

M/OTHERING IN TRANSNATIONAL SPACE AS
CURRICULUM THEORIZING: INVESTIGATING
INTERRELATIONALITY IN A SELF/OTHER
RELATIONSHIP THROUGH WEAVING

By

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Abstract: The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore a different way of thinking otherness in a self/other relationship. Specifically, I theorize m/othering in a transnational context in dealing with otherness in curricular practices. “M/other” is a doubled status of “mother,” constantly questioning and troubling a normalized understanding of “good mother.” Through the feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry of m/othering, I examine the *process* of constituting my subjectivities, relationships, and knowledge as well as the complexity of *interrelationship* within a self/other relationship, focusing on what I encounter in my research process. I investigate the process of constructing my subjectivities as m/other and relationship with my mother in transnational space by analyzing discursive constitution and circulation of discourses of mothering. I also examine the ways in which otherness emerges and works within a self/other (m/other) relationship. By othering *my self* and my mother from my conventional knowledge of “good mother,” I focus on my senses of doubt, confusion, and subversion which prompt diverse ontological statuses of “mother” in problematizing my “naturalized” knowledge of mother. In addition, I reconceptualize a seemingly separate, essentialized self/other relationship by rethinking the notion of weaving. In doing so, I challenge the interrelationship between my self and situated context and map out the formation of my knowledge, subjectivity, and relationship of/as/with m/other through weaving.

I delve into the moments of challenging and re/articulations of m/other in my partial knowledge making process. The self and the Other never exist within a fixed form. Rather, the otherness among the subjects emerges anew through un/expected interactions responding to their socio-political situatedness. This inquiry of m/othering through weaving for theorizing curriculum disrupts a monolithic understanding of self, other, and otherness and urges to work multiplicities, interrelations, and flexibilities in complexly connected and continuously changing educational space. This study implies that curriculum continues to transform just like weaving creates diverse patterns. My curriculum theorizing of m/othering provides a different frame to redefine and reconstitute important knowledge in contemporary educational practices which constantly search for unnamed pedagogical possibilities within various interwoven self/other settings.

Keywords: self/other relationship, otherness, interrelationality, m/othering, weaving, curriculum, poststructuralist feminism, autobiography

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CHAPTER I

POINTS OF ISSUES: M/OTHERING IN TRANSNATIONAL SPACE AS CURRICULUM THEORIZING: DEALING WITH OTHERNESS IN A SELF/OTHER RELATIONSHIP

This dissertation study investigates the process of construction of (a) my subjectivities as m/other¹ and (b) the relationship with my mother within a mother/other relationship. This inquiry aims to reconsider how *otherness* works in a self/other relationship² by challenging any fixed notion of difference. Instead of questioning “what is different,” this dissertation study focuses on examining the context of constituting a self/other relationship and the process of working with otherness. For this inquiry, I scrutinize my sense of otherness to myself as mother and to my own biological mother, in order to examine the complexities in dealing with otherness from my conventional knowledge of mother as always caring, accessible, and sacrificing. By othering my

¹ The term of “m/other” in this dissertation study implies a maternal subject who struggles with her “otherness” in her m/othering. By othering herself from her normalized understanding of mother, m/other constantly questions and troubles her feelings of ambivalence, ambiguity, and uncertainty. “Mother,” as a general term, is used without an article (a/the), indicating a conventionalized, institutionalized status of mother. “M/other” continuously works with her double(d) status in the process of constituting her maternal subjectivities.

² To specify a relationship between a self and the Other in this dissertation study, I use a slash (/) for demonstrating a complex, dynamic, and temporal self/other relationship. In contrast, I use a hyphen (-) to indicate a structural, power-imbalanced self-other relationship. When the self and the Other are considered within a relationship, they are lowercased (self/other); for their independent status, the Other is capitalized to indicate its significance to the self (e.g., the self and the Other).

self³ as well as my mother from the historically, socio-politically, and culturally normalized image of “good” mother, I examine how the otherness emerges in my m/othering and the relationship with my mother.

Through the process, I map out how my m/othering subjectivities have shifted and how the relationship with my mother has been constituted, as I experience my m/othering and the relationship with my mother anew in transnational space. In addition, in order to articulate the complexities in a self/other relationship, I reconceptualize the notion of weaving by analyzing the process of creating weaving art works of my mother, mine, and in collaboration. Ultimately, through my inquiry of m/othering⁴ and weaving, I investigate the ways of enunciating how to deal with otherness and interweave my understanding of self/other relationship into curriculum theorizing.

Interrogation

I believe I first seriously considered my self and my life in relation with *the Other* was during the early years of my marriage when my two sons were born. Since then, my daily life has been a quest of self-examination as I live my life, and at the same time, live for my family’s needs and expectations, while I have fulfilled the roles of being a mother,

³ To highlight the materiality of the “self,” I place a space in the word of “myself” and “herself”: my self and her self

⁴ M/othering (Springgay & Freedman, 2012) is a new concept of understanding a maternal subject’s thinking and behavior. By othering a mother from the conventional knowledge of mother, m/othering articulates her doubled status and trace the process of constructing maternal subjectivities. In this dissertation study, the slash (/) demonstrates dynamic interactions and movements in a juxtaposed relationship (e.g., self/other, m/other, mother/daughter, im/possible, etc.). In m/othering, the slash does not isolate a mother from the Other or simply unite them; rather, it works within their connection which is temporal, partial, and open to unknown possibilities.

daughter-in-law, and wife. My marriage and creation of a new family necessarily brought significant changes with the emphasis on responsibilities in love and caring. In retrospect, living with three generations together under one roof, I frequently struggled in my attempts to meet all expectations to be a *wise, good* mother, daughter-in-law, and wife. As I tried to satisfy my own needs and those of my extended family, I questioned the notion of “unconditional love” and doubted whether such a reality actually exists.

Different from institutionalized understanding of mothering, my inquiry of m/othering initiates from my feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity, and discomfort in dealing with otherness, which emerges between my confusing, messy m/othering practices in reality and my conventional, idealized version of knowledge of mothering. The purpose of my autobiographical research is to reconceptualize my knowledge of mother and mothering by articulating the double(d) status of m/other and mapping out the process of constructing my maternal subjectivities which have emerged within historically, socio-culturally, and global-economically formulated discourses of “good” mothering. The following two sets of my inquiry of m/other illustrate backgrounds of my research problems.

Inquiry1: My Subjectivities as M/other in Transnational Space

In the early morning, I wake my son up for the final check-up for his mid-term test today.

The child, a 5th grader in elementary school, is sitting on his chair, rubbing his sleepy eyes, and working on his test-prep book again, which his mother graded for him last night.

To be a good mother, the mother is supposed to be a great partner for the child’s academic success, whether the child likes it or not.

I usually come home from my work before my child’s arrival from school to prepare his dinner, so he could eat his meal on his way to his private academies after school.

I drop him off at a math academy, and after the math class, he will need to go to another academy for his English lesson.

After he returns home from private classes around 10 pm, he has to sit on his chair again to complete his school homework.

The most unbearable thing for me is that my son adjusts well to this frenetic life and searches for his enjoyment through this daily routine.

I have no courage to stop this abnormal practice, because many children and their mothers live in a similar manner.

I see so many intelligent children, but I am not sure if they have ever thought about the meaning of friendship.

They hang around together at academies and compete against each other for their imaginary successes.

This reality is somehow wrong. I want to live my life differently, if possible.

I am an “international” doctoral student in the United States. My two sons and I arrived in the United States the day after Christmas Day in 2009, leaving my husband in my home country. My initial goal was to complete my master’s degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Students of Other Languages) in one of the American sister-schools of my graduate school in South Korea where I finished the TESOL certificate course in 2000. I was teaching English to elementary and middle school students for ten years in private educational settings. Less than two years. That was our temporarily planned *wild goose family* life—a mutated transnational family structure that each parent lives separately in other country for their children’s education. I am not sure if I can prioritize the importance between my desire for learning and my children’s education. Yet, the opportunity for studying abroad in the United States had come to my sons and me very timely necessarily when I was

seriously thinking about the direction of my children's education as well as my intellectual growth as an English teacher in a graduate school level.

I still remember the first night of our arrival at our new home in the United States, a two bedroom-apartment, located three miles away from my campus in Oklahoma City. It was quite a different trip than I used to enjoy with my family members. I was not able to relax in spite of the surge of fatigue from traveling over 24 hours. As soon as our four large travel bags were laid on the neatly cleaned apartment living room floor, an intense feeling of anxiousness that I needed to begin my "different life" with two young sons, all by myself, flooded through me. How many times did I repeatedly pack and unpack those bags before leaving my country! I opened those bags again to take out toiletries, towels, and several blankets in a strange place for our first night's sleep. The three of us lay down on the carpeted floor, missing our cozy beds and fluffy comforters in our home country. I was aware of the coldness of the floor against my back. As I closed my eyes, I again contemplated my decision to leave my home country and family members behind, and the meaning and direction my new life in the United States would take. My husband and the rest of my family members were anxious about our well-being and security in the process of settling down in a foreign country, let alone the physical separation from them.

What compelled us to begin our adventure in a foreign place? The decision to migrate to the United States with my two children may appear to have been motivated solely by a desire to avoid the heavy pressure of the system of education in my home country. In South Korea, the increasing number of transnational families seeking opportunities for their children's education has become a significant social issue. To escape or resist the relentlessly rigorous system of education currently in place, a number of students and their parent(s)

move to another country (particularly countries where English is the first language) to pursue their educational goals, resulting in the mutations and endangerment of family life patterns (Bae, 2013; Kim, Agic, & McKenzie, 2014; Shin, 2014). This portion of population is characterized as the “early study abroad children” or “wild goose family” echoing the admired behavior of wild geese, known for dedicating themselves to raising their youngsters, traveling long distances to feed them. According to Kim et al (2014), in this new transnational family arrangement, the mother usually migrates with her children to a foreign country, while the father remains in the home country, working to provide financial support for family. The family invests resources and allocates responsibilities of other family members by hoping that their children will become successful, and they will have the added advantage of having grown up in a transnational environment (Bae, 2013; Park & Bae, 2009).

As a parent who has followed this pattern, and may be characterized as a member of this migratory group, I often ask myself if I want to be simply categorized and identified by this generalized new cultural term, “Goose Mother.” I decided to come to the United States to study with my children, but I am confused if the choice was made by my sole free will. Although eight years have passed since we launched our academic journey to America pursuing new possibilities, I am still struggling within the globally, culturally, and educationally formulated mothering discourses. I remain anxious about my competence when I consider universally conceived and socio-culturally constructed notions of what constitutes “good” care and education for my children. During this period of studying abroad, my efforts to provide a better educational environment for my children and my self, have been criticized by other people, public opinion, and mass media. Negative remarks point out that my

decision to be a single parent in a foreign country has caused, for example, family separation, emotional and financial burdens for maintaining two households, and little opportunity for my children to learn about the culture or language of the home country and so forth. Thus, my inquiry focuses on investigating how my m/othering practice has been shaped within the discursively constituted mothering context, as I was contested within the binary relation of good education-bad education for my children.

Inquiry 2: Dealing with Otherness of my Mother

While residing in the United States to pursue my graduate study, my mother and I have come to create a “new” relationship. Far from our home country and separate from other family members, my mother and I spend quality mother/daughter time during my mother’s annual visit to the United States to see my children and me. I remember that we barely had this bond since I married my husband as soon as I graduated from college. Even before my marriage, we seldom spent time together because my mother was always busy with caring for a three-generation household, as well as her own career. Yet, I know how my mother’s love for her three children was extraordinary when I remember our school lunch boxes filled with varieties of side dishes and freshly cooked gourmet foods. She had hardly missed family events to host holiday gatherings, ancestors’ memorial service days, and family members’ birthday parties, while keeping her schedules for her profession. My mother was always responsible, devotional, and sacrificing for her three children and rest of family members. I was grateful for her dedication for my family all the time but on the other side, often curious about what enabled her to perform her role as a mother, wife, and daughter-in-law so “ideally” in our family setting.

Owing to the development of information and transportation technology, my mother is able to fly to see me within a day from the opposite side of the world, and we can chat or text about what is happening around us in real time via cell phone and Internet. This technological development allows us to stay connected and build up our communications more often, blurring the national border between the United States and South Korea. It establishes a specific time and space for us to create a new mother/daughter alliance. In the *transnational* space, where geographical boundaries among nations are blurred, and openness and changes are always filled with events (Miller, 2006), I have come to be attentive to complexities in my mother/daughter relationship crossing our memories in the past and present as well as narratives in South Korea and the United States. In the process of understanding our relationship anew, I particularly focus on the moment of surprise, tension, and question, which emerges un/expectedly through our discursive interactions. Of course, we care for each other, but sometimes I cannot resist a feeling of strangeness from my mother especially when I expect a socially and culturally taken for granted image of “good mother” from my mother.

My mother is a basket-weaving artist and runs a local plant-woven crafts museum in Gyeonggi-do, South Korea. She has been a weaver over half of her life and devoted herself to studying and preserving Korean traditional weaving skills and providing educational programs for the community. The figures 1, 2, and 3 demonstrate her weaving collection of Korean traditional handicrafts. To practice a Korean indigenous weaving skill, she visits local artisans and learns to weave Korean traditional woven works. After studying their woven techniques and materials, my mother used to weave the same items that she learned

from the artisans.⁵ She always emphasizes the importance of preserving the Korean tradition and hand them down to next generations not to lose its authenticity; yet, her point often confuses me to question about universalized understanding of the Korean culture or Koreaness.



Figure 1. Dungumisin (snow boots)



Figure 2. Kkalbansuk (working mat)



Figure 3. Mituri (Korean traditional shoes)

She also has particular interest in learning and collecting other countries' weaving traditions. During her visit to the United States, she wished to learn about the Native

⁵ Figure 1 illustrates a pair of straw snow boots (called Dungumi Shin) woven in a Korean traditional way. Figure 2 is also woven with straw created as a sitting mat (Kkalbansuk). Figure 3 is Mituri, a pair of Korean traditional shoes woven with hemp. These woven pieces are exhibited in the Pulzip museum and their images are shown in the museum's website.

American basket-weaving culture in Oklahoma. My mother and I travelled to local Native American museums and came to shape good friendship with tribal weaving artists. She enjoyed learning and exchanging new and different weaving skills with other Native American skilled weavers. I served as an interpreter to facilitate their communication with each other. At the same time, I was also curious to explore the differences, similarities, and relationships between the two cultures. I decided to study this topic for my qualitative research course in my graduate program, so I recruited my mother and a female Cherokee weaver as participants and submitted my IRB asking for permission to research their lives as female indigenous artists, as well as their cultural awareness of own cultures.

As the research proceeded, however, I confronted the problematic situation of researching my mother and the other participant, a Cherokee basket-weaving artist. One participant was too close to me to be impartial; for the other, my knowledge of the Cherokee culture was clearly limited. Challenged with the vocabulary the artist used to describe important cultural and historical Cherokee events, I realized that I would not be able to learn enough about the Cherokee culture within the limited interview period. My knowledge and interactions with the artist were just not sufficient for me to speak for her life and culture in any nuanced way. On the other hand, when I attempted to interview my mother, I found it troublesome to conduct the interview in the same way I did with my other participant. The identical interview questions did not run as smoothly with my mother. For instance, in an attempt to understand my participants' lives as female indigenous weaving artists, I conducted interview questions regarding their personal experiences at home, school, and career. Following these research questions, when I asked my mother to reflect her childhood and school life, my mother began to spin a yarn bringing all of my grandmother's,

grandfather's and uncle's stories with which I was more familiar and engaged. During my interview with her, our conversation inevitably returned to our usual form of communication—celebrating the moments we shared and assuring our solidarity as family. When my mother reflected on how her mother (my grandmother) raised her and how her mother loved and cared for me (as the daughter of her busy daughter), I found myself missing her so much and pondering our similar mothering lives. Moreover, I realized that I reacted sensitively to my mother's heretofore private and hidden narratives, while my reaction seemed consistent to my other participant's responses. It was challenging to be formal to my mother; my mother, also, expressed awkwardness as she recited her private stories to me in response to my interview questions that I did not know or even need to know.

I reflected, is it even possible to interview my mother? To what extent can my mother be *the Other*⁶ to me? I am challenged to appropriate the distance and proximity between my mother and me within the category of a self and the Other. As Rich (1978) articulates, a mother-daughter relationship is complex. It is “subliminal, subversive, pre-verbal: the knowledge flowing between two alike bodies, one of which has spent nine months inside the other” (p. 220). Indeed, I was a part of my mother's body before I was born. Though my mother and I share ample amounts of genetic attributes, significant life experiences and memories, I wonder, really, how much I know about my mother. In the process of *othering*

⁶ Albeit the meaning of *the Other* can be varied in diverse situation (e.g., Hegelian Other as a self-conscious counterpart for defining a self; Heideggerian Other as ontologically different; critical feminist Other in the binary context of man-woman; postcolonial Other as colonized in the structure of the Eastern world-the Western World), “the Other” in this dissertation study refers to a feminist poststructuralist subject who struggles with indeterminacy, instability, and temporality in-between the relationship of self and the Other. For its significance, I capitalize the word the ‘Other’ juxtaposing with “the self.”

my mother from myself, the question of how to articulate the distance between my mother and me within a fixed term was raised.

Bringing these two inquires—dealing with otherness in my course of m/othering as well as shaping a mother/daughter relationship with my mother—in this dissertation study, I examine the moments when my sense of otherness arouses in the m/other relationship. I focus on how normalized knowledge of mother has affected in constructing my m/other relationship. In addition, through the concept of weaving, I investigate *interrelationality* between my m/other relationship and the context in dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship. By analyzing a process of weaving and weaving artworks of my mother and our collaboration, I delve into complexities and dynamics, which emerge in the course of weaving in an attempt to articulate the construction of a self, the Other, and otherness, as well as the work of otherness in a self/other relationship.

Inquiry 3: Understanding Curriculum through M/othering and Weaving

Knowledge in curriculum is never neutral and always selected by someone's or some group's interest and vision. Thus, contemporary curriculum inquiry needs to focus on examining knowledge construction process, in which involves historically, culturally, and socio-economically diverse contexts, discursively constituted discourses, and complexities of power relations (Miller, 2005). As Foucault (1978) articulates in *Discipline and Punish*, power does not reside in one place; rather, it exercises randomly within networks of social systems and individuals. The discursive and multi-layered effect of power produces particular discourses and knowledge. Thus, the Spencerian question of curriculum—What knowledge is of most worth?—does not sufficiently inquire the complex condition of

knowledge-making process in determining curriculum as “official” knowledge. Instead of questioning the validity of knowledge in curriculum, investigation of power/knowledge relations and their operation will be necessary to scrutinize the process of knowledge production in working with otherness in curriculum.

In addition, the produced knowledge constructs a social norm or a set of norms, which regulates one’s thinking and behavior and demarcates the boundary of the “good” and “normal” (Butler, 1993a). The complexly produced knowledge influences significantly one’s subjectivity construction process as my discursively constructed knowledge of good mother affects the formulation of my subjectivities of m/other. According to Butler (1993a), when the category of the good and normal comes into question, it becomes unclear how to discern the real from the unreal. By othering my self and my mother from the knowledge of “good” mother, I question the senses of tension, ambiguity, and uncertainty, which I encounter in the binary relation of good and normal-bad and abnormal mothering. Through the investigation of “How do I experience and construct [m/othering] knowledge? How are those ‘experiences’ and construction mediated by the discourse available to me at any one place and time?” (Miller, 2005, p. 140. Emphasis in original), I want to analyze historically, socio-culturally, and transnationally constructed my m/othering context and its effect on fabricating my subjectivities and relationship with my mother. In addition, by challenging my conventional understanding of weaving, I examine how otherness in the relationship of m/other can be re/considered.

By mapping out the process of shaping my knowledge of mother and woven space in weaving different materials, I want to connect the process into understanding of how knowledge is produced and how the knowledge can be operated in practicing curriculum.

Ultimately, investigation of dynamics and complexities, which emerge in the course of m/othering and weaving, will expand the way of understanding how to deal with *otherness* and interrelationality in a self/other relationship in curriculum theorizing. Thus, my main inquiry points will be as follows: a) In what ways have my subjectivities as m/other been constructed within the transnational context? b) How has the notion of otherness been challenged in shaping my m/other relationship? c) How is the theorization of m/othering through weaving interrelated with the recent curriculum discourse of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation study is to theorize the way of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship in curriculum studies, by investigating the process of constructing my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other through the concept of weaving. In order to articulate complexities and dynamics which emerge in the process of working with otherness in a self /other relationship, I scrutinize interrelationship between a mother and the Other (m/other) by unsettling the seemingly bifurcated relationship, and their construction of relationship within discursively constituted historical, socio-political, and cultural m/othering contexts.

In this dissertation research, I am not interested in exploring my m/othering as oppressed or liberating the colonized maternal subject by seeking a solution. I am also not interested in interpreting how my relationship as/with mother has been constructed within a biologically or psychologically predetermined framework. Rather, I examine, interrogate, and trouble any taken for granted knowledge of m/other, which has profoundly influenced to

shape my maternal thinking and performances, as well as the relationship with my mother. By analyzing the moment of confusion, tension, and disruption in the process of othering, I will investigate how the sense of otherness emerges and works within the self/other relationship. By doing so, this study may facilitate more possible ways of m/othering and prompt new, different understanding of m/other, avoiding exclusion, hasty generalization, and oversimplification of one's materiality. Further, I re/conceptualize a self/other relationship and its interrelationality through the analysis of concept and process of weaving. This dissertation inquiry of m/othering may think with recent curriculum issues of working otherness in a self/other relationship in diverse pedagogical practices.

Theoretical Framework: Feminist Poststructuralist Thoughts

For my inquiry of m/othering in a self/other relationship to theorize curriculum, I incorporate feminist poststructuralist thoughts, which consider women's identities as multiple, contingent, and constantly changing. Interrogating any essentialized and fixed understanding of women, feminist poststructuralist thoughts trouble the category of the woman which universalizes women's identities with collective attributes (Butler, 1990, 1993a, Lather, 2007; Miller, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). Decentering generalized assumptions of mother as inherently caring, sacrificing, and always accessible, I investigate my complex and multi-dimensional subjectivities and relationship construction process as/with m/other. Feminist poststructuralist understanding of one's subjectivity and relationship construction process is not fully knowable, because it is discursively constituted, and constantly in flux, shifting in a particular space and time. With Janet Miller's concept of "transnational flows and mobilities" (2006), which enables flows of bodies, cultures, and identities to create new possibilities in blurred boundaries, I delve into the transformative moments in my

subjectivity, as well as the relationship construction process as/with m/other in the transnational context. In the process, I trouble any modernistic notion of mother as stable, knowable, and predictable, because it reduces mother's potential diverse ways of thinking and doing. By othering myself from the essentialized category of "good" mother, I examine the emergence of feelings of *tension* and *excessiveness* (Lather, 2007; Miller, 2005; Springgay, 2008) that would prompt my m/othering to become unstable, ambiguous, and contradictory. The moment of tension and excessiveness is not something negative or needs to be corrected; rather, from the feminist poststructuralist perspectives, it invites multiple realities and more fertile practices (Lather, 2007; Miller, 2005; Springgay, 2008). Refusing any foundational grand narratives and static version of discourses, feminist poststructuralist thoughts investigate women's multiple, fragmented identities (Alvesson, 2002) shaped within "the various situations, embodiments, contexts, and institutions that frame diverse lived realities" (Miller, 2010b, p. 371).

In addition, feminist poststructuralist thoughts consider that women's identities are personal, at the same time, very political because their identity constructions are closely interrelated with dynamic power operations. As Foucault (1978) observes, power exercises randomly among people and their multi-layered relationships, and networks of systems. The discursively circulated power generates particular discourses, knowledge, and social norms; they significantly influence certain individuals' and particular groups of people's identities, subjectivities and relationships constitution processes.

Judith Butler (1990, 1993a) highlights that gender is produced by socially constructed norms that repeatedly police one's sexuality. For her, there is no preexisting, pre-cultural gender, which one can choose; rather, it is socially formulated through the effect of

circulating gender norms. Butler's concept of gender performativity (1993a) specifies that gender identity is continuously signified and resignified by a compulsive norm or a set of social norms "in and through the iterability of its performance" (p. 90). In other words, one's gender identity is not pre-given, but performed repeatedly through socially regulated and normalized practices. The feminist poststructuralist concept of gender performativity provides a different perspective that gender identity and its behavioral production are intricately interrelated and discursively embodied within the network of power and normative constraints (Butler, 1990, 1993a, Foucault, 1978; Miller, 2005, 2010a, 2010b). Feminist poststructuralist thoughts, thus, focus on examining gendered discourses shaped within particular historical, socio-cultural contexts to analyze the process of constructing diverse women's multiple identities, subjectivities, and forms of knowledge. Bringing the feminist poststructuralist focus, I investigate the process of constructing my subjectivities and relationships as/with mother within my historically, socio-culturally, and transnationally situated contexts, in order to examine the gap as well as the connection between personal and political knowledge of m/other.

As such, feminist poststructuralist theories examine interrelations within self/other and self/context relationships. In a dichotomous relation of self-other and self-context, each element in a dyad is considered being opposed, excluded, and consumed by one another. In the bipolar relationship of self-other, mother's varied, potential ways of doing and thinking are readily overlooked and reduced to the expense of the Other—the normalized understanding of mother. Yet, feminist poststructuralist theories work *with* difference and focus on the network of connection in a self/other relationship (Butler, 1990, 1993a; Lather, 2007; Miller, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Springgay, 2008), disrupting any thinking of polarization

or separation. A feminist poststructuralist self and the Other are intricately connected through dynamic interactions and actively involved in each other's transformative process (Ahmed, 2000; Lather, 2007; Springgay, 2008). By responding to each other's otherness, a self and the Other become vehicles for each other's formation. As Ellsworth and Miller (1996) articulate, dealing with *otherness* in a self/other relationship from feminist poststructuralist perspectives refers to the "possibility of engaging with and responding to fluidity and malleability of identities and difference, of refusing fixed and static categories of sameness or permanent otherness" (Ellsworth & Miller, 1996, p. 247). This viewpoint urges me to unsettle any binary economy in the mother-other dyad and see more dynamics and complexities in the m/other relationship. Thinking a relationship in a binary setting curbs potential interactions and closes the door for more to come. My inquiry focus is not to consider a matter of inclusion or exclusion of the Other's otherness; rather, it is to investigate the process of how the otherness is recognized, how a self and the Other interplay, and how self, other, and their boundaries transform through interactions in the space where multiple truths are produced.

Modes of Inquiry

In this dissertation study, I incorporate a feminist poststructuralist version of autobiographical inquiry which investigates a woman's multiple, provisional, and fluid subjectivities, her discursive situatedness in particular historical, social, and cultural contexts, and the interrelatedness between self/other and self/context relationships. A feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry disrupts a humanistic, modernistic notion of autobiography that an "authentic" subject with "enlightened" agency is always accessible to one's memories, being fully conscious and knowing what is happening in one's life (Miller, 2005, 2006, 2010a; Moon, 2011). A feminist poststructuralist autobiographical subject is

ambiguous, fragmented, and uncertain, and constantly struggles with conflicts and tensions, which emerge in the process of complying discursively constructed discourses and social norms. Dealing with otherness between the subject and normalized knowledge, a feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry constantly kneads its category and works within the gap. As Miller (2005) advocates, in a feminist poststructuralist approach, the subject constantly confronts with socially constructed roles and rethink any taken for granted knowledge, such as gendered discourses, relationships, and structures. Since any grand meta-narrative and/or absolute form of knowledge do(es) not sufficiently support the formation of multiple realities, my feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry investigates local and partial narratives which work within the interstice between the realm of personal/political and private/public trajectories. Distinguished from a humanistic version of autobiography, a feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry challenges any holistic, linear, and sequential ways of representing one's narratives, memories, and experiences as an ending project. Rather, it takes into account the process of subject's knowledge, relationship, and subjectivity construction—particularly, in the status of disjuncture in dealing with otherness. Highlighting this point, I examine my senses of discomfort, confusion, and uncertainty in my subjectivity and relationship construction process as/with mother in the m/other relationship.

In addition, my focus on the living inquiry, interrelationality in the m/other relationship, and process-based research attends a method of a/r/tography, which examines “complexities in the relationship” of the artist/researcher/teacher in the context of art, research, and education (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, & Xiong, 2006). A/r/tographical research troubles the slash—boundaries of items in their relationships. In attempt to re/conceptualize working with otherness in a self/other relationship, my analysis of weaving

artworks and the process of weaving project with my mother will concentrate on what emerges within the boundary of a self and the Other. A/r/tographical texts and images are not the means of representing thoughts but a process of struggling with terms, concepts, and practice (Springgay, 2008). My a/r/tographical research process is entangled with theories and concepts that provoke me to think further about dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship in m/othering and curriculum theorizing. Influenced by Jackson and Mazzei's concept of "thinking with theories," (2012) which connects a researcher's questions and ideas into relevant theories and concepts in an inquiry process, I assemble my disparate ideas to work together and articulate abstract thoughts in a sensible manner. Rather than handy application of my questions and autobiographical materials to a preconceived theoretical framework, I focus on examining interconnections with my thoughts, inquiries, and theories from which I attempt to recognize the emergence of something new within the connection. Instead of exhausting materialities of narratives, memories, and experiences into artificially categorized themes and codes, the process of "thinking with theories" attends interplays among my research questions, thoughts, and theories, which disrupt my boundary of thinking and bring about its transformations.

My methodological choice closely ties in with major points of feminist poststructuralist theories. Thus, I avoid humanistic research practices which a knowing researcher pre-exists and exerts controls over a researched and material (data) in a Cartesian separation of researcher-researched or researcher-data (Lather, 2013; St. Pierre, 2006, 2012, 2014). Instead of thinking in disconnection, scrutiny of interrelationality in a self/other relationship is underscored in my dissertation study because investigation through a strong linkage between epistemological, ontological stance and methodological practice is crucial

for more scientifically rigorous qualitative research (St. Pierre, 2006, 2014). I also acknowledge the notion of *Crisis of Representation* that supports im/possibility of perfect representation of realities due to limitations of language capacity and a researcher's ability (Lather, 2007; Marcus & Fischer, 1986; Miller, 2005). On top of that, by attending the *process* of understanding of a self, the Other, otherness, and their interplays, I examine methodological complexities of knowing one's materialities. Furthermore, I incorporate the narrative/visual analysis (Riessman, 2008; Sullivan & Miller, 2013), which considers both text and image not separate, rather interrelated elements that serve to reinforce each other.

Importance of the Study

The ultimate purpose of the dissertation study is to investigate interrelationality between a self and the Other in the process of constructing a self/other relationship through my m/othering inquiry. I articulate how otherness emerges and works in the self/other relationship with the concept of weaving; by doing so, I connect my understanding of dealing with otherness in a self /other relationship and interrelationality among the self, Other, otherness, and their relationship construction through the inquiry of m/othering and weaving into theorizing curriculum in diverse self/other settings. By investigating interrelations between constructing my subjectivities and relationships as/with mother and my discursively situated m/othering contexts, I examine the process of knowledge production of m/other and its normalized practice. This process-based research may offer a pivotal way of working with *important knowledge* in curriculum studies, inquiring "how-ness" rather than finding the essential of what-ness. In addition, interweaving theories, concepts, and feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry of m/othering and weaving may provide different ways of understanding a seemingly bifurcated self/other relationship and insight to see the

gap between theory/practice and private/public relations anew in creating pedagogical practices. Further, by reconceptualizing ontological meanings of a self/other relationship and their working with otherness through the inquiry of m/other, weaving, and curriculum, this dissertation study envisions possibilities in working with diversity in significant life issues.

CHAPTER II

THINKING WITH LITERATURE:

M/OTHERING AND INTERRELATIONALITY IN WORKING WITH OTHERNESS

In this chapter, I review diverse perspectives of feminist studies of mother(ing) and the mother-daughter relationship to investigate complexities in a self/other relationship. By reviewing feminist debates about *mother*,⁷ I examine the discrepancy between mothering as biologically natural and socially constructed to understand its interrelationality. I then introduce Judith Butler's theory of performativity (1993a) as a different way of understanding one's subjectivity construction process and its interrelation with its discursively formulated contexts to consider a m/other relationship. With the concept of *rhizome* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), I assemble the studies, which illustrate the *process* of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship—entanglement, encountering otherness, and working with tension within the boundary. This review of literature consists of three sections with following subtitles: *Connection or Separation?; Thinking and Doing Differently; Within the Relation.*

⁷ While the mother's title is not limited to women, the meaning of *mother* in this study refers to the women's role or qualification.

Connection or Separation?

Following the theme of this section, I review feminist literature of mother and mothering, and discuss the way of understanding *otherness* in feminist studies by interrogating Cartesian understanding of mother (woman) as separate, predictable, and knowable. In doing so, I examine the limitation of inquiring dynamics and complexities of m/othering in a fixed binary of biological-social economy.

From Motherhood, Mothering to M/othering

Feminist studies of “mother” have veered their perspectives from emphasizing women’s biological ability of reproduction and child caring, and their oppression to investigating more socially constructed mothers’ roles and their mothering practice (Featherstone, 1999; O’Reilly, 2004a, 2006; Tong, 2014). The study of mother has been significant in understanding women’s life since Adrienne Rich introduced her narratives of motherhood in her work, *Of Woman Born* (1978). Rich suggests two aspects of mothering: women’s experience as mother and motherhood as institutional. Her distinction was important for mothers to acknowledge their institutionalized experience (Featherstone, 1999). Rich (1978) stresses that the patriarchal institution of motherhood “has ghettoized and degraded women’s potentialities” through its own history and ideology (p. 13). O’Reilly (2004a, 2006), however, differentiates the term of “mothering” from “motherhood” by describing motherhood as male-defined under a patriarchal institution, while mothering refers to female experience and her point of view. O’Reilly (2006) urges a shift from the patriarchal ideology of motherhood to “explicitly and profoundly political-social practice” of mothering (p. 13).

Differentiated from mothering, the term of *m/othering* (Springgay & Freedman, 2012) is a different way of understanding a maternal subject's thinking and doing. M/othering seeks a new space to invite multiple realities in one's mothering practice by disrupting a fixed category of mother. Situated in a doubled status between a mother and the Other (m/other), the concept of m/othering troubles a conventional understanding of mothering, and provides new knowledge of mother and mothering. M/othering is not about suggesting solutions for problematic mothering or liberating the institutionalized mother; rather, it is about extending knowledge of mothering "to the limit, to the unknowable, and to the incomprehensible" (Springgay & Freedman, 2012, p.6). By focusing on the moment of confrontation, resistance, and challenge on its limit, m/othering constantly works with the otherness of mother. Through the investigation of discursive conditions as well as ambiguous processes of mothering, m/othering aims to examine the seemingly bipolarized mother-other relationship and work within the gap for articulating its connectivity. In this dissertation study, the slash (/) demonstrates dynamic interactions and movements in a juxtaposed relation (e.g. mother/other, mother/daughter, self/other, and so forth). In m/othering, the slash does not isolate or unite the two elements—the mother and the Other; rather, it maps out the route of constituting m/othering temporality, partiality, and its transformation.

In *Mothering a Bodied Curriculum* (2012), Springgay and Freedman point out that a dichotomous understanding of a mother as "the Other" compels the mother to objectify, reduce, and regulate her mothering practice. They allege that the binary understanding of mothering leads mothers to be closed in the essentialized image of mother as passive or uniform. A feeling of ambivalence and tension can emerge when the

mother places her self in-between her mothering reality and her knowledge of “what a good mother should be like.” However, in the m/othering project, the sense of dislocation, discomfort, and isolation is not something to be rejected; rather, the doubled status should be scrutinized to invite more possible ways of understanding of m/other. As Lather (2007) argues that “a double task that works the necessary tensions that structure feminist methodology as fertile ground for the production of new practices” (p. 76), m/othering can disrupt existing knowledge of mothering and simultaneously create new understandings.

To examine mothers’ discursively contextualized mothering practice, Hays (1996) coined a term, “intensive mothering” as “a historically constructed *cultural model* for appropriate child care” (p. 21, emphasis in original). She considers that images of children and mothers are socially constructed—children as economic assets and mothers as primary care takers; this has been the best model in many other cultures and histories. In intensive mothering, thus, mothers require “copious amounts of time, energy, and material resources” (p. 8) for their priceless children. Hay (1996) argues that the ideology of intensive mothering is a normative standard, which serves “the interests not only of men but also capitalism, the state, the middle class, and whites” (p. xiii). Under the dominant historical, socio-political, cultural, and economic discourses, mothers confront tensions left in the separation of private and public spheres. Whether they decide to be stay-at-home mothers for their children or to be “*homo economicus*” for their socio-political participation (Hay, 1996, emphasis in original, p. 11)—although the choice may be limited to certain contexts of mothers—Hay contends that women ultimately “benefit not only men but also capitalism and the modern state” (1996, p. 18). For this conflict,

Bell (2004) articulates that mothering is “an arena of political struggle” that intersects multiple and shifting dimensions of power relations (p. 49).

Under the discourse of intensive mothering, mothers have no choice in their mothering practice (O’Reilly, 2010). Whether guidance is informed through parenting books, a physician’s advice, or the father’s rule, a mother comes to raise her children in accordance with the value and expectation of the dominant culture. Mothering without autonomy causes a sense of having no control in their child rearing. In this circumstance, the values and behaviors of mother are easily influenced by other people’s judgments. Ruddick (1989) articulates this point that mothers are policed by *the gaze of others*. She elaborates that under the gaze of others, mothers “relinquish authority to others, and lose confidence in their own values and in their perceptions of their children’s needs” (p. 111). The code of conduct in mothering is developed through communal, social, and cultural norms, and mothers are compelled to observe these regulations in everyday situations (O’Reilly, 2010).

A mother who has no choice, authority, and confidence in her mothering is readily haunted by the romanticized depiction of mother whose love is unconditional, self-sacrificing, naturally nurturing, knowing how to raise her child and educate a perfect child (O’Reilly, 2010). If the mother thinks herself unable to accomplish this demand, she feels acutely isolated and excluded from the knowledge of *normal, good* mother. These ideal images of mother marginalize the mother’s sense of self and normalize her mothering patterns and practices. O’Reilly (2004) adds that mothers believe that they are hugely responsible for raising their children, perceived as a national resource that needs to be carefully trained and educated—echoing the commonly used metaphor in which

children are often regarded as a blank paper, “If you paint with black ink, they turn black; if you paint in red ink, they turn red” (Stevens, 2004). That is, mothers are expected to fulfill the role as the painter who is successful in executing a flawless picture. This assumption saddles the mother with the heavy physical and intellectual burdens of responsibility.

Within this constrained mothering context, mothers cannot help but to conform to the values of others. In order to avoid blame, which might be detrimental to their children or themselves, they are obliged to adjust their mothering to historically, culturally, and socio-politically produced norms. The dominant discourse of mothering promotes unrealistic images of mothering that are impossible to achieve and often leave the mother feeling inadequate, dislocated, and guilty. The discrepancy between idealized socio-cultural expectations and the mothering realities triggers the mother to confront “maternal ambivalence” which is “camouflaged, masked by the normative discourse of motherhood,” in the process of challenging the denial of such difficulty and difference (O’Reilly, 2004b, p. 14). This maternal subject in ambivalence is affected by discourse of discursive power relations (Foucault, 1978). Regulation of mothering practice is influenced by power interventions, such as government campaigns to raise children for the future of the nation in the context of advanced global capitalism. A maternal subjectivity, thus, is constructed through the mother’s performance, reproduction, and resistance to these socio-culturally power-embedded maternal norms (O’Reilly, 2004b).

As studies of motherhood, mothering, and m/othering illustrate, maternal thinking and doing have been markedly affected by historically, culturally, socio-economically, politically constructed knowledge and discourses of mother. The multiple networks of

power circulate and normalize a maternal value and life. Thus, maternal subjectivity is constituted under/in/through discursively established dominant discourse of what a good mother should be like—intensive mothering, mothers as experts in child rearing, gazes of others, government interventions, effects of global capitalism, and so forth. The discrepancy between the idealized mothering and its reality formulates the senses of ambivalence, confusion, and resistance in the course of complying normative mothering constraints. These ironic situations formulate m/othering complexities which mothers continue to work with their otherness from the normalized mothering knowledge and practice, situated in diverse mothering contexts. The complexities are called into questions through mothers’ constant differentiation (othering) from the conventional knowledge of mother which readily discounts or overlooks individual mothers’ particular mothering situations.

Mother as Knowable and Generalizable: Matrophobia

Matrophobia is a feminist concept, which characterizes tensions and complexities aroused in a mother-daughter relationship. The term of matrophobia refers to a “fear” of becoming a mother both for mothers and daughters; it raised controversial issues in theorizing a mother-daughter cathexis (Hirsch, 1981; O’Reilly, 2010; Reventós, 1996). Grounded from a Freudian psychoanalysis, matrophobia illustrates “a paradoxical push and pull” (Wong-Wylie, 2010, p. 740) in the mother-daughter dyad. Adrienne Rich (1978) defines the term of “matrophobia” as “the fear not of one’s mother or of motherhood but of *becoming one’s mother*” (p. 236, emphasis in original) and as “womanly splitting of the self” between a rejected femininity and a masculine ideal (p. 238). According to Rich (1978), transferring a daughter’s dependency from her mother to

father in the oedipal complex stage, the daughter realizes her absence of penis and enrages with her mother's powerlessness, passivity, and oppressive motherhood under paternal power. The daughter becomes humiliated by her mother's victimization and image of "the martyr" in her institutionalized motherhood as she evidences her mother's vulnerability as "unfree woman" (p. 236). Fearing a transmission of her mother's suffering to her, the daughter denies her learning what it means to be a woman under patriarchy and rejects her assimilation into her mother's degraded life.

In matrophobia, the mother attempts to teach her daughter about "proper" expectation as a woman for survival. To illustrate this situation, Rich (1978) refers to two examples—the traditional Chinese mothers who passed on their own affliction of foot binding to their daughters; the mother who fears bringing irrevocable shame on her family reputation by keeping her daughter silent about her father's sexual abuse and being raped by other men. The mother's doubled status of being both absent under patriarchy as well as being the daughter's supporter, raises conflicts and troubles in the mother-daughter relationship. For this, Reventós (1996) argues that the mother's imposing her doubledness to her daughter causes "matrophobic" and/or "mother-blaming" situation. Reviewing contemporary female literatures, she addresses that most of literary works of mother-daughter relationship deal with mother-daughter's hostility and battles as main themes—a mother's distorted love vs. her daughter's resistance to her mother. Reventós (1996), in particular, points out power hierarchy in a mother-daughter structure which a frustrated mother with her own motherhood projects her desires onto her daughter; the daughter as the powerless is always controlled and managed by her mother. This power-imbalanced mother-daughter framework is unfair and

psychologically damaging to the daughter because she does not achieve a “positive self-image, self-agency, and emotional fulfillment” (Reventós, 1996, p. 289) through interactions with her mother.

It is tragic, problematic, and even dangerous to understand a self/other relationship through the Freudian psychoanalytic mother-daughter binary because the mother-daughter split is derived from devalued femininity through the effect of masculinity ideals. However, in constituting a mother/daughter relationship, the power exercises multi-dimensionally—from paternal power to maternal power and the maternal power to the powerless daughter. Even if the mother appears to impose her intentions to her daughter in the position with power, the mother is actually a victim who struggles against her institutionalized motherhood. The mother’s love and support toward her daughter are distorted in the process of compromising with patriarchal practice of “good” mothering. Yet, in the structural, predetermined mother-daughter relation, a mother needs to be always the oppressor to her daughter; a daughter is expected to be the oppressed to her mother. But when it comes to the daughter’s rebellion and denial to her mother, the mother comes to suffer from her sense of helplessness and self-hatred. As such, a mother-daughter relationship cannot be arranged in a neatly and transparently predetermined structure; rather, it is shaped in/with/through complex, contradictory, and paradoxical contexts. Within a multiple, temporal, and uncertain relationship of mother/daughter, the doubled status of intimate/distant, love/hate, and supportive/restrictive coexists which arises with no prescription and in no particular order. Therefore, the complexities of and entanglement in a mother/daughter relationship cannot be generalizable fixed within any prescribed forms.

In terms of power-imbalanced mother-daughter relationship, extensive feminist studies have continued to work on providing suggestions for the mother-daughter complexities (Hirsh, 1989; Kinser, 2008; O'Reilly & Sharon, 2000; Reventós, 1996; Wong-Wylie, 2006). These studies aim to empower mothers to speak for themselves, to focus on connections in a mother-daughter relationship, and to investigate individual woman's particular historical, social, and cultural positioning as well as discursive power relations within the contexts. Against institutionalized motherhood identified by men, Rich (1978) empowers mothers and daughters to recognize the deepest mutuality because all mothers are at the same time daughters. In like manner, regarding the matrophobic mother-daughter relationship, O'Reilly (2010) proposes three ways to heal the separate relationship—establishing or reestablishing a mother-daughter alliance, choosing a specific but small problem to address, and imagining the mother as an individual unrestricted by the conventional role as a mother. Through this effort, O'Reilly (2010) believes, mothers and daughters become supportive for each other and are able to build a new model of close mother-daughter relationship.

Yet, similar to the generalized mother-daughter relationship, there are numbers of feminist studies, which consider a self-other relationship in a fixed format. Under the premise of a psychologically predetermined and prescribed developmental scheme, differences between a self and the Other are universalized, and complexities within the relationship are overlooked, simplified and reduced. For instance, Carol Gilligan's (1982) study of women's different patterns of moral reasoning process compared to men has been criticized with its universalized research approach (O'Reilly, 2010; Tong, 2014). *In a Different Voice* (1982), Gilligan refutes Lawrence Kohlberg's male-biased moral

developmental scale, used to evaluate women's moral growth. Based on her empirical study of twenty-nine women's moral decisions on abortion, Gilligan demonstrates that women focus more on wants, needs, and interests of particular others in connection than men who prioritize justice, fairness, and rights in separation. By differentiating from men, Gilligan (1982) argues that women's different approaches on moral reasoning, described as "more responsible and caring with sensitivity" in the relationship with others should be recognized for women's developmental truth. Gilligan (1982) highlights distinctions between females and males in managing relationships with others and elaborates further below:

Consequently, relationships, and particularly issues of dependency, are experienced differently by women and men. For boys and men, separation and individuation are critically tied to gender identity since separation from the mother is essential for the development of masculinity. For girls and women, issues of femininity or feminine identity do not depend on the achievement of separation from the mother or on the progress of individuation. Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation. Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with individuation. (Gilligan, 1982, p. 8)

Emphasizing the inherent difference between women and men, Gilligan observes two different moral ideologies: "ethics of right" for men justified from separation versus "ethic of care" supported by attachment for women. Gilligan further illustrates, while men's respect of the rights of others causes indifference, women's psychological logic of

relationship brings up self-criticism. For Gilligan (1982), differentiating women's and men's different approaches in making moral decisions is important to avoid false interpretation that results when women are measured by male-standards.

If Gilligan's women's different ways of moral reasoning and distinctive natures of attachment are highlighted, women's other possible ways of thinking and doing in their constructing relationships are limited within the universalized and predetermined premises. In fact, Gilligan's study (1982) has been criticized for using her lack of data and finding for generalization and confining her interviewees to women excluding relations with men. (O'Reilly, 2010; Tong, 2014). If women's difference is recognized only in the relation to one of men, women's difference becomes overly simplified and perceived as fixed knowledge. For instance, if women's nature of attachment and continuity in constructing relationships are accentuated, women are essentialized as permanent caring people and better caregivers than men are. In contrast, if men are presupposed to be better at achieving individuation and justice, men's capacity of affinity and caring will be underestimated or even not ever imagined. Emphasis on segregation and distinction between women and men's psychological moral development will readily predetermine, diminish, and misinterpret one another's possible styles of thinking and doing. By confining themselves within uniquely categorized characteristics, both women and men will become accustomed to and even educate themselves to conform to the expectations of their own groups. If difference is perpetuated and totalized, it becomes another standard or norm which may limit one's diverse and situationally changeable ways of thinking and behaving to the expectation of what men and women should be like. This presumption also leads people to take one's difference for granted in a universal and

collective category of women-men. Without considering individuals' discursive positioning in their historical, socio-political, and cultural contexts and their interrelationality among the webs of relationships, hasty essentialization or generalization of one's particular identities brings failure to examine complexities and dynamics which emerge in a self/other relationship and impedes individuals' potential ways of becoming of something different.

In this regard, Adrienne Rich's autobiographical work, *Of Women Born* (1978) cannot avoid receiving criticisms due to her essentialistic analysis of women's institutional motherhood and matrophobic mother-daughter relationship which perpetuate women as oppressed, despite its canonical contribution to contemporary feminist maternal studies. For this instance, Jeremiah (2004) is concerned that mothers' reduced images as the oppressed homogenize all mothers to fight against patriarchy. The title of mother plays diversely within different relationships and contexts; thus, it can be performed in multiple realities. Reciting mothers' ways of thinking and behaving by placing maternity in central—more nurturing and suffering, and less powerful—essentializes mother's identities (Keniston, 2004). In addition, without considering multiple power operations and paradoxically intersected situational contexts, solutions of mending problems in a matrophobic mother-daughter relationship (O'Reilly, 2010; Rich, 1978) provide a grand narrative or superficial approach of investigating complexities in mother/daughter relationship, since every mother/daughter relationship is differently contextualized in its particular space and time. According to Alcoff (1988), promoting a solution is to “rediscover women's essence and bond with other women” (p. 410). Prior to finding a solution, to be able to recognize complexities in a seemingly detached

mother/daughter relationship, multiple layers of relations as well as diverse situatedness in discursive power operation needs to be examined. With this reason, Gilligan's (1982) emphasis on distinction between women and men's moral development will also need to be reconsidered to accommodate other possible interrelationality and to articulate unnamed complexities in a women-men dyad.

Then, how one's particular identity (ontological status) can be understood if it is contextualized differently? How a mother's subjectivity can be understood if it is multiple, complex, and constantly changing? To what extent a maternal subject's mothering can be studied without essentialization or generalization? These questions prompt me to inquire a different way of thinking of my m/othering and relationship with my mother. Rather than simply representing what I consider my experience as mother and relationship with my mother under dominant paternal discourses, my focus directs to articulating the complexities residing in the interrelations: specifically, to recognize what else can surface within the relationship of my self as/with m/other in response to my taken for granted knowledge of mother. The following section discusses a different way of understanding m/other and m/othering by examining Judith Butler's concept of "performativity" (1993a) in order to consider interconnections between the construction of one's maternal subjectivities and the effect of discursively constituted social norms.

Thinking and Doing Differently

In order to investigate one's complex, partial, and contingent m/othering practice, I incorporate Judith Butler's gender performativity theory (1993a). Deviating from holistic, fixed, and generalizable understanding of m/other in a self/other relationship, I

review the approach of examining discursively constructed subjectivities of m/other and their relation with m/othering contexts. By scrutinizing the process of constituting m/othering subjectivities and its interrelationality with historically, socially, and culturally formulated mothering conditions, the static understanding of mother-other as well as mother-context relationship is re/illuminated.

In her gender performativity theory, Judith Butler (1990, 1993a) argues that there is no preexisting gender, which one can choose. Gender is produced by an enforced social norm or a set of norms that repeatedly polices one's sexuality. Butler emphasizes that there is nothing given about gender, nor is there any pre-cultural or pre-discursive gender. To the issue of gender construction in a social-biological debate, Butler responds by taking an example of the "impregnation":

Although women's body generally speaking are understood as capable of impregnation, the fact of the matter is that there are female infants and children who cannot be impregnated, there are older women of all ages who cannot be impregnated, and even if they could ideally, that is not necessarily the salient feature of their bodies or even of their being women. What the question does is try to make the problematic reproduction central to the sexing of the body... I think it is the imposition of a norm, not a neutral description of biological constraints. I do not deny certain kinds of biological differences. But I always ask under what conditions, under what discursive and institutional conditions, do certain biological differences—and they're not necessary ones, given the anomalous state of bodies in the world—become the salient characteristics of sex. (Osborne & Segal, 1994, p.33)

In her interview account above, Butler considers that bodily signification of impregnation is not a salient issue to discuss women's reproductive capability; rather, the point is the matter of effecting socially imposed norms, a taken for granted assumption or expectation that every woman is able to be pregnant. Under the pre-condition, women who are unable, or choose not to be pregnant with any inevitable reasons become stigmatized and degraded by not being normal women because "You are struggling with a norm that is regulating your sex—a collective struggle to rethink a dominant norm" (p. 34). For Butler, "biological difference" is not the question of body materiality (e.g., femininity); rather, the tacit and compulsory social institution of reproduction is the matter of investigation.

Without an analysis of discursively and institutionally formulated discourses and the process of producing the normalized knowledge, one's complex, multiple, and constantly changing subjectivities cannot be sufficiently examined. With the Butlerian approach, which queries "to what extent" maternal subjectivity can be explained and "under what conditions" m/othering occurs, the complexities in the issues of m/othering can be mapped out, interrogated, and scrutinized, avoiding presupposed or single-dimensional interpretation. I am not interested in exploring my m/othering as oppressed and then liberating by seeking a solution. I am also not interested in examining how my subjectivity and relationship as/with m/other have been constructed under the binary biological-social setting. My inquiry focuses on examining how otherness emerges in my m/othering and how I deal with the otherness responding to my conventional knowledge of mother.

M/othering Performativity

Although feminist poststructuralist perspectives take slightly different positions in understanding ontological difference between women and men, numbers of feminist poststructuralist studies affirm that mothering is a practice of multiplicity, ambiguity, and uncertainty (Kinser, 2008; Richards, 2008; Springgay & Freedman, 2012). In addition, mothering is not passive or static, but performative (O'Reilly, 2004a, 2004b, 2010; Watt, 2012). In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler attempts to dismantle and denaturalize gender categories (e.g., man-woman) and formulates the notion of gender performativity. She specifies the concept of performativity that a socially created gender norm or a set of norms produces one's actions through the process of signification and resignification (1990, 1993a). Performativity theory challenges understanding of one's coherent and stable identity. Performativity is not a single act because it continuously generates one's identification "in and through the iterability of its performance" (1993a, p. 90). Butler differentiates the meaning of performativity from the performance (e.g., free play or theatrical self-presentation):

Performance as a bounded act is distinguished from performativity in so far as the latter consists in a reiteration of norms which precede, constrains, and exceed the performer and in that sense cannot be taken as the fabrication of a performer's will or choice. (1993a, p.178)

However, performance and performativity are not independently produced in isolation from each other (Butler, 1990, 1993a; Ruitenbert, 2007) because no one acts without a context or is estranged from the effect of discursive power circulation. The iteration of normative performance generates a performativity (regulatory practice) which cannot be chosen by a subject's freewill. Butler clarifies her position with an analogy of

“the choice of gender” in a closet. According to her analogy, the humanistic notion of self can wake up in the morning and choose its gender identity for the day in a closet, and then restore it to its place at night (1993a, p. ix). However, a self has no freewill to choose its identity or performance because one’s identity and its behavioral production are intricately constructed, and discursively embodied within the network of power and normative constraint (Butler, 1990, 1993a; Foucault, 1978; Miller, 2005, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c). The meaning of “negotiated” or “alternative” choice already power involved is different from a choice of free will. Butler considers that during the production of forcible performativity, resistance towards the normative structure emerges and works as a form of agency, paradoxically, “in the possibilities opened up in and by that constrained appropriation of the regulatory law” (1993a, p. xxi). The resistance enables a subject to challenge and disrupt normative regulations and participate in possibilities for transformations.

Borrowing the concept of performativity, Jeremiah (2006) attempts to reconsider the issues of mothering from the poststructuralist perspective, emphasizing a shift from naturalistic “motherhood” to performative “mothering.” She postulates maternity as thoughts and actions that are changeable and contextual. In her theorizing of mothering, she stresses, “the active nature of maternity: an important move, given the traditional view in western culture of the mother as passive and powerless” (p. 21). She further suggests enhancement of maternal agency, arguing for the autonomy of mothering choice. Jeremiah (2006) raises a question to Butler’s idea of performativity on the issue of non-voluntary mothering performance. She believes that a mother has control of her

mothering performance and the choice made should be extended to the discussion of ethics.

I posit that Jeremiah's (2006) account on mothering performativity is issued from a misinterpretation of Butler's point. From my readings of Butler's concept of performativity, acknowledging the interrelationality in the seemingly binary relationship (e.g., gender-sex, power-powerless, passive-active mothering, etc.) is the overarching point to understand one's process of materialization. The process of signification happens only in relation to another—the opposing signification (Butler, 1990). Each side cannot stand alone or simply be unified. If one is isolated, the Other becomes a free-floating part. When unity has been attempted, the dynamics of self-coalition will be impeded. Through both sides' random interplays, each loses its stability and distinctness from each other (Butler, 1990).

In this regard, m/othering is not a choice generated from an isolated activity. The performative m/othering is the effects of compulsive reiterative social norms that are constructed in and through "good" mother discourses over a lengthy duration of time. It might be readily understood that becoming a mother or practicing mothering is the mother's choice. Yet the decision process has always been shaped by interventions from historically, socially, and culturally constructed mothering norms or codes of act; therefore, the mother's autonomy loses its function (Butler, 1993a; O'Reilly, 2010). The choice, eventually, is processed through historically and socio-culturally constituted expectations. It is also policed by discursively formulated power networks (Foucault, 1978). The either-or question—whether m/othering is a choice or not—may not be of the issue; rather, as Butler argues, the issue is to investigate *to what extent and under what*

condition the m/othering has been constructed *within and through the relation of reiterative compulsive social norms*. I set up this thesis to inquire complexities in the m/other relationship.

Within Relations

Butler's notion of interrelationality (1990, 1993a) in the relationship of self/other and self/context provokes me to investigate the *process* of dealing with otherness in my m/other relationship. By reviewing the literature which studies the meaning of *otherness* and moment of encountering with otherness (Ahmed, 1988, 2000, Butler, 2001, 2006; Springgay, 2008) in a self/other relationship, and the discursively and intricately entangled, *rhizomatic* relationships (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), I will focus on the questions: "How can the otherness be recognized?" "What would happen in the moment of encountering with otherness?" and "How is the relationship with the Other interrelated?" This section with the title of *Within the Relations* consists of three parts: *Entanglement, Encountering with Otherness, and Working with Tension within the Boundary*.

Entanglement

As my critique on "essentializing women's difference" discussed in the previous section, in a perpetuating binary self-other separation, the self and the Other interact with one another at the expense of each other. However, from the poststructuralist perspective, each subject is interrelated with one another within diverse connections of power networks via repetitive processes of significations (Butler, 1990, 1993a; Miller, 2005). Focusing on the discursively constructed interrelationality within a self/other as well as a

self/context relation, I want to weave the concept of *rhizome* into the entangled self/other and self/context's relations. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) conceptualize a complicatedly connected network as a rhizomatic relation:

[U]nlike trees or their roots, the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states. The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple. It is not the One that becomes Two or even directly three, four, five, etc... Unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations between the points and biunivocal relationships between the positions, the rhizome is made only of lines: lines of segmentarity and stratification as its dimensions, and the line of flight or deterritorialization as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis, changes in nature. (p. 21)

A rhizome is an underground stem plant, which spreads lateral shoots. It is difficult to extract it from the ground because of the massive networks of entangled stems. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Chomsky's linguistic tree model (tree-root) is separated into semiotic and semantic in their function, and reduces possibilities in enunciating diverse, temporal, and ambivalent meanings in reality. The rhizome, however, is not linear and hierarchal; instead, it connects randomly and intricately into the other, thus changing each other's forms. Lather (2007) considers that "rhizomatics is a journey among intersections, nodes, and regionalizations, through a multi-centered complexity" (p. 124). Contrary to a dichotomous relation, a rhizomatic relation is exposed to more opportunities in diverse connections and possible transformations. To be

rhizomorphic is to become something new and troubling fixed identity; therefore, it is “performative and gestural” (Springgay, 2008, p. 5). The dynamic entanglement in a rhizome challenges any linear, transparent, and dissected ideas that simplify and limit possibilities in a dualistic relationship. The complexity in entanglement, thus, allows knowledge, which is difficult to access and of working in uncertainty, discomfort, and ambiguity to be viable (Springgay, 2008). Rhizomatic understanding displaces any bifurcated relations, and decenters essential, universal connections in a self/other relationship.

Encountering Otherness

In this section, I examine the process of recognizing otherness, differentiating the otherness, and dealing with the otherness in a self/other relationship, through Ahmed (1998, 2000), Butler (2001, 2006), and Springgay (2008)’s investigations. With respect to a relationship with others, Springgay (2008) delineates that people are always with others, and in the event of *with*, otherness and thought are produced. She specifies the moment of “being-with” as the concepts of encounter in and through “touch.” At the moment of encounter in and through touch, a self and the Other emerge as well as transform each other, not as a separate subject and object relation, but as two subjects in formation. In other words, at the moment of encountering each other, a self and the Other attempt to make sense of one another and simultaneously differentiate themselves from each other. In the process of differentiating, the self and the Other emerge anew and mutate continuously in non-predetermined ways. In this regard, Ahmed (2000) makes an important point about the process of recognizing otherness at the moment of differentiation: the otherness is not simply found in the bodies of self and the Other, but it

is established through the process of differentiating each other's otherness. The otherness does not pre-exist, but emerge through "being related to, and separated from particular bodily other[s]" (p. 44). In the course of acknowledging the Other by connecting and disconnecting themselves, the otherness surfaces and the self and the Other constantly shift during the interactions.

In like manner, Butler (2001) articulates the moment of recognition between a self and the Other that they do not acknowledge one another remaining in their previous or present time, position, and locations. Since they are "avowing a connection" with each other, the self and the Other are already becoming something new in connection (p. 92). Their recognition constantly compels themselves to move beyond what they have been to encounter new possibility. In terms of ontological understanding of the difference in a self/other relationship, Butler (2006) expresses concerns:

The subject-object distinction presupposed and instituted through this tradition presupposes that the subject is ontologically distinct from its object, but it does not ask whether there might be some common substrate or genesis from which both subject and object emerge, and which join them in some original way... every moment of alterity turns out to be presupposed by the subject, to be always already this subject and, hence, not to constitute a moment of alterity at all. Indeed, the much touted "always already" which, in phenomenology, designates the prejudicative realm of taken-for-granted meanings would be paradigmatic of this kind of masculinist monologism in which alterity and the not yet known, and not yet knowable, are refused. (p. 115, emphasis in original)

One's otherness is not predetermined or fully known because the otherness is always changeable based on diverse contexts. Thus, it cannot be oversimplified with any presumption. The idea of being "always-already-different" perpetuates a self and the Other's otherness and pushes one to predict a sure difference from one another. It curbs any possible emergence of unknown differences locked in a fixed frame. The particularity and complexity of difference in a self/other relationship, which is encountered and interacted with, in, and through different bodies, are placed in a closed circuit and refuse to be even imagined. For this, Butler contends that seeking to know what is different from the Other "is not, though being known, assimilated or reduced to the one who seeks to know" (p. 115).

Further, refuting Irigaray's account on the ethics of sexual difference—"how best to approach without assimilating the Other," Butler remarks that a simply reflective woman-man relationship admits its own limitation in opposition to each other. She argues that "the relation is not primarily that of an encounter, but rather, of a constitutive intertwining, a dynamic differentiation in proximity" (2006, p. 115). Butler prompts an even more difficult question on dealing with the Other's difference: "how to treat the Other well when the Other is never fully other, when one's own separateness is a function of one's dependency on the Other, when the difference between the Other and myself is, from the start equivocal" (p. 116). The process of recognizing the difference does not require fundamental otherness or presumed distinction in a self/other relationship; instead, it is embodied and dynamically intertwined in/through the relationship. Then, how can the unknowable, ambiguous, and un/representable otherness be engaged within a self/other interaction?

For Ahmed (1998, 2000), the question of how to deal with otherness is to think about ethical relation with otherness. It is readmission of proximity of the Other; the Other's nearness and the impossibility of fully excluding the Other from the self. Hence, the proximity in the relationship is bound up to decipher the degree of each other's otherness. Ahmed (2000) argues that ethics is about recognizing the Other which is beyond "whatness" or "what it is to be" of the Other. Differing from the concept of morality, which prioritizes universal sets of rules or codes for conduct, she argues, ethics is, instead, a question of *how* one encounters others as the Other, and "*how* one can deal with what cannot be measured by the regulative force of morality" (p. 138, emphasis added). Thus, ethics is "never yet known" (Ahmed, 2000; Butler, 2006; Springgay, 2008) but shifts from "getting to know the Other" to an "understanding from the embodied encounters" that are ethical, particularly in relation to openness and risk (Springgay, 2008). In the following section, I discuss the process of interactions between a self and the Other, and of working with boundary, which involve the moments of tension and excessiveness, dealing with otherness in a rhizomatic self/other relationship.

Working with Tension within Boundary

The metaphor of a rhizome illuminates dynamic movements in the middle of interactions of a self and the Other at the venue of encounters. Deleuze and Guattari point out:

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things ...

The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one

thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25)

With no sure origins or final destinations, a rhizome works in-between where a self and the Other encounter and intersect each other. The in-between is the space of entanglement where a rhizome continues its connections and ruptures (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and picks up the dynamic movements of its becoming in unpredictable and discursive manners. Grosz (2001) points out that the in-between is the place where a cultivation of one's and the Other's transition toward becoming occurs. Thus, the in-between space always involves something more to come: the multiple, indeterminate, and fragmented in the series of segments.

Yet, the temporal gaps between segments in a self/other relationship are not something to be expelled, rather they need to be understood as “force, desire, and relationality” (Springgay, 2008, p. 18), which invites more possibilities in the relationship toward ever yet known. The moments of breakup, rupture, and fragmentation in segments are derived from the tension out of taken for granted expectations and/or normalized practices, which attempt to appropriate and control one's process of transformation at the limit. The tension, which emerges in the process of working with otherness, enables the self and the Other to exceed their limits. By resisting any fixity and stability of the structure in their relationship, the two elements constantly challenge to and struggle within their boundary. In the process, the excessiveness is recognized, called into questions and worked as generative functions. Hence, working on the juncture of tension

and excessiveness is a dynamic engagement in a self/other relationship, which constantly creates splits and nodes with no clear origin or destination, or distinction between a beginning and ending point. As a self and the Other interplay in the moment of tensions and excessiveness, they respond to each other's otherness and move across their boundary, simultaneously involving and troubling the boundary.

Within the boundary of the relationship that a self and the Other encounter, they react to one another in proximity and work on what may come. Contrary to the modernistic understanding of boundary as complete, fixed, and static, in an interrelational boundary, Springgay (2008) specifies that a self and the Other not only act with each other, but both also interact with the boundary. The interrelational boundary enables both elements to transform by facilitating their movements, as well as expanding and/or contracting itself while encountering that dynamics. The malleable boundary is more porous and less firm and rigid than has been commonly understood (Grosz, 2001).

I draw two perspectives of understanding the dynamics of boundary from Springgay (2008) and Ahmed (2000). According to Ahmed (2000), the permeability of bodily space is produced through the connectedness between bodies. She considers the skin of the body as the place of encountering other bodies. She believes that the skin serves as a border or boundary, both closed, as well as, exposed to the Other. The skin as a boundary holds the subject inside and keeps the Other outside. As a border, the skin performs a demarcation of the self and the Other's boundary by calling into question about the relationship by accepting familiar bodies and distancing from strange bodies. The skin registers and recognizes the difference of touch from a familiar body and a strange body. In the process of working acceptance or expulsion, the contours of body are

re-formed and de-formed (Ahmed, 2000). As two bodies move towards or against each other in proximity and distance, both bodily and social space expand and contract.

Similar to Ahmed's analysis of the performance of skin as boundary (2000), Springgay (2008) suggests the concept of "threshold," which emphasizes the boundary's active involvement in the process of self and other's transformations. Yet, unlike conventional understanding of the role of a boundary, a threshold does not hold a place, rather it "experiences the limit being exposed, open, and folded" (p. 65). At the site of encountering, not as a division of inside and outside, the threshold focuses on the moment of penetrating the limit, giving rise to an unexpected transformation. The boundary does not solely provide a venue of containment, or decide "who or what belongs or does not belong," rather it actively involves in the process of working with the otherness, by attending what is happening at the very limit.

Although Ahmed and Springgay both illustrate the porosity and flexibility of a boundary through the metaphors of "skin" and "threshold," I agree with Springgay's (2008) point that a boundary is not a simple, separately existing component which demarcates one's domain firmly and marks one's status of inclusion or exclusion. Ahmed's concept of skin as boundary limits a self, other, and boundary's potentiality, by placing them within the opposing pair of inside-outside, strange-familiar, closed-exposed, and accepting-distancing. Within the limited, fixed, and exclusive boundary, only either-or type of encountering is allowed—different-same, close-distant, open-close, and so on; other possible modes of encountering cannot not be explained. Within those preset familiar-strange and inside-outside connections, the contour of skin as a container only appreciate limited interactions and demarcate a clear-cut self-other relationship.

However, a threshold as a transformative boundary actively reacts to dynamic interactions of the self and the Other by providing a new venue for more to come. Further, the boundary also joins very limits and possibilities in interactions of a self and the Other, as the boundary itself modifies its territory.

Thus far, I have reviewed diverse positions of feminist understanding of mothering and examined its gap and limitation in inquiring m/othering dynamics and complexities. Rather than essentialized and generalized understanding of mother which may confine or reduce materiality of m/other, I suggest the way of analyzing discursively constructed m/othering context which focuses on the question of “To what extent and under what conditions has one’s m/othering been constructed?” with Judith Butler’s performativity theory (1993a). The concept of rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) provides insight for investigating interrealtionality and entanglement of m/other with normalized knowledge of mother and its discursively constructed m/othering context. Instead of perpetuating a m/other’s position as powerless, consumed, and self-sacrificing to men, her children, and the world, I want to scrutinize the effects that influence my maternal thinking and behaviors and their complicating connections in the process of constructing my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other.

For this investigation, I incorporate studies of Ahmed (1998, 2000), Butler (2001, 2006), and Springgay (2008) with the concept of rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) to examine the course of encountering, recognizing, and dealing with otherness and working with tensions within the boundary in a self/other relationship. The rhizomatically interrelated relationship invites simultaneous changes of a self and the Other and prompts the boundary to join the transformative event as well as to experience its own

transformation. In addition, the segments of breakup, rupture, and fragmentation, which emerge in the process of working with otherness, are not negative effects; rather, the excessive component creates a room for unknown possibilities to come.

CHAPTER III

INQUIRY METHODS: STUDYING RAW MATERIALS IN FLOW

To investigate the issue of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship in m/othering and curriculum, I focus on my inquiry points: 1) How have my subjectivities been constructed through m/othering in a transnational context of education? 2) To what extent is my mother the Other to me? 3) How can the otherness of m/other be re/conceptualized in theorizing curriculum in a self/other relationship? To examine the *process* of constructing my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other through m/othering inquiry, I work with feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry (Miller, 2005, 2006, 2010a) to scrutinize the complexities and tensions, which emerge from my experience of m/othering as well as building a relationship with my mother. From the feminist poststructuralist perspectives, I incorporate my autobiographical materials—retrospections, conversations, contemplations, notes, news articles, artworks, and so on.

To articulate points of significance intricately interwoven within my thought and life, I “think with theories and concepts” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Koro-Ljungberg, Carlson, Tesar, & Anderson, 2014; Lather, 2013; St. Pierre, 2014) so as to expand my

ideas in the process of theorizing. Since my inquiry aims to interrogate the *process* rather than evidence-based data interpretation or representation, I incorporate the method of a/r/tography (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Gauer, & Xiong, 2006; Springgay, 2008), which focuses on interconnection, multiplicity, and temporality within the relationship of artist, researcher, and teacher. Through the process of weaving with m/other and analyzing woven art works, I constantly disrupt boundaries of the relationship of I/weaver, I/artifact, and I/mother. In addition, I inquire through memory/writing (Haug et al., 1987; Metta, 2010, Moon, 2016; Richardson, 1997, 2005), and incorporate narrative/visual components as relational texts (Riessman, 2008; Springgay, 2008; Sullivan & Miller, 2013).

Material Sources

As main source of material for my inquiry of dealing with otherness in m/othering and curriculum theorizing, I work with my autobiographical memories (retrospections, conversations, and events); transnational living artifacts (images, private notes, news, articles); weaving art works and projects of my own as well as with my mother. Rather than representing data materials or final creative works, my feminist poststructuralist autobiographical research focuses on the process of inquiry, which investigates the ways of constructing subjectivities and relationships as/with m/other, dealing with otherness in m/othering and curriculum.

Modes of Inquiry

Feminist Poststructuralist Autobiography

In order to examine a self/other relationship through m/othering, my inquiry focuses on investigating complexities and tensions that emerge in the process of othering my self from my conventional knowledge of mother and mothering. My autobiographical accounts as local narratives may offer other ways of thinking and doing m/othering and curriculum. A feminist poststructuralist autobiography is an overarching mode of inquiry in my research. I re/consider my life as m/other as I examine my m/othering context, which has been constructed within historically, socio-culturally, educationally, and globally constituted webs of power. The method of autobiography has been widely used for understanding one's identity in diverse pedagogical practices (Pinar, 2012). Unlike the format of humanistic autobiographical conventions which presents one's life experiences as linear, static, and fully knowable (Moon, 2011), I embrace feminist poststructuralist autobiographical perspectives to focus on the process of formulating my multiple, inconsistent and fluid subjectivities and their relation with the Other as well as its situated contexts. Specifically, Janet Miller's (2005, 2006, 2010a) concepts of feminist poststructuralist autobiography, which complicate and disrupt any unitary and normative version of autobiography, influence me to delve into my subjectivities and relationship formation process as/with m/other. Rather than revealing my life experiences to use as evidences or gathering them to interpret and analyze for findings, I focus on recognizing the moments of ruptures, discomfort, and/or excessiveness in my m/othering, so as to interrogate and re/conceptualize how my subjectivities and relationship with the Other are contextualized.

Janet Miller (2005) is concerned about humanistic, modernistic understanding of autobiography, which "an authentic subject" with "enlightened agency" is always

accessible to one's memories, being fully conscious and knowing what is happening in one's life. Eakin (1999) also points out "illusion of self-determination" (p. 43)—the myth of autonomy in autobiography which means *I write my story; I say who I am; I create my self*. The omnipotent perspective of autobiography serves to "limit and close down rather than to create potential for constructing permanently open and resignificable selves and performative accounts of always changing cultural meanings of identities" (Miller, 2005, p. 219). A self cannot be objectively expressed and solely constructed within universalized categories for easy identification. Without questioning already labeled, collective identity categories (e.g., woman, mother, teacher, student, and so on) and without troubling pre-structured, unified version of autobiography as fully representable, one's sense of self and knowing often get hardened into rigid, polarized, and inflexible divisions of the good and bad—a dualism (Miller, 2005). Researching an autobiographical subject within a binary and oppositional situation confines one's identity potentials within an either-or choice, and only re-inscribes already fixed, static aspect of one's life situation. Such a monolithic knowing of a self forbids any possibilities to come as it "closes the doors to multiple, conflicting, and even odd and abnormal" (Miller, 2005, p. 221) practices in one's life. By working vigilantly, not being confined within the structure of humanistic autobiography, I continuously challenge and disrupt any taken for granted ways of examining my autobiographical subjectivities and investigate incomplete, unnamed aspects of a self that is not known yet.

In addition, a feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry encourages a researcher to scrutinize the process of the formation of one's subjectivities, which are effected and regulated through gendered, raced, classed, and sexualized cultural norms,

by tracking the complex map of power dynamics (Miller, 2010a). Thus, one's seemingly "naturally given" identity formulation should be interrogated and troubled, by shifting its focus from a grand, overgeneralized scope into analysis of discursively, locally entangled networks of power. In a feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry, any moments of rupture, fragmentation, and discomfort, which exceed a boundary of normalized knowledge, are taken into account primarily to investigate one's resistance against status quo as well as asymmetrical power distributions. By paying attention to those excessive accounts, the relationship between a subject and its situated context can be re/examined in the process of articulating one's iterative, resignifiable, and performative identity (Butler, 1990, 1993a). Miller acknowledges performative autobiographical subject as "an 'I' that is always coming into being through social and cultural construction" and "simultaneously failing to cohere" (2005, p. 219). A feminist poststructuralist autobiographical subject is contextualized within discursively constituted and diversely institutionalized discourses; it is performative, multiple, fractured and always in-the-making.

A feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry persuades me to concentrate on my sense of self-formation process within the context of transnational m/othering, and to examine the feelings of otherness in the relationship with m/other. Those temporal, multiple, and always changeable feelings of unfamiliarity and uncertainty are attentively questioned and investigated throughout my inquiry process. The feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry troubles any structured, linear, and holistic version of self-reflective autobiography that provides a(n) evidentiary account, solution for a problem, and final guideline for improvement. It allows me to scrutinize interconnected

relationships with others and my socio-cultural and transnational situatedness where my senses of ambiguity, estrangement, and dislocation emerge in the course of m/othering. Within the interrelations, the self narrates the stories of the Other in “non-linear, discontinuous, and non-teleological forms,” without locating them in opposition (Eakin, 1999, p. 48). My autobiographical accounts are always interrelated with other’s stories and experiences; they are partial, incomplete, and always being re/told and re/membered. My inquiry points have not been created just for the purpose of my dissertation research. They are questions that have long been part of my life and have surfaced whenever I feel displaced and confront with feelings of strangeness and isolation in my life course; they have been formulated through my temporal life learning and experience. The interrogation of otherness in my situated self/other relationship compels me to re/consider my subjectivity construction process not as separate, singular, and static, as I engage and work with feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry.

Memory/Writing

I partly implement Laurel Richardson’s (2005) concept of “writing as inquiry” as I incorporate feminist poststructuralist qualitative research. Richardson considers that styles of writing are neither fixed nor neutral; rather, they are mutable, since they are discursively contextualized in political, historical, and social discourses. I agree with the point because my writing styles, expressions, and use of vocabularies are profoundly interrelated with my epistemological perspectives. From her poststructuralist perspectives, Richardson postulates one’s situated writing as partial and local knowledge, challenging any singular and grand narratives. Influenced by power, language, and discourse in a society, one’s sense of self *or selves* is constructed within particular,

multiple, and overlapped contexts, which are discursively constituted and always in the process of construction. Situated in a specific time and place, a researcher complicates the notion of writing as fixed and permanent through the process of writing; the writing “frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone” (Richardson, 2005, p. 962).

In addition, I, as a researcher, think through writing. In the process of jotting down, I grasp the ideas that momentarily pass through my mind, and map out my thought branches. While thinking through writing, new senses emerge and other ways of thinking visit me. A new idea or chains of ideas surfaces unexpectedly, discursively, and in the patterns of rhizomata entanglement of dispersed thoughts. In this process, the current thought is challenged and morphed into new thinking. I attempt to capture and assemble those partial ideas as well as their connections, and examine my stretched thought, newly raised concerns and expanded understanding in/through/with writing. Richardson (1997) states, “I write to learn something that I did not know before I wrote it” (p. 87). The cartography of my writing constantly modifies and transforms as dynamic interplays occur between the process of thinking and writing. Writing as inquiry does not plan ahead a neatly outlined act of writing-up; rather, it attends any moments of intersections where thoughts and impetus flow.

Furthermore, since I write with my contingent self/selves and transmutable ideas, my memory and experience cannot be static or fully knowable; rather, they are also transformative and contextualized in the process of re/membering. Bringing this point, I incorporate feminist poststructuralist memory work (Haug et al., 1987; Metta, 2010; Moon, 2016) in my autobiographical inquiry. According to Metta (2010), all memories

are problematic because they are assemblages of the past, not the past itself. In other words, a memory that a researcher remembers is not a separated fact but a connection with a particular time and space (Moon, 2016). Memories do not come in isolated forms; rather, they are interrelated with series of historical events and the researcher's contextual positioning. Moon (2016) accentuates that the memory remembered by the researcher is not neutral but political, because they are embedded within the researcher's discursively located historical, socio-political, and cultural settings. Memories are accordingly, subjective, necessarily mediated, and can be transformed by the researcher's temporary thoughts and situated judgments (Haug et al., 1987; Metta, 2010). In addition, memories work with the relationship of private/collective, self/other, writer/subject, fact/fiction, memory/imagination, and remembering/forgetting (Metta, 2010). In the process of working with tensions in those dynamic and complex relationships, memories become contested, fragmented, and multiplied, open to new emergences of other forms of memories. In view of discursively contextualized and malleable memories, the researcher's narratives are constantly constructed and reconstructed through the process of the researcher's un/re/membering.

My feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry engages with my situated memories, contemplations, and writings. They are temporal, inconsistent, and continuously transforming with my positioning in a particular time and space. My contingent un/re/membering, un/thinking, and un/writing seem to be stabilized by writing for the purpose of documentation, but their meanings are neither to be reduced nor confined into a certain frame. By writing through thinking as an inquiry method, my memories and stories will be captured interwoven in the process of portrayal.

Thinking with Theories and Concepts

The concept of *thinking with theories* (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) demonstrates a term of “plugging in” which not only spawns new analytical questions but also transforms a researcher’s ideas. The process of plugging my questions into theories and concepts activates my disparate ideas to work together, pulling a thread from entangled ideas, which helps me articulate my abstract thought in a sensible manner. Rather than simply inputting my questions and autobiographical materials into a preconceived theoretical framework as a handy application, I focus on examining connections among my autobiographical memories, narratives, inquiries, and concepts from which I attempt to recognize the emergence of something new. When I notice that the theoretical model threatens to reduce the materiality of my experiences and questions, I revisit them to challenge, and reorient the direction of the inquiry. Koro-Ljungberg et al. (2015) refer to this process as “thought of events, particles, and through brute and raw partiality” and “without totality where raw events happen and elements are wedded and pasted together” (p. 613). Furthermore, plugging my inquiry and autobiographical materials into theories and concepts does not generate one complete view for my research. Instead, they work together in contingency; engender their partial networks of thoughts; converge into discursive, multiple patterns.

In particular, I endorse “thinking with theories and concepts” as a method to investigate my m/othering performativity (Butler, 1993) in the process of examining how I deal with otherness in my m/other relationship and of analyzing its complex connectivity within my situated historical, social, and cultural contexts. I specifically re/consider my taken for granted understanding of otherness in a self/other relationship

with a concept of “weaving,” not only because it connects with my mother and me, but also because I want to enunciate how I can think about dualistic elements in a self/other relationship differently through the process of weaving. Conventional understanding of weaving as static, predetermined, and structured can be challenged and other possible ways of thinking are imagined. I also inquire the concept of *weaving* with Deleuze’s ideas of *rhizome* (1987), *folding* (1993), and *becoming*. I also work with Butler’s performative theory (1993a) to consider how my m/othering performances have been reiterated and re/signified within discursively constituted discourses of contemporary m/othering and their normalizing process—the mother as the Other from her self as well as from her daughter.

By plugging my inquiry into theories and concepts, I also anticipate to be able to yield new knowledge that is enmeshed within my life and educational practices. Theories are formulated from questions about life, and randomly interwoven into human’s non/scientific work and activities. Theories and practices cannot be considered as separate; rather, they interplay within/beyond their boundary and express each other’s presence. By investigating how the concept of weaving works with other theories in my methodological practices, I may be able to articulate a process of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship and its curriculum theorization. In the process of theorizing a self/other relationship through thinking with theories and concepts, I hope to be able to expand and introduce new vocabulary to enunciate complexities in any bi-polarizable relations such as m/other, education/life, theory/practice, and researcher/researched (data).

Instead of exhausting materialities of data sources by confining them into a structure of research, the process of “plugging into” creates a complex and porous flow. Interplays among questions, autobiographical materials, and theories disrupt their boundaries and provide flexibility in their working. My questions, autobiographical experiences, narratives, and theories are not static materials waiting to be discovered and depleted; rather, they are fluid, subject to change, and rhizomatically interwoven together. For example, my autobiographical sources have their own materialities that I do not know fully since my stories, documents, and other visual materials are selected and named through my selective decision-making. My autobiographic materials constantly interact with relevant theories and concepts; my thought flows and morphs as I read and think about my questions, which are frequently re/examined, re/stated, and re/articulated according to my focus. The inquiry process is always in-the-making and open to more to come and un/known possibilities.

Qualitative Research In-the-making

In the course of studying qualitative research in my program, there were moments of confusion when dealing with data materials for my pilot cross-cultural study, which aimed to research the perceptions of the two ethnically different, female indigenous basket-weaving artists (my mother and a Cherokee basket-weaver) about their respective cultures. I worked with my interview transcripts and observational notes to practice “data analysis” by coding and interpreting my interview materials. In the process, I anatomized my participant’s interview excerpts to categorize them by themes and by several qualitative research methodologists’ narrative structures. Yet, I was frustrated to sort out my participants’ interview accounts into those predesigned structures and plots. Since my

participants' narratives are complexly interconnected into line by line, their conversational flows were hardly dissectible. In addition, I found it difficult to make a clear separation of researcher/researched in the relationship with my participants. Determining my positionality and reflexivity was challenging because the distance between my participants and me was shifting responding to themes of interactions. Although an "inductive emergent flexible research design" (Patton, 2002) was emphasized in my qualitative research textbook, I had difficulty in imagining its feasibility under the pre-existing, linear structure of qualitative research framework and seemingly pre-organized sets of methods and/or methodologies. I was not sure if I was doing qualitative research "correctly"; whether I would be able to continue my pilot research in the "right" qualitative way, despite all the un/questionable discomfort.

In this regard, Patti Lather (2013) conceptualizes a new and different methodological turn, which troubles "narrow scientism and reduction to an instrumentalism" (p. 643) in conventional qualitative research practices. Influenced by the Deleuzian sense of *becoming*, Lather highlights the movement from measurable and evidence-based methodological rigor to more depth of understanding, sensitive approach to social issues, and epistemologically sophisticated approaches (the Spencer Foundation report, as cited in Lather, 2013). Here, the important point is that the new movement does not exclude, reject, or isolate traditional qualitative research practices; rather, the new methodological change occurs "within and beyond" current qualitative research paradigms within the effect of neoliberal governmentality. The power, which decides quality of "good enough" scientific research, creates constantly new language and discourse of qualitative research. Lather (2013) and St. Pierre (2006, 2012, 2014)

vigilantly adhere to this transition by urging qualitative researchers to work “sensitively” to a narrow definition of scientific research practices in politics of qualitative methodologies.

In terms of the post-qualitative turn, Lather and St. Pierre (2013) pinpoint the Cartesian separation as a problematic discipline in conventional qualitative research practices—thinking and doing in separation of self-other, research-data, and human-non-human. They encourage researchers to think differently from current human-centered research practices, which are organized and structured by “the knowing subject” that pre-exists and exerts controls over material sources. Instead of thinking in detachment, post-qualitative research underscores scrutiny of the relation of entanglement and imbrication in the relationships. Particularly, investigation through a strong linkage between epistemology and ontological research practices is stressed for more scientifically rigorous research. For St. Pierre, “methodology should never be separated from epistemology and ontology” (2014, p.3), because epistemology and ontology are “entrenched” modes of one’s thinking and living this world and their separation from methodology happens only when the “methodology is used simply instrumental” (2006, p. 257). She further argues for the connection between science and philosophy by emphasizing the coordination of epistemology, ontology, and methodology. I am convinced by St. Pierre’s point here, because my methodological practice has been closely related to my epistemological, ontological position and deeply involved within every aspect of research processes—raising questions, working with theoretical perspectives, gathering and analysis of my autobiographical materials. In this respect, thinking with relevant theorists’ concepts, such as Judith Butler’s performativity theory

(1993) and Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome (1987), has been immensely helpful to expand my scope—to examine and investigate my m/othering complexities in my situated context and dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship in curriculum theorizing. In the process of inquiry, theories and concepts can be methods that “enable new research practices that can neither be described in advance of a study nor easily described at the end” (St. Pierre, 2014, p. 14).

My methodological practice attends to focusing more on the process of “plugging in” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) rather than evidence-based data interpretation or representation. The important point is about how I articulate these ambiguous, complex, and fluid processes and work with the uncertainties. I may still feel secure with having a neat arrangement, collecting reasonable clues, and working to fit in the categories of “good” validation of research. Qualitative inquiry is simultaneously possible in the relation of before/after and open to its transformation. It blurs notions of “past and present” (Koro-Ljunberg et al., 2015), “old and new” (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), and is in “becoming” in Deleuzian sense (Lather, 2013). Qualitative inquiry is always in transition mode and invites diverse practices by attending to both conventional and new practices simultaneously. From this perspective, I probe closely into my inquiry process—how my interrogations are connected with my autobiographical materials; how thinking with theories and concepts produces something different and new; what my possible encounters would be in the process—in an attempt to concentrate more on the flow of my research and to think within un/thinkable areas.

The Narrative/Visual

In my feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry, I incorporate my narratives and visual components into text materials. Riessman's (2008) points out that narratives have distinctive styles and structures which closely interrelate with visual materials. She believes that written narratives and visual images cannot speak for themselves, being separated; rather, an image can be narrated within contextualized and theorized words. Hence, she encourages a researcher to work back and forth between written narratives and images relating to her "research question, theories, and philosophical positions" (p. 179). Multiple readings of texts and visual images are always possible for inviting diverse unknown truths, because there is no single correct reading and viewing. I particularly support her viewpoint on a reader/viewer's potentially different reaction to a researcher's written narrative/visual analysis. She argues that a researcher must be careful not to reify a written/visual text as the "real" thing. Taking her point, I extend my methodological practice into possibilities of reader/viewer's different, multiple experiences—not being structured, fixed, and closed but being opened, fluid, and constantly changeable.

Sullivan and Miller (2013) also highlight the focus of narrative/visual method by advocating, "the use of images and stories for theorizing about inquiry practices can be sites for constructing new knowledge" (p. 9). They consider incorporating narrative and visual methods as crossing boundaries of research traditions and representational practices in order to create "provisional, mobile, in-process spaces where we might craft unstable, shifting, and multiply situated narrative and visual research representations" (p.8). Particularly, Sullivan and Miller (2013) accentuate that visual research is untapped potential to understand a researcher's postmodern intentions; visual forms include

“multiple discourses and symbolic processes grounded in complex cultural practice” (p. 9). Coupled with this point, I work through my autobiographical materials to examine my subjectivity construction process as m/other, feelings of getting lost, and dealing with tensions within the m/other relationship. By facilitating visual and narrative components as interconnected texts, I also attend to acknowledge how my subjectivities work throughout my inquiry process. My inquiry process involves various creative analytic approaches—putting together my fragmented ideas with the form of poetry, monologue, layered text as well as artwork project (Sullivan & Miller, 2013; Springgay, 2008). My creative inquiry of analyzing narrative/visual texts is open to my readers/viewers to create their own interpretations.

A/r/tography

I also collaborate with the a/r/tography method in terms of my focus on the process-based inquiry rather than representation of what I find from data. A/r/tographical texts and images are not the means of representing thoughts but a “process” of struggling with terms, concepts, and practices, and searching for those linkages (Springgay, 2008). A/r/tographical texts and images are rhizomatically entangled and exceed their boundaries of one another. For example, within the category of artist, researcher, and teacher (a/r/t) in the context of art, research, and education, a/r/tography investigates the complexities within the relationships by probing who an artist, researcher, or educator might be or what art, research, or education is (Irwin et al., 2006). Each feature intersects one another and coexists in continuous relations, in and through time and space. In particular, I want to take a/r/tography’s focus on troubling the slash—the boundary within their relationship to investigate my m/other relationship. A/r/tography understands

each relation not as separate, opposite, or consumable, but as interconnected, multiple, and in continuum. Its focus is on investigating what is learned during the act of creating, not what is learned from the final artwork.

Art making is a process, incomplete, and unknowable. There is no clear beginning or ending point. As Deleuze & Guattari (1987) illustrate, like a rhizome, it is always in the “middle” where it picks up speed. In the process of inquiring through art, there is no order to maintain or category to fit in. Art making is a temporal, ambiguous, and uncertain practice performed in an artist/artwork relationship in a particular time and space. The artist and artwork do not begin from nothing. Artwork is not simply created by the artist in one-sided performance. The artist and artwork begin with their own materialities which constantly shift and are multiple, and transform themselves into unpredicted forms through dynamic interactions. In their in-between space, they allow “new and [different] assemblages to be created without any predetermined model of organization” (Springgay, 2008, p. 65). The space of art making is not static or empty space waiting for something happens. Rather, the space recognizes the boundary of the artist and artwork, and helps them experience their limits and transitions. As such, a/r/tographical inquiry provokes me to think beyond those seemingly separate and opposing relations—self/other, m/other, artist/artwork, and researcher/researched, and to focus on the process of working with otherness in a self/other relationship through artistic approaches. The idea of a/r/tography prompts me to do research within/beyond the slashes and to work with various terms that have been im/possible within my limited range of thinking and linguistic capacity.

I have designed this dissertation research from two broad aspects—thinking with theories and concepts (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), and investigating through visual/narrative texts (Riessman, 2008; Sullivan & Miller, 2013) with the method of a/r/tography (Irwin et al., 2006; Springgay, 2008). For my inquiry of understanding my m/other relationship, I connect my questions, ideas, and autobiographical materials into theories and concepts, and extend my capacity of thinking in articulating significance of understanding and how to deal with otherness in a self/other relationship. Images and narratives are not isolated from each other; rather, they are interwoven together as texts by supporting one another. For instance, images are narrated; narratives are imaged; the meaning can be generated anew beyond what they have conveyed. With the focus of feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry (Miller, 2005, 2006, 2010a), I work with my autobiographical materials (experiences, memories, reflections, stories, images, personal notes, news articles, and so forth), which are flexible to transform their meanings in response to my research purpose and context. In the process of working with my materials sources, I inquire through writing and write through thinking (Richardson, 1997, 2005) incorporating temporal memory work (Haug et al., 1987; Metta, 2010, Moon, 2016).

Overall, I investigate connections and flows within the relations and work within/beyond the slashes: the in-between space. Rather than category-oriented, outcome-centered, and evidence-based research practices, I focus more on examining what would emerge in the *process* of my inquiry and how I articulate the complexities in the relationships of self/other and self/context through in-depth analysis. Each piece of acknowledgement of different emergence and its significance in my inquiry will become

a new chunk of knowledge, which bring multiplicities in the field of thinking and doing m/othering and curriculum. Incorporating with these methodological practices, in the following chapter, I investigate the process of constructing my m/othering subjectivities by analyzing the context of my transnational m/othering and its interrelationality between my maternal subjectivities and their situated context.

CHAPTER IV

M/OTHERING IN TRANSNATIONAL SPACE: M/OTHERING COMPLEXITY

Migrating to the United States from South Korea for my and my children's educational journey has changed my m/othering patterns in various ways. In this chapter, I investigate how my m/othering subjectivities have been discursively constructed through transnational experiences. Although I challenge any grand narrative to represent a "South Korean" mothering experience, I interrogate the network of forces which I consider important in formulating my maternal thinking and behaving in my daily life trajectories. In an attempt to blur the boundary of the meta/local narratives, I juxtapose analysis of the dominant source of power in my m/othering context with my memories, experiences, and reflections in the course of m/othering depicted in italics.

In this chapter, I examine interrelationality between my m/othering context and construction of maternal subjectivities. I first examine the ways in which my m/othering has been constituted and transformed in transnational space. Particularly, I analyze the network of forces in my mothering context in Korean and the US. I examine the effects of Neo-Confucianism, which have permeated into constructing my knowledge of a mother's familial position and mothering for my children's education covertly and overtly throughout my lifetime. I also investigate historical shifts on socio-political, national economic, and educational reforms and practices in South Korea to understand

the relation between my transformative mothering performances and situatedness. Incorporating Judith Butler's theory of "performativity" (1993a), I then map out the process of constructing my m/othering subjectivities and performativities in which I cared for my children while trying to become a "good" mother, conforming and sometimes rebelling against historically, socio-politically, and globally constructed mothering demands. Focusing on my excessive components in working with my conventional mothering knowledge, I delve into the process of how my m/othering has been transformed in transnational space.

"Congratulations! It's a boy!!" I heard my baby's first cry and I am finally relieved that my big day went well. The miraculous meeting with my baby was short lived, and I am now lying on my bed—alone—separated with my baby for the first time. I try to recall every moment in my labor process as if I was in an eternal time zone full of uncertainty and fear. Nobody taught me in detail how to give birth to my baby, and I have just gone through the "natural" event that mothers experience! Holding my baby in my arms was a true blessing. Suddenly I was surrounded with a strange feeling in recognizing this new relationship—detached from the umbilical cord—perceiving my baby as an individual who will need my constant care and love, and at the same time, trying to make myself familiar with the title of "mother."

When my baby and I came home from the hospital, my real days as "mother" unfolded. My time and schedule were entirely focused on this little one's needs. My days and nights reversed, and I was able to do my chores only when my baby fell asleep. Interestingly, when my baby demanded my full attention, I realized how selfish I was in thinking of my own desires as an individual.

That was a strange feeling. I was not ready for being a good mother yet. Although 20 years have passed, I am still confused with how best to mother my two sons.

My M/othering Experience in South Korea

My home country, South Korea, is well known for its fast economic growth with advanced technologies in globalized societies driven by a highly educated and skilled workforce since the republic was proclaimed in 1948 ("South Korea Country Profile,"

2017). According to a report from the Federation of Korean Industries (2015), the major impetus of Korea's innovative success was derived from the people's desire and willpower toward pursuing better lives as well as education fervor, which concentrates on fostering high-quality human resources. That is not surprising to me because not only did I grow up with the emphasis on "education and success" throughout my school age, but also the value of education has deeply impacted the way in which I mothered my two sons. Then, why has success in education been so important to me? To what extent have educational achievement and economic success been related to one another in the South Korean society? In order to investigate normative mothering discourses regarding "education and success," I first examine effects of the Neo-Confucian tradition in the web of normative mothering forces, which governed the Korean society as a ruling principle in the late 14th century and have influenced Korean people's as well as my value system for a long time.

Neo-Confucian Effects on my Family Arrangement

Neo-Confucianism which emerged in Sung China (960-1279) interpreted earlier teaching of Confucius (551-479 BCE) as social and ethical philosophy and provided a philosophical alternative to Buddhism and Taoism in the pre-modern China. Neo-Confucianism was propagated to many countries in East Asia such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Japan, Vietnam, and Singapore where Chinese people predominantly migrated and settled down and has influenced people and societies as a philosophy, religion, and socio-political system (De Bary & Chaffee, 1989; Koh, 2003; Wei-ming, 1996). Confucianism was transmitted to Korea in the Three Kingdom period (57 BCE)

and became the national religion and ruling principle of Joseon Dynasty⁸ (1392-1910) in the form of Neo-Confucianism as a means of unifying the nation's public order and building up a rational society (Chung, 2015).

The Neo-Confucian tradition highlights the connection between a family and its nation. It idealizes how the individual family's wellbeing directly affects the nation's prosperity. The Neo-Confucian teaching emphasizes strict role-driven hierarchical relationships among social groups and individual family members, such as between the government and citizen, parent and child, husband and wife, older siblings and younger siblings, and friends⁹. Neo-Confucianism values each social group's harmony and order to maintain the group's stability, and encourages individuals to practice the Confucian ethics, characterized by the Five Constant Virtues: 仁 (*in*: benevolence, humaneness), 義 (*ui*: righteousness or fidelity), 禮 (*ye*: proper rite), 智 (*gi*: knowledge), and 信 (*sin*: integrity). This principle teaches reinforcement of consolidation among family members as well as social constituents in the nation in pursuit of maintaining idealized relationships.

I was born as the eldest daughter among three siblings in my family. I was often told that the eldest daughter ought to take care of her younger siblings and act like a role model for them. I have tried not to disappoint my parents' expectations, and most of all I hated

⁸ Neo-Confucianism in Korea was practiced and characterized by the emergence of many eminent scholars—particularly, Yi T'oegye (1501-1570) and Yi Yulgok (1536-1584)'s theorization of *Sungnihak* which influenced Korean philosophy, religion, social, and political systems—from the late sixteenth century up to the beginning of the current century (Chung, 1995). In this dissertation, I mention Neo-Confucianism indicating Korean Neo-Confucianism influenced both by Zhu Xi and Korean Neo-Confucian scholars.

⁹ Neo-Confucianism teaches three fundamental principles and five moral disciplines in human relations. The Three Bonds (*Samgang*) accentuate obligations between ruler and subject, parent and child, and husband and wife. The Five Relationships (*Oryun*) concentrate on love and obedience between father and son, benevolence and loyalty between ruler and subject, differentiation between husband and wife, order between elder and younger siblings, and trust between friends.

myself to be in the center of any conflict. I married my husband during the year of my college graduation. Since he was the only son in his family, I began my newlywed life with my husband and in-laws together. After the birth of my two sons, we moved from the upper level of the home to the lower level, but we still shared common life routines like sharing meals and spending leisure time together. In South Korea, people believe that looking after elderly parents day and night is the virtue of a good offspring. Family hierarchy and each family member's role were distinctively marked in maintaining the family order—a father-in-law as the head of household and then followed by a mother-in-law, husband, and his wife. However, the position of daughter-in-law seemed most complicated and oppressed to me in the family structure.

Carrying out given family roles in the Neo-Confucian shared principles demands strict moral obligations to married women living as daughters-in-laws, wives, and mothers. The Neo-Confucian emphasis on “filial duty for parents” (父爲子綱, bu-wui-ja-gang) and the “distinction between males and females” (夫婦有別, bu-bu-yu-byul) often forces married women to fulfill multiple roles as a caretaker.¹⁰ The patriarchal hierarchy in a family structure demands moral obligations and urges conformity with a father's rules. In addition, differentiated from fathers who occupy the public world, mothers are expected to take full responsibility of child rearing while taking care of private and domestic duties in a familial arrangement.

Neo-Confucian Effects on my Children's Education

I believe that the clear role division in the Neo-Confucian family structure which encourages parents to be involved in their children's education for their family prosperity

¹⁰ The filial piety (孝) is a compound idiom of the old (老) and 'son (子),' describing a child as holding up his parents. The Neo-Confucian tradition teaches that children should serve parents faithfully as fundamental virtue for humans to practice (Oh et al, 2014; Sorenson, 1986). The hierarchal order in a Confucian family structure often raises a feminist ethical concern of women's (particularly daughter-in-law's) care as oppression in the Korean society (Kim, 2007).

and honor, has been the most important knowledge in my mothering practice. For a long time, the Neo-Confucian emphasis on the rank of the order and distribution of roles in a family organization has rationalized the system of social hierarchy and class inequality in a society and nation. An individual's social status as well as a family's dignity as a group has been legitimated by one's level of educational achievement. The major concept of Neo-Confucianism, 修己治人 (*su-gi-chi-in*: cultivating the self and governing men) illustrates the importance of education as an instrument which nurtures one's morality and sustains public order. That is, through the process of constant "self-cultivation," a person can reach the quality of 君子 (*gunja*: a sage, superior man) and come to rule 小人 (*so-in*: inferior man) with his virtue and wisdom. It also means that educational achievement authorizes high social status and provides a path to upward one's social mobility.

During the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), Confucian scholars who passed 科擧 (*Gwageo*: state qualification exam) became ruling elites and occupied positions of high-ranking government officials. The exam was mainly designed to evaluate candidates' ability of writing composition and knowledge of the Confucian literatures. Thus, the most important responsibility of parents was to offer a proper learning environment and motivation for their children's intellectual growth and success. Since parents' roles were differentiated by gender, mothers were the central caregivers of children and responsible for their education at home. With the Neo-Confucian emphasis on education, mothers were to help their children realize the Neo-Confucian ideals and to discipline them through the life-long process of self-cultivation (Herr, 2016). Mothers' wisdom and devotion toward their children's education were highly recognized as *good* qualities of

ideal mothers, and the stories of role model mothers, which carry strong messages, are still acknowledged by contemporary mothers in their mothering in South Korea.

For instance, the mother of Mencius is well-known for an old saying, 孟母三遷之教 (*maeng-mo-sam-cheon-ji-gyo*: the mother of Mencius three times moves for education). Mencius (ca. 371- 289 BCE) was a pupil of Confucius's grandson, Zisi, and became one of the principal Confucian philosophers of early China. Mencius's father died when he was three years old, so his mother raised her son alone. Mencius's mother had to find a residence where she and her son could live. The first place they moved was near a cemetery. Mencius's mother witnessed her son amusing himself at the tombs, imitating various performances of funeral rites and burial services. She thought that the place was no good for her son and decided to move to a different place, near a marketplace in the town. There, Mencius mimicked merchants' street cries and hawking, and it also displeased his mother. So Mencius's mother moved again and ended up living close to a school. Mencius saw and heard scholars' and students' reading and writing and began to follow their daily study habits. Relieved by her son's change, the mother settled down at last at the residence near the school. This story illustrates how Mencius's mother constantly cared about and sought a better environment for her son's "good" education.

Comparable to Mencius's mother, there is another story of a mother who was dedicated to her son's education in a Korean history. Han Seok Bong was a remarkable calligrapher in the Joseon Dynasty and his skillful penmanship was widely known in near countries. Seok Bong's mother noticed her son's talent in his early childhood and decided to send him away to a temple school to receive a more rigorous education. She was

widowed and poor, so she had to manage her and her son's life by selling rice cakes. While Seok Bong left home for his learning for ten years, the mother and son missed each other so much. One day, Seok Bong came home to see his mother because he suffered from homesickness, but his mother scolded him harshly because he did not complete his learning. Seok Bong's mother was cutting rice cakes and she wanted to examine how well her son had learned. The mother suggested, "I will cut my rice cakes, and you write your letters" and then blew out the lamp. After a while, when she relit the lamp, Seok Bong realized how his writing was messy and crooked compared to his mother's rice cakes that were cut evenly in the same size. To his great dismay and shame, he returned straightaway to the temple to continue his learning. Indeed, due to his mother's stern and strict teaching and support, Seok Bong completed his study and became one of the finest calligraphers in Korean history.

Previous stories of two mothers may demonstrate how the Neo-Confucian emphasis on role-driven family organization and mother-child centered education are deeply rooted in mothering value and practice. In these old stories, while mothers are depicted as wise, persistent, and stern primary caregivers for their children, fathers are often absent, silent, or less involved in their children's education due to their work outside the household. For children, with emphasis on the value of filial piety (孝), they are expected to be obedient to their parents and study diligently for their future success as well as family prestige. In the Neo-Confucian teaching, education for "self-cultivation and governing men" (修己治人) can be a pathway to become ruling elites, which would bring honor and prosperity to a family's and nation's statuses.

It feels as if my life has been steered by my choice, but the choice seemed not made solely by my own will. I voluntarily and involuntarily quit my job to pay more attention to my family care and it was accepted by all family members without question. As my children grew up, raising them with “proper” education has become my major interest and concern. Many Koreans criticize their success-oriented environment of education, which encourages students to participate in competitive learning practices, designed to train them as “the best” in the world. When children start to walk and talk, their mothers would need to seek “good” learning resources for their children. Whether their parents are financially, physically, or psychologically supportive or not, signing up their toddlers for private educational programs such as language, music, and sports is prevalent. As they grow and enter the K-12 school system, children are expected to build competencies in various areas of knowledge and skills to prepare them to be “competent” for their promising futures. If mothers are not able to help their children properly in that atmosphere, they fear falling behind and struggle with the sense of guilt in their lack of ability to “educate” their children well. Children are tutored privately after school, and their mothers are pushed to work outside home to pay for their children’s extra education.

Impacts of Socio-political and Educational Dilemma on my M/othering in South Korea

In this section, I examine discursively constructed socio-political and educational contexts in South Korea, which have also shaped my m/othering practice directly. The educational policies have been reformed due to Korea's Neo-Confucian ideals and new economic development plans. These cultural and political changes have constructed Korean mothers’ mothering patterns. Focusing on the webs of institutional power and their relations, which pushed me to perform my transnational m/othering as a “goose mother,” I analyze under what condition my m/othering has been formulated as performativity (Butler, 1993a).

Educational Zeal

The important concept of “self-cultivation” in education in the Neo-Confucian teaching might have shifted its meaning within the contemporary educational context in

South Korea. Just as 科擧 (*Gwageo*: state qualification exam for civil service) was administered in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) with the purpose of selecting competent civil officers, taking a *Suneung* (College Scholastic Ability Test) to enter a prestigious college with high scores has been a significant cause for most children and adolescents to study, because they and their parents believe that the certificate of academic achievement guarantees a secure and lucrative social position in their careers (Diamond, 2016; Kim, 2016; Lee, 2006; Seth, 2002). Rather than self-learning and self-discipline for cultivating one's morality in the Neo-Confucian teaching, one's learning goal and its process appear converged into one destination—success for fame and wealth. Compared to the rigid and distinct social class system in the past society, educational opportunities are equally open to people in contemporary South Korean society; thus, educational achievement has become a major channel toward people's upward social mobility.

Instead of providing children with plenty of time for exploratory learning, children are directed to achieve academic goals fast so people can see their outcomes and evaluate their scholarly abilities. Applying for employment with no college diploma means a lack of promotional opportunity, limitations on choosing jobs in demand, and few chances for salary increases. Preference given to prestigious college graduates in attractive job positions drives students and their parents to live for success in the world of reckless competition to the top in the name of education (Kim, 2016; Park, 2010; Seth, 2002; Sorensen, 1994).

I was also one of those students, teachers, and mothers who strived to fulfill the academic success for my self, my students, and my children, keeping up with the social

expectation and other people's recognition. Rather than questioning why I was learning and teaching particular knowledge in this way or why I was raising my children in that way, I came to follow the way that the system led and emulate what my friends, other teachers, and other mothers performed. I felt like I was living for other's goals and other's life. Although I wanted to live and raise my children differently, avoiding the effect from the current system, trend, and practice of education seemed im/possible. In the following section, I analyze the network of multiple power sources, which has been embedded in my life of education and mothering. I examine complex interrelations between the nation's agenda on socio-economic development and its effect on the changes of educational context in South Korea to understand and problematize my m/othering performativity.

Education within the National Socio-economic Agenda

After undergoing Japanese occupation (1919-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953), South Korea slowly began to recover its economy in the 1950's. In an attempt to restore the devastated country, under the presidency of Park Jung Hee (1961-1979), the government launched national economic and social development plans. South Korea's economy had been predominantly dependent on agricultural business, yet the Park government urged "The Five-Year Plans" to promote development of new industries and markets. By investing governmental funds in major businesses such as the mother companies of Samsung, LG, or Hyundai, the government planned rapid industrialization of South Korea through mass production and growth in exports (Lee, 2006; Sorensen, 1994; Yoo, 2008). In the 1960s and 1970s, the Korean economy expanded

expeditiously—first into light and then heavy industries—and relied on a multitude of labor power for factory-based manufactures (South Korea Government, 2012).

After the 1980s, in the transition to technology-based industries, the industrial business market required a workforce with specialized knowledge in complex task-oriented job performances. With the impact of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) crisis in the late 1990s, the South Korean industry paid more attention to higher value-added business and the export-driven market, led by major conglomerates (Yoo, 2008). The labor market required skillful workers and highly qualified human resources, and with this demand, the number of people who attended higher education was gradually increased (Lee, 2006). In addition, the national project of “Brain Korea 21” (Korean Ministry of Education & Human Resources Department, 2001) was promoted to boost the national competence in response to globalization for the 21st century, focusing on nurturing “top-notch” manpower in a knowledge-based society through innovative curricular in higher education.

The economic development and governmental effort led South Korea to be ranked in the first place with the higher education completion rate among members of 39 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries. According to 2014 OECD Indicators, 98% of Koreans aged from 25 to 34 have finished at least upper secondary education and 66% of the same age group has attained higher education. I consider that the domestic and globalized governmental policies on economy growth demanded highly qualified labors and instigated people’s desire for attaining their own prosperity and social recognition through occupational self-realization. This socio-political and economic transition for national growth and globalization heightened

people's educational fervor toward success in higher educational achievement in South Korea.

Private Education and Education Policies in South Korea

While the OECD data summary indicates high rates on the Korean students' educational achievement, it also points out the Korean households' huge expenditures on private education (OECD, 2016). According to National Statistical Office of Korea (2017), Korean parents spend 17.8 trillion won (approx. USD 16 billion) on private education for their children who attend elementary and secondary schools. They provide extra lessons for their children after regular school hours in private learning settings, known as *Hagwons*. Moreover, private education even reaches pre-kindergarten children; its statistical report reveals that 84% of five-year-old and 36% of two-year-old children take private lessons for several subjects such as language arts, gymnastics, and arts (Korea Institute of Child Care & Education, 2016).

Around 10 p.m., surrounded with bright neon signs of numerous private academy buildings, many cars are lined up alongside streets. Mothers are waiting for their children, sitting on the driver seat. Groups of students begin to spill out from Hagwon buildings. They find their mothers and walk to their cars, dragging wheeled luggage loaded with stacks of extra textbooks in their hands. Mothers smile and greet their children and ask about what they learned from classes. Several kids are still playing soccer on the sidewalk until they are picked up to go home. To the interview question of how they feel about their extra learning until nighttime, a girl answers that she needs to study harder not to be ignored by her classmates and teachers at school. Another girl responds that she wants to maintain and improve her English proficiency that she learned from overseas English camp by taking lessons from her native-speaking English teacher at her private English academy by taking regular lessons. No child complains about this life situation. Children are rather concerned about how they can excel in this educational setting. The continued scene shows that a group of advanced middle school students are solving a complex college math problem, standing in front of blackboard in a Hagwon classroom (EBS Documentary, 2016).

I was also the part of the parent group who offered swimming, piano, and painting lessons to my two sons before they began their public schools in South Korea. While they were attending elementary schools, they took several tutored classes such as English, math, science, and playing violin after school hours. The private education market provided varieties of selection in subject areas; programs were skillfully designed for parents' and children's needs and tastes. Despite the financial constraint of sending my two children to several private tutoring institutes, I felt I was not able to stop this routine, because private lessons seemed more beneficial for my children as they grew and entered higher grades. As I relied on after school learning more, they provided more sophisticated program for my sons' progress. In addition, the atmosphere of competition was generated among children when their abilities were tested at school or any other contests outside school and given special recognitions or opportunities according to scores and ranking they earned. I felt that if I stopped these endeavors, I would be giving up on my children's future and neglecting my responsibility as a mother.

Yet, I was not the only mother who was concerned about and confused with this issue. From my experiences, when I met other mothers, the topic of conversation was mainly about our children's education. Mothers seemed to maintain frequent meetings with other mothers to discuss and share information about new education policies, test-preparation plans, and private tutoring programs. They used to create study groups for their children with other mothers' children to reduce economic burdens by increasing numbers of student per teacher. If mothers did not have time to care about their children's learning schedules or had financial difficulty paying for extra education, they used to feel isolated from the group of mothers who had time and abilities. The heat of private

education in South Korea pushes mothers to follow the rule of competition; mothers herd their children into the life of passive learning and reckless race. Within the complexly-constituted educational context, mothers and their children create and repeat their life patterns, hoping that a better world is in store for them. Then, how has the private education market been formulated in South Korea? Under what conditions has the private education market grown so fast and become so impactful to my children's lives and my life?

The rise of the afterschool private education market is closely related to the process of education reforms in South Korea (Kim & Lee, 2010; Lee, 2000; Park, 2010; Yoon, 2014). The military government of Park Jeong Hee (1961-1979) proclaimed two education reforms: "Abolition of Middle School Entrance Examinations" (1968) and "High School Equalization Policy" (1974) in order to advocate uniformity in education and school equalization. Subsequently, in the name of equal opportunity in education, the Jeon Doo Hwan military regime (1980-1987) announced "July 30 Education Reform" to ban all types of afterschool private education. However, the regulation was gradually loosened in the 1990s, particularly for secondary school students. Transforming the educational policy from "uniformity and equality" into the context of "neoliberal education," the first civilian government of the Kim Young Sam presidency (1993-1997) initiated the reform along with adopting English as a part of elementary school curriculum in 1997. In April 2000, the Constitutional Court decided that prohibition of private education was in violation of parents' right over their children's education and freedom of employment (Lee, 2011, Yoon, 2014). Followed by the Kim Dae Jung government (1998-2003), the pursuit of "creativity, excellence, and diversification" in

education was accelerated. The neoliberal education reforms opened a free market for private afterschool education and became a channel for building students' global competencies in the 21st century (Kim, 2004; Randall, 2013; Song, 2010; Yoon, 2014).

During the upheavals of political, socio-economic, and educational renovations in South Korea, life patterns of mothers and their children have been heavily influenced by the discursively constructed discourses of education and the normative constraints that multiple axes of power create. Although neoliberal educational reform prompted diverse, extended learning opportunities for mothers and their children, and freedom to make a business for private education markets, it has actually raised the life of ceaseless competition in their own desire for success. The expanded private education market, extended learning hours for children, and increased financial burdens for parents are the byproduct of the neoliberal market economy. Due to specialized and individualized lessons, mothers believe and hope that their children can learn more effectively through private learning programs. Yet, in the context of constant competition, the goal of private education is not in assisting children's learning. Rather, it guides them to learn how to excel and surpass other children with better-preparation strategies by winning the race of neoliberal education.

M/other as Educational Manager

In addition, the Neo-Confucian emphasis on the dedicated mother and docile child relationship within the context of neoliberal free competition encourages a mother to perform as an educational manager of her children (Kang, 2012; Park, 2010). By taking full charge of scheduling her children's private lesson programs, continuously seeking for

new information, being ready to provide transportations for her children, the mother is expected to be always accessible and responsible for her children's academic success as well as in the long run, for her family wellbeing and honor. This contextualized m/othering knowledge controls and governs maternal thinking and behaviors and shapes mothers' subjectivities in various forms. If a mother neglects fulfilling her expected role as a persistent, wise, and diligent mother, she may be criticized as an irresponsible and devalued mother. For a triumph for education in the neoliberal scheme, the mother is supposed to always think ahead for her children's future, to be physically and financially supportive, and to be knowledgeable to frequently changing educational policies and test guidelines to help her children. These expectations provoke mothers to design and monitor her self and her children's daily routines to gauge whether or not they are on the "right" track on the race. If a mother is not a fulltime mother and cannot provide a full attention to her children, she may regret for her situation and feel guilty for her children. I, my friends, and other mothers that I knew were not free from this issue. I had to give up my professions to concentrate more on my children's education because I believed raising my children "well" was the most important job to me.

Analysis of Discursively Constituted my M/othering Context

Thus far, I have examined historical and socio-political backgrounds of my m/othering to understand the process of constituting my subjectivities as m/other. By zooming-in and zooming-out my situatedness in South Korea, I attempted to map out the production of my m/othering performativity and embeddedness within the context. As illustrated, constitution of my m/othering contexts in South Korea had been immensely influenced by intricately connected layers of power: the Neo-Confucian principles,

neoliberalism, globalization, and renovations of governments' socio-political, economic, and educational policies.

The complex linkage of power exercised neither separately nor in sequence; rather, the combinations of forces emerged randomly, generated new forces in the process of working together, and would differently affect mothers in diverse situations. The Neo-Confucian ideals on mothering and education, which underlay my value system, had propelled me to become involved in advancing education fever. The wave of neoliberalism and globalization activated the government's modifications on its socio-political, economic, and educational policies; the institutional power reshaped my m/othering patterns. The government's educational reform emphasized "diversity and choice"; the ideology of neoliberal competition and consumerism overheated private education markets. In addition, the dominant power circulation itself did not remain stable or immutable. It constantly interacted with other effects, transformed its quality, and worked differently in particular situations. For example, the Neo-Confucian teaching of self-cultivation in education had been transformed into unlimited competition when it encountered the wave of neoliberal globalization. The desire for "success" of children, family, and the nation through education had expanded from a national level to the world stage.

Responding to the entangled web of power relations, my m/othering knowledge was formulated; I constantly struggled with following the norms and expectations which the historically, socio-culturally, edu-politically, and global-economically constituted m/othering discourses had created. My m/othering performativity had been produced in the process of repeating to comply with these normative standards, which demanded my

“copious amount of time, energy, and material resources” (Hay, 1996, p. 8). The normative constraints of being a “good” mother as knowledgeable, industrious, and always accessible for my children’s needs and success forced me to continuously monitor and self-define if I was doing my best as a good mother. The more I desired to become a “better” mother, the less I felt my self-assurance on my mothering. The most perplexing point was that I was not sure whose creed I was following in rearing my children. I was scared if my children grew to fulfill my desire. Whenever I was concerned about my children’s future and added one more private lesson to their schedules, I questioned if I really cared for and loved my children. The world is open to my children and encourages them to release their potentials and realize their dreams via free competition. The nexus of power urges this world, nation, school, family, and other mothers to eagerly participate in its system to live for their future.

Yet, the mothering norms are neither static nor permanently existing. As the web of power moves in/through/with macro/micro and merged/scattered ways, the mothering norms also modify their forms in the course of repeating the process of signification as well as failing to repeat the signification (Butler, 1993a). Moments of doubt and self-questioning provoked me to consider my life and m/othering seriously and to decide to study abroad with my children in the United States. Yet, the decision was made not solely for escaping my m/othering reality; rather, it was associated with diverse factors. My parents-in-law and husband were also deeply concerned about raising my children in the rigid educational environment in South Korea; around the same time, I earned a study-abroad scholarship in order to complete my graduate degree. Most of all, I might need a

time to think about my life and m/othering differently, apart from my family obligations and relationships.

My m/othering also changed its direction and modified its boundary little by little as I challenged and disrupted the prevalent, compulsive educational practices which regulated and controlled my and my children's life patterns. Responding to the discursively constituted mothering norms and standards in South Korea, I had to constantly question my seemingly fixed, absolute knowledge of what a "good" mother should be like. The senses of doubt, confusion, and frustration which emerged in/with/through the process of othering led me to realize the distance between my mothering reality and mothering ideals. I continued to work on the gap by admitting and/or resisting the historically, socio-culturally, and edu-politically constituted mothering norms.

For instance, although I quit my job to focus more on raising my children and maintaining the household to become a better mother, daughter-in-law, and wife, I could not give up my self-worth and own growth in my teaching career. Therefore, I enrolled a graduate program and asked for assistance from the rest of family members in fulfilling my roles at home. After earning the TESOL certificate, I ran a home-based English school and taught students with the family support. There were some tensional moments in the process of persuading my parents-in-law and husband to understand my aspiration but as I proceeded, I was able to enlarge my space in the family structure as well as challenge the border in my knowledge of mother. In addition, I always tried to concentrate on what my children wanted and needed rather than what the society and others required. Staying vigilant to frequently changing educational policies and

competitive afterschool markets in South Korea, I paid more attentions to cultivating my children's creative learning avoiding simple memorization or outcome-oriented education.

Transnational M/othering

I needed time and space to think about the way I wanted to live, detached from my messy m/othering reality. Mustering all my courage, I asked my family's opinions on my ambitious studying abroad plan to accompany my two sons. I did not expect easy agreement from the rest of my family members. Surprisingly, they reacted positively to my suggestion. My father-in-law and husband proactively assisted in preparing for the visa application and departure plan. Finally, I arrived in the United States wishing to live and educate my self and children differently—to understand the meaning of education and mothering “better” and its ways to be fulfilled.

I migrated to the United States as an “international” graduate student with my two sons in 2009. In this section, prior to thinking about my m/othering in the United States, I first trouble the commonly used term of “goose mother” by analyzing its complex context of emergence. I challenge the category of the labels “international” and “goose mother” which might bind, constrain, and reduce my identities and situatedness, by introducing the concept of *transnationalism* as well as varied patterns of transnational mothering.

Goose Mothering

Marching with the flow of neoliberal globalization, certain mothers in South Korea practice their m/othering desires beyond its national border, seeking other possibilities to build up their children's academic growth and global competencies. Many studies point out that Korean Neo-Confucian familism on children's education has created a new family structure such as Goose Family (*Girugi Gajok*) or Early Study Abroad (*Jogi Yuhak*) Family (Bae, 2013; Cha & Kim, 2013; Finch & Kim, 2012; Jeong,

You, & Kwon, 2013; Kang, 2012; Park & Bae, 2009; Shin, 2013, 2014; Song, 2010). In South Korea, wild geese pairs are known to be faithful to their partners and dedicated to caring for their youngsters. The typical format of a goose family follows the Neo-Confucian traditional role-driven family structure—father as breadwinner, mother as primary caregiver, and children as hardworking learners. Temporarily separated from the rest of their family members, increasing numbers of children in South Korea study abroad in their early ages to acquire multiple language competencies (mainly English and/or Chinese) and to widen their global awareness (Bae, 2013; Park & Bae, 2009). This new family pattern has emerged to secure a family project, which is aimed at their children's success in education in a transnational context. In this transnational family arrangement, mothers usually accompany their children and take care of them in a foreign country; fathers financially support their families left in their home country. This mutated family style has become a contemporary educational trend in South Korea for certain groups of families, raising a number of problematic social and familial issues.

For instance, the news media often reports negative effects on the family unit due to the separation of transnational migration, claiming that Goose Fathers struggle with financial burdens as well as emotional difficulties and physical health problems (Chow, 2012; Kang, 2012; Kim, Agic, & Mckenzie, 2014). Being left alone in the home country, Goose Fathers take care of themselves by carrying out household duties such as cooking, doing laundry, and cleaning their homes. Goose Fathers tend to gain more social attention because they are regarded as the most victimized and isolated by their wives and children. On the other hand, a Goose Mother's doubled roles as a head of household as well as the children's caregiver is also challenging work for her to manage her life in a

foreign country alone. Goose Mothers not only need to be responsible for taking care of their children and doing housework, but they also carry out work outside of the home that is usually considered as fathers' work (Cha & Kim, 2013; Kim, Agic, & Mckenzie, 2014).

Although the Goose Family's typical structure (fathers as financial supporters vs. mothers as child caregivers) appears to follow the Neo-Confucian model, which emphasizes a role-driven family organization, the doubled role-playing of Goose Parents in a split family arrangement actually disrupts the traditional Neo-Confucian family structure and the virtue of family cohesion. The effect of neoliberal globalization on child education has produced a new format of family arrangement. The family project of children's success responding to the demand of contemporary educational discourse has blurred a national boundary and the seemingly separate role distinction between husband and wife. Through this dynamic, a new way of mothering has emerged in the process of complying with, surviving within, and resisting the normative context of neoliberal education in and outside of country. As the new family alignment exceeds the Neo-Confucian gender norms and crosses geographical boundaries of the nation, the new pattern of mothering and educational practice emerge differently, constantly modifying their forms.

Various Types of Transnational Mothering

Although the term Goose Mothering refers to a specific form of mothering which aims to educate her children in a foreign country in a family split situation, many derived patterns of transnational mothering have emerged according to each individual family's

diverse situation in South Korea. For example, fathers take care of their children overseas while mothers support from their home country; the primary goal for transnational mothering is not limited to the child's education. One of the parents accompanies his/her child(ren) to a foreign country for the purpose of fulfilling her/his own business or career for a certain duration. I, henceforward, want to consider this migratory family group with a broader term: "transnational family." In fact, the emergence of transnational mothering is not the only case of South Korea. Some East Asian countries, such as Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan, characterize similar migration patterns known as *Flexible Families*, *Astronaut Families*, *Satellite Kids*, and *Parachute Kids* (Cha & Kim, 2013; Ong, 1999; Park & Bae, 2009; Waters, 2002). Those East Asian countries' transnational family alignments may appear similar to the format of migratory family groups in South Korea, but their patterns and purposes are slightly different. For instance, while transnational family groups in South Korea display more temporary migratory patterns for their children's education, the purpose of Astronaut Family or Parachute Kids from other East Asian countries gears toward more permanent immigration of the whole family, on top of the aspiration of their children's education (Tsong & Liu, 2008). Some transnational families from Latin America also differ from the East Asia countries in their family migratory patterns and goals. In the context of Latin America, mothers live and work in foreign countries and provide financial support while their children live in their country of origin (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997).

The reason why I illustrate several groups of transnational family migratory patterns is not to categorize those transnational family groups into geographical distinctions. Rather than classifying or generalizing a nation's particular cultural

phenomena with a specific language term, I am curious to understand under what condition those different transnational family arrangements would have surfaced. Just as the Goose Family metaphor does not explain sufficiently each format of transnational migratory family group in South Korea, a style of transnational mothering is formulated within each family's own discursively constituted, historical, cultural, and socio-economic situatedness, responding to the circulation of webs of power embedded in a certain geographical context. As my own complex life situation in my home country prompted my transnational mothering, the patterns of transnational family migration are diversified and particularized across national borders with an individual's or a group's different purposes or needs—seeking other ways of living, such as studying abroad, exchanging knowledge, searching for refugees, working temporarily, and/or living as permanent immigrants. Therefore, instead of defining a migratory group with a label or reducing its particularity within a category, investigating the migratory group's context and situatedness, which push and pull their people to experience transnational life, is more important to critically understand these transnational phenomena. Those transnational migratory groups' routes of traveling are not linear or one-way trips; rather, they are poly-centered, maintaining ties with their home countries while they work, study, and reside in different locations in transnational space (Collins, 2009; Miller, 2006). In the following section, I introduce the concept of *transnationalism* in depth and connect the concept with my transnational m/othering in order to reconsider my cultural identification of “goose m/other” as an “international graduate student” in the United States, blurring the national boundary between South Korea and the United States.

Transnationalism and Transnational M/othering Complexities in the United States

According to Dingo, Riedner, and Wingard (2013), *transnationalism* investigates how networks of global power connect diverse countries, people, and their situated locations. Transnationalism rejects any fixed or linear power relations; rather, it focuses on individuals' geo-politically constructed discursive situations across gender, race, ethnicity, citizenship, and class in different times, places, and contexts. Through the investigation of complex interrelationships within uneven power structures, transnationalism traces one's mobilities and transformative process within discursive power circulations across borders (Collins, 2009; Dingo, Riedner, & Wingard, 2013; Miller, 2006). Like other diverse transnational migratory individuals, I drifted with the tide of asymmetrical power movements in a global context; its effect drove my children and me to launch our academic journey in the United States. As my transnational m/othering has already involved complexities such as issues pertaining to my children's education, my career building, and family relations in South Korea, my m/othering in the United States also initiated several concerns.

I was desperate to think differently about what I believed as "natural" mothering in my life. Yet, although I wished my questions to be resolved in my new transnational space, I am still struggling with the feeling of discomfort in managing a "good" family relationship in two different transnational households and my selfish m/othering as a full-time graduate student, dealing with my limited performance in both places.

Family Dis/connection

Fast-changing technological developments enable my separate family members to stay connected via air traveling, phone calling, emailing, texting, and Internet chatting. For instance, when we have a family memorial service in my home country, my sons and I can join the ceremony playing in real-time via my laptop computer screen, watching the

whole event and conversing with each other on opposite sides of the world. Although the advancement of technology frequently connects my family and me, I often feel isolation because I am unable to be physically present with them and in their daily life. For example, preparing family traditional holidays such as Korean Thanksgiving Day (*Chuseok*) or Lunar New Year Day (*Sulnal*) for the entire family is one of the most important works for a married woman in South Korea. Being excused from those responsibilities due to distance, I am not comfortable with my freedom in the United States. I am regretful that I cannot join the rest of my family members when they need me. Eight years have already passed since we arrived in the United States. I am worried about losing my space in my family and other relationships in South Korea due to my long-time absence. Although I visit my home country and see the rest of family at least once a year, my temporal stays in both countries evoke an ambivalent status of not being able to be the “whole” with them—the partial, fragile, and inconsistent engagement.

When we began our transnational journey, my elder son was twelve and my younger son was eight years old. As they went through their teenager turbulence, I struggled to find a way to communicate with these two growing young men. When my teenage sons went beyond my control, I missed my husband and father-in-law so much, who could have advised and helped them grow differently. When I realized that my sons would not be able to avoid any negative impacts from my single parenting, I was afraid of not having other adult models for them to follow around home besides me. In addition, as they grew, they did not seem to care as much about other family members in South Korea. They seldom contacted their father and grandparents unless I advised. What was more, since my elder son entered college far from home, our communication has been

diminished; I cannot help feeling estranged from my son. Faced with this emotional and physical distance with my family members, I have come to reconsider this dilemma in family dis/connection. In South Korea, frequent interventions and expectations from family members in proximity disrupted my sense of self; yet, now I am struggling with feelings of remoteness from my family. I am confused with thinking about what a “good” or “normal” family relationship would be like.

Searching for “Good” Mothering

My previous plan of returning to South Korea after the completion of my Master’s degree was altered because of my desire to study cross-cultural complexities more deeply in a doctorate program as well as my children’s wish to continue their schooling in the United States. Recollecting the first two years in my Master’s program, I felt like I experienced totally different life styles from when I was in South Korea. In the United States, separated from the rest of my family members, I was able to spend most of my time only for my children and myself. My family obligations as wife and daughter-in-law were lessened; instead, I had more accountability in making my graduate study and my two sons’ education successful. In the initial period of my study abroad life, I was frequently overwhelmed with adjusting myself to my new school system, people, and language; I could not pay attention to my children as much as I did in South Korea. My weekly school assignments and presentation schedules occupied my mind and time. I was desperate to improve my English in order to survive in the program. While I was struggling with my problems, I came to realize that my sons were also striving with their school lives. I presumed that children would be able to adjust and catch up with a new language and culture faster and better than adults. Yet, when I heard from their

homeroom teachers and friends' mothers that they were daydreaming in classes and having difficulties expressing themselves to get along with new friends, I was in shock and my heart was broken. The feeling of guilt that I had not noticed my children's struggles earlier due to taking care of my self surged into a doubtful moment of rethinking my purpose of transnational migration for "good" education and "better" m/othering.

Transnational M/othering Performativity

My expectation for "better" m/othering in the United States had raised another question of what the status of being *normal* would be like. My resistance to normalized knowledge of "good" mother and education and other complex issues in South Korea prompted my transnational migration to the United States and formulated different m/othering patterns. Although the pressure from excessive competition and heavy burden of private lessons might be reduced, located in my different mothering situation, I was once again challenged to question what it means to be a family. Whenever I described my self and my family's residence status to others, people did not understand our family split, which seemed mainly aimed at an educational purpose. Then, I began attending to and interrogating my feelings of otherness—the excessive accounts—of comparing to what others think as "normal." Also when I was troubled with the question of "good" family relationship and "good" mothering in dealing with otherness crossing the border between South Korea and the United States, I wondered how the sense of otherness emerged differently according to my different situatedness in the transnational space. That is to say, the otherness is not formulated with any expected or commensurate form. Otherness which occurs in one place neither disappears nor is resolved in the other place.

Rather, it continuously works within different contexts, modifies its form, and emerges anew, creating layers of connections with other issues.

I consider my transnational m/othering a course of constant suspecting, interrogating, and challenging of “what it means to be” in ambiguity and uncertainty. Thus, I cannot define what my mothering is because it involves multiple, un/expected variables and constantly shifts its route. My situatedness in historically, culturally, and socio-politically constituted mothering discourses pushed me to perform my m/othering with a certain form and to doubt, struggle, and question my m/othering performativity. As Butler’s theory of performativity (1993a) specifies, my m/othering performativity has been closely related to my m/othering contexts, which are mainly constituted within the Neo-Confucian emphasis on family and education, and neoliberal globalization. My knowledge of mother has been constructed through the circulation of mothering norms produced from mothering discourses. My m/othering performativity has been shaped in/through the iterative process of responding to normative constraints of mothering knowledge. Once m/othering performativity is produced, the performativity is signified, questioned, and challenged for its resignification (Butler, 1993a). Yet, the moment of signification of m/othering was temporal; the temporally signified status was troubled soon again for its new signification.

As such, my transnational m/othering subjectivity and performativity continuously flow, move, and shift their contours and patterns, responding to my discursively constituted m/othering contexts. In addition, those dominant mothering discourses and norms do not remain stable or immutable. They modify their forms in the process of repeating and failing to repeat its circulation over time. Therefore, interactions

between a maternal subject and its situated context produce one's particular m/othering performativities which are multiple, temporal, and incomplete. In this sense, my m/othering performativities in transnational space are not separated from each other labeled as *Educational Manager* in South Korea or *Goose Mother* in the United States, for example. Rather, they are on the continuum of constituting my m/othering subjectivities and performativities, struggling within the process of questioning, challenging, and resisting to compulsive mothering norms and my prior normalized mothering performances.

My transnational m/othering subjectivities and performativities have been constructed within ideologically, worldly, and educationally contextualized particular space and time. They have been shaped within the discursively constituted familial and educational discourses of mothering—particularly influenced by the Neo-Confucian traditions and neoliberal flows of globalization in transnational space. Through dynamic pushes and pulls between my m/othering and compulsive mothering norms, my m/othering subjectivities and performativities are constantly formulated within the layers of the nexus of forces by changing their forms. The moment when I recognize the senses of frustration or excessiveness in my m/othering path prompts me to doubt, trouble, and/or disrupt my previous pattern of m/othering, seeking different possibilities.

In addition, my transnational m/othering is intertwined within complex power relations and constantly transforms its patterns and contours, connecting two countries, as *transnationalism* focuses on one's fluidity and mobility (Miller, 2006), as well as discursively located situatedness across national borders (Collins, 2009; Dingo, Riedner, & Wingard, 2013). The discursively constituted nexus of power also shift their routes.

For instance, the wave of neoliberal globalization shifts a set of social norms and redefines the notion of "good-ness" both locally and globally. The conventional family structure supported by Neo-Confucianism has been disrupted by the newly emerged familial format of Goose Family. The transnational parenting of Goose Family has actually engendered diverse ways of mothering by blurring the boundary of gendered private/public parenting via a dismantled notion of *home*. Flowing with the transformative m/othering subjectivities, performativities, and their contexts, my understanding of m/othering also shifts with new ways of thinking and knowing, and encounter different familial and educational situations in my daily m/othering paths.

Curriculum as Performative Acts in Transnational Space

My transnational m/othering constantly transforms and flows, responding to discursively constituted networks of mothering and educational discourse in my life trajectory. In this section, I theorize curriculum as performative acts in transnational space, which I emphasize complexity, changeability, and fluidity of curriculum within the network of power. As my m/othering has been within diverse, un/expected, and uncertain contexts disrupting geographical boundaries, curriculum is unstable and ambiguous that constantly changes its patterns through ongoing interactions with its transformative effects.

According to Judith Butler's (1993) gender performative theory, one's materiality is produced in, through, and with compulsive work of hegemonic norms. The process of materialization is "not a singular or deliberate 'act,' but rather, reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names" (p. xii, emphasis in

original). Butler highlights the *process* of formulating a performativity which constantly works with the effect of a compulsive norm or set of norms. A performativity is signified, questioned, and challenged through the process of resisting and/or failing to follow the norm; a new performativity is signified. Yet, the process is neither linear nor scheduled to happen. It is rather a temporal, simultaneous, and partial work which involves a complex connection with unknown performativities. For instance, there is no original performance until the copy is in operation. The originality of performance cannot be considered without the copy (Butler, 1990, 1993; Lather, 2007; Phelan, 1998) That is, a performativity, differentiated from the static, bounded act of performance, as a derivative “act-like” status in present continuously destabilizes and transforms its forms.

The complex network of political, economic, and educational norms repeatedly imposes a standard of “what good, successful education should be like.” The compulsive pedagogical norms which are produced to meet the demand of discursively constituted profit/nonprofit groups, constrain individuals’ learning and teaching in various educational settings and their life experiences. Through this process, a pedagogical performativity in a particular condition has emerged; the performative pedagogical status comes to be named by the virtue of iteration of the norm.

My transnational m/othering and educational experiences in South Korea and the United States are complex and cannot be oversimplified or generalized without examining socio-political historicities. Narratives in this chapter imply how “good-ness” has emerged with different forms, is shifted through diverse paths, and shaped by discursively interrelated with national politics, globalized neoliberal economy, and other complex effects. The failure to comply a reiteration of norms opens a space for reworking

and resignification; indeed, normative approaches to "good" education have proceeded as a new performative curriculum and are in flow, responding to the discursive chain of transnational educational demands.

If I focus on the *process* of formulating a performativity of curriculum in the transnational educational space, there is no authentic distinction between good curriculum and bad curriculum from the beginning. Rather, its distinction is derived from one another in the cycle of working and reworking for pedagogical possibilities. The performative action to a discursively constituted political, economic, and educational normative practice formulates *differences* between the dominant discourse of good curriculum and bad curriculum. It disrupts their bipolarized boundary through random repetitions of doing and undoing, intersecting the place of "original" performance and transformative performativity. In this scheme, the educational performance as willful, theatrical, and open to choices and the educational performativity as regulated, forced, and affected are braided together in the iterative course of complying with and resisting the normative educational practices. The deformed educational experiences will be called into question, re/worked and/or un/worked, and constantly rearticulated with a new form of performative knowledge, teaching, and learning in the process of dealing with the effects of a contemporary pedagogical norm or set of norms.

Overall, curriculum is a relational process constantly transforms its patterns with responses to the reiteration of educational norms and its citational practices—the performative curriculum. My m/othering performativity is constantly constituted anew in transnational space by questioning, troubling, and resisting the otherness and formulates differences between my m/othering reality and conventional knowledge of what a "good"

mother should be like. Similarly, I argue that everyday-doing-curriculum is performative acts, destabilizing and deterritorializing its boundary through the reiterative signification in hegemonic educational practices. My m/othering performativity and performative curriculum, thus, are always open to re/signification through failing to adhere to the norms in constructing their materialities. At this point, I have come up with dilemmas in articulating one's ontological status. How can, then, the unstable, contingent, and spontaneous moments of re/signification be understood in the process of materialization? How can I consider its inconsistent and paradoxical attributes in the course of identification of one's materiality, avoiding universalizing or essentializing? In the following chapter, I investigate further the issue of claiming one's ontological status and working with the Other (or others) by juxtaposing two different feminist perspectives.

CHAPTER V

ONTOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF OTHERNESS

I begin this chapter derived from my question of how I depict my understanding of m/othering subjectivities construction process, which is always partial and constantly shifts its patterns responding to multiple networks of power. In order to reconsider an essentialist approach to understand one's materiality¹¹, which might generalize, oversimplify, and reduce one's ontological status, I first draw from Judith Butler's and Rosi Braidotti's different feminist understandings of *difference*. By doing so, I examine the process of claiming one's contingent ontological status with Butler's concept of "strategic provisionality" (Butler, 1993b). Then, I investigate the question of dealing with otherness in collectivity, thinking with my cross-cultural research experience in the United States, transnational m/othering, and curriculum. Lastly, with my ontological understanding of otherness, I theorize curriculum with the concept of communities without consensus (Miller, 2010d) by delineating the process of formulating one's materialities and drifting with other(s) through the image of pieces of clouds in the sky.

¹¹ In this study, the term "materiality" involves one's diverse ontological statuses such as subjectivity, identity, performativity, otherness, particularity and so forth.

Understanding of Otherness

During my transnational migration to the United States, I encountered a number of cross-cultural issues. For example, when I experienced a peer review activity for the first time in an English composition class in my master's program, I remember the moment when I felt embarrassed with my classmate's honest and direct feedback on my writing. Receiving evaluation on my work from a classmate was a new and strange experience; I was even suspicious if the comment from my classmate was trustable or reliable. Furthermore, I was offended with the classmate's straight criticism, which seemed not to care about our "harmonious" relationship. My cultural knowledge of teacher's authority and value of group harmony that I had learned from my school, society, and home in South Korea differed from the one that I experienced in the United States. This culture shock led me to question how to understand "difference" and motivated me to conduct research about how people from different cultural backgrounds would react to a peer review activity for my master's thesis project in 2011 (Hwang, 2011).

Since my participants were 27 college students in a multicultural English composition class and their demographic characteristics were diverse, I classified my participants by their ethnic backgrounds for the convenience of data analysis. I divided the participant groups based on their native countries—particularly, the East and the West. I hypothesized that students from similar cultural backgrounds would react similarly in their ways of thinking and communication styles, applying the cultural models of collectivism vs. individualism (Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996) and direct vs. indirect communication styles, which emphasize "cultural uniqueness" in interethnic communication between the East and the West (Scollon & Scollon, 1981). Yet, my findings from in-depth interviews and survey results indicated that the participants' reactions and their stories did not fit in my categorization of the East and the West, as I presumed. That is, the multicultural students' reactions toward a peer review activity varied widely based on their cultural experiences, individual personality, residential statuses, influence from family or friends, and degrees of their cultural sensitivities that are constituted within duration of their living in the States (Hwang, 2011). Their positions

in ethnicity/race, gender, and citizenship were multilayered and intersected among the cultural indicators. My monolithic understanding of cultural difference and sameness based on clear-cut geographical categories overlooked my participants' complex and dynamic cultural particularities, essentialized their cultural experiences, and limited their multiplicities in cultural narratives.

Then, how can I consider the “sameness” that appears to be seemingly “natural” and generalizable? How can one’s particularity be articulated without “essentializing?” If one’s subjectivity construction is contingent, unstable, and ever changing, how can the process be addressed and where would be the point of recognition? For instance, while analyzing my discursively constructed m/othering context within complex networks of power and knowledge in the previous chapter, in order to articulate my m/othering performativity and the process of my m/othering subjectivity construction, I had to decide certain points of political remark for an in-depth analysis. In the course of determining dominant forces in my m/othering practice—the focus on the value of the Neo-Confucian, neoliberal, and transnational contexts, I sought to cut and see the sliced dimension of my discursively interconnected m/othering situation and freeze to re/collect my linked memories. Following my postmodern-epistemological stance, it was perplexing and paradoxical for me to insist that I do not tend to “generalize” or “essentialize” my m/othering experiences as common mothering practices of “Korean mothers” in the “same” context. I was particularly careful to avoid creating any grand narratives from my experience and universalize other Korean mothers’ shared struggles throughout my narratives during the process. Yet, it was even more challenging to separate and differentiate my m/othering experience from the experiences of other

Korean mothers because certain m/othering contexts are connected and the overlapped m/othering contexts are interrelated historically, socio-politically, and economically with one another. Then, how can the “connected” identity with other Korean mothers and the points of “signification” in the formulation of my m/othering performativity be understood? To investigate how to articulate one’s complex, dynamic, and fluid identity formation process and its contingent otherness, I examine Butler’s (1993a) theory of performativity again by problematizing any essentialist approach to signify one’s identity in the following section.

Point of Citation as Contesting a Boundary of Identity

In feminist poststructuralist studies, the question of how to complicate one’s identity and subjectivity construction, and its relationship with multiple-random power operations, has been a critical issue in working with the notion of “politics of identity.” Contrary to the concept of “identity politics”—which considers one’s identity as monolithic, static, and generalizable for a political use, politics of identity focuses on a subject’s fluidity, multiplicity, and particularity in their subjectivities-making processes. According to Judith Butler’s gender performative theory (1993a), one’s gender performativity is constituted through the iterative process of signification and resignification of a socio-culturally constructed gender norm or a set of norms; the repetitive performances formulate one’s gender identity and subjectivity. The discursively constituted social norms wield their power on an individual subject in circulation and produce one’s performative identity. Yet, the repetition of compulsive norms is not consistent. The set of social norms can fail to repeat its normalizing process, which performativity constantly modifies its form through the inconsistent iterative

process of citation. Therefore, each claim of identity, subjectivity, and performativity is the aftermath of the process of continuous re/signification and cannot be identical to the previous signification. Butler articulates this process in “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (1993b):

To claim that this is what I *am* is to suggest a provisional totalization of this “I.” But if the I can so determine itself, then that which it excludes in order to make that determination remains constitutive of the determination itself. In other words, such a statement presupposes that the “I” exceeds its determination, and even produces that very excess in and by the act which seeks to exhaust the semantic field of that “I.” In the act which would disclose the true and full content of that “I,” a certain radical *concealment* is thereby produced... its signification is always to some degree out of one’s control, but also because its specificity can only be demarcated by exclusions that return to disrupt its claim to coherence. (p. 309, emphasis in original)

According to Butler, revealing one’s ontological status involves the subject’s partial recognition simultaneously, because it does not include the subject’s excessive and concealed elements. Only through/with the exclusion of some points, can the subject’s status be claimed. Yet, this exclusion is questioned and returns to the claim for its rearticulation. That is, the terms that I used for elaborating my m/othering context (*Neo-Confucianism, education politics in South Korea, and global neoliberalism*) and the formation of my m/othering performativity in transnational space appear definitive and fixed in my descriptions. However, each constituent of my m/othering context is shifting its forms and meanings in particular time and space; my m/othering performativity

constantly changes its contours through inconsistent work of social norms. Within the complex and simultaneous movement, my m/othering subjectivities emerge in diversified ways and are discursively connected with various situations, so it is impossible to understand or describe them completely in a conclusive form in any case. For instance, my m/othering performativity as a transnational mother—what is called Goose Mother in South Korea—does not repeat the exact same patterns to fit the language term. Instead, there are always variables and excessive factors in the process of complying or resisting the normative Goose Mothering situations. Thus, my claimed m/othering context and performativity cannot be consistent or permanent; rather, they are products of partial, contingent, and always reconstructable citations.

In addition, the act of citation happens on the “boundary” of the term’s ontological capacity, where its limit is always unstable for modifications and open to any possible rearticulations. As soon as one’s performativity is signified with a certain referent, the signification is subject to be questioned, troubled, and destabilized to rearticulate one’s excluded elements. If a subject is signified by a certain term, the signification is already called into question and disrupted through repetitive citational practice in the process of working with its excessive accounts. For Butler (1993b), if a subject is claimed with the term defined by others, the language should be rearticulated for a proper citation. The terms defined by others such as Goose Mother and Educational Manager Mother are insufficient to describe my m/othering and need to be questioned to elaborate more. I do not follow fully the “exact” model of Goose Mother or Educational Manager Mother (I am not sure if any “exact” model exists); I do not even know the absolute meaning of those cultural terms; I am not completely aware of how my

m/othering has been practiced and how it would proceed in the future. Yet, those cultural terms are employed for contestation of the status of normative m/othering constraints and reworking for my concealed and excluded m/othering aspects. Thus, the citation process involves political demand, which accompanies resistance to the subject's exclusion, mislocation, and misrecognition of its materiality. Through the act of questioning, challenging, and reworking already signified terms, the boundary of citation for one's ontological status is deterritorialized and makes room for another citation.

My m/othering subjectivities are products of interactions between discursively interconnected historically, socio-culturally, and transnationally formulated m/othering discourses and my questions about, struggles with, and resistances to the normative m/othering knowledge. The contested significations such as Goose Mother and Educational Manager have emerged from the start as procedural, but those terms were necessary to be used for troubling and articulating my subjectivities as m/other as well as analyzing the entangled m/othering contexts. Thus, the terms used for citation are not foundational, definitive, or perpetual. Rather, those terms are flexible “to use them, to repeat them, to repeat them subversively, and to displace them from the contexts in which they have been deployed as instruments” (Butler, 1992, p. 17). When a signification was called into question, the term does not “freeze, banish, render useless, or deplete of meaning the usage of the term; on the contrary, it provides the conditions to *mobilize* the signifier in the service of an alternative production” (Butler, 1992, p.17, emphasis in original). They are malleable to change and permanently open to future articulations.

My senses of being challenged and discomfort, which emerge from the process of appropriating my m/othering subjectivities within those normative cultural terms and of

troubling their significations, surface with the strategic use of linguistic referents. The moment of citation involves the act of questioning my excessive, ambiguous m/othering components and contestation against limiting my subjectivities within definitive cultural terms such as Goose Mother and/or Educational Manager Mother. Yet, the signs that I use for signification are not permanent, foreclosing, or fully describing. They are provisional, inclusive of something that has not been named yet and always open to possibilities for re/significations.

Understanding Otherness in Collectivity

In the previous part, I have examined how to articulate one's ontological status in the process of formation of its materiality. In this section, I interrogate how one's ontology is constructed in a collective setting. In my inquiry process, I articulate how my m/othering subjectivities separated from other mothers' struggles with their children's education in South Korea. This attempt was im/possible because individual mothers are interconnected within their relationships and situatedness in their m/othering contexts. Yet, it does not mean that individual mothers share the "same" mothering context because, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, the context itself transforms responding to the flow of webs of power. In order to trouble any essentialistic understanding of one's materiality in certain collective settings, I review Judith Butler's and Rosi Braidotti's different feminist ontological investigations of "the category of women" by juxtaposing concepts of "strategic essentialism" and "strategic provisionality." In addition, I delve into how individuals work with different individuals in communities drawing from feminist poststructuralist point of views (Butler, 2001; Harraway, 1991, 2000; Miller, 2006, 2010d; Phelan, 1993, 1994).

The Category of Women

The question of understanding “sexual difference” in the relationship of women and men has long been a debate issue for feminist inquiries. In her book, *Nomadic Subject*, Rosi Braidotti (1994) considers sexual difference as the “foundation” upon which all people rest and one that cannot be dissolved easily. She remarks:

Just like a death, sexual difference is always there, whether we acknowledge it or not... the essentialist belief in ontological difference is a political strategy aimed at stating the specificity of female subjectivity, sexuality, and experience while also denouncing the logic of sexual indifferenciation of phallogocentric discourse.
(p. 131)

Although Braidotti’s feminist poststructuralist perspective focuses on the interconnectedness of identity, subjectivity, and power in sexual difference, for her, “being a woman” is always pre-existing as an ontological precondition. She urges that the fact of being a woman is an essential, original premise for the articulation of a female subject. To investigate different layers of complexity in women’s becoming, Braidotti suggests a three-level nomadic feminist project. The project proposes a guideline to understand the status of “being a woman,” by highlighting three procedures: identifying “difference between men and women” as bodily roots; “differences among women” as the collective; and “differences within each woman” as the individual. That is, for a redefinition of femininity, she argues, first, women’s empowerment and emancipation should be prioritized by identifying difference between men and women in phallogocentric dichotomy; then, women’s differences should be solidified for their strong bond as

sisters; and finally, individual woman's complexity as a(n) embodied, multiple, and fractured subject needs to be worked. In her project, raising women's consciousness for women's solidarity is a starting point to represent the feminist position. Braidotti argues for working on women's historical and epistemological specificity to redefine women's own femininity in order to secure their political purpose.

With respect to Braidotti's emphasis on prescribed sexual difference, I come to ask myself if I have thought about my femininity: how it would be, should be, and could be like. It would be unthinkable for me to marry my husband and become a mother of my two sons, if I had already accepted women's historical and psychological position as oppressed. If I had a pre-given model of being a woman or mother, my life would have been miserable, constantly mirroring the image of oppressed and dealing with ethical issues, which I would struggle with adjusting my thinking and behavior to the female codes of conduct. If I were concerned about the old, derogatory proverb, "when a hen sings loud, the house goes ill" which concerns women's social participation or success, I would not have even imagined leaving my country to study abroad, relinquishing my family duties of caring for the rest of the family members as a wife and daughter-in-law. If I was raised by the teaching, "Girls are supposed to be/do..." or "Women's lives are like..." my life journey would have been confined within the boundary of foundational, already inscribed femininity, not to mention of reduced possibility in the relationship with other women due to their womanly internalized knowledge. In addition, under the premise of foundational sexual difference, women and men will need to be treated differently—men as more like men; women as more like women. It must have also affected in my child rearing. How would I know how to raise my two sons like "real

men,” if I was taught that I was supposed to live like a woman throughout my life? The world, society, and people’s understanding of sexuality has been changing, but why should foundational sexual difference be the starting point to think about femininity, which might undermine women’s unknown possibilities?

Different from Braidotti’s (1994) perspective on sexual difference, for Judith Butler (2004) sexual difference is not a fact, not a bedrock of any sorts. She is suspicious whether sexual difference has its fully constructed foundation. She contends:

Sexual difference is not a given, not a premise, not a basis on which to build a feminism; it is not that which we have already encountered and come to know; rather, as *a question* that prompts a feminist inquiry, it is something that cannot quite be stated, that troubles the grammar of the statement, and that remains, more or less permanently, to interrogate. (p. 178, emphasis in original)

From Butler’s perspective, sexual difference is unpredictable, unknowable; rather, it is a difficult question which requires a deeper analysis of difference. It is the question of challenging any taken for granted assumptions about the difference, investigating the complexly constructed context which formulate the difference, recognizing hidden, unseen differences, and disrupting a neatly established structure of the difference. Yet, to work with the difference, the difference needs to be grasped for its articulation. For this point, she argues for taking “*partiality* which resists any clear sense of *partition*” (2004, p. 186, emphasis in original) in working with discursively constructed differences. It does not mean that there is no ontological register of sexual difference. Her point is that wherever the foundation would be, it will be constantly in the process of re/construction,

encountering its necessary “foundering, a contestation” which is “the permanent risk of the process of democratization” (Butler, 1992, p.16).

Braidotti (2011), however, takes a different stance in understanding the “foundation” of women. She supports Gayatri Spivak’s concept of “strategic essentialism,” claiming that feminist who concerns them with sexual difference “cannot afford *not* to be essentialist” (p.122, emphasis in original). Introducing the concept of strategic essentialism, Spivak (1996) postulates “a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest” (p. 214). That means, strategic essentialism allows “temporal essentialization” for a certain group of members’ advancement of solidarity. As a political strategy, strategic essentialism admits a universalized version of identity to achieve a certain group’s collective goals (Braidotti, 2011). Spivak, however, disavowed the term in her interview concerning the overuse of the term for promotion of essentialism itself. She regrets that her notion simply became “the union ticket for essentialism” with no interest in understanding the meaning of “strategy” (Danus, Johnsson, & Spivak, 1993, p. 35). Because Braidotti’s (2011) feminist project focuses on the redefinition of female ontology as collective as well as woman’s femininity as individual, she considers that her strategic use of essentialistic stance is important to “take seriously ontological question and see it, with the critique of discourse and essences, as the historic task of modernity” (p. 123).

Yet, Judith Butler (1990) raises a question about this operational use of essence in understanding women’s ontological status. By challenging the strategic use of women’s fundamental difference, Butler argues that the sure category of women affects a political closure for its own. Since the category itself characterizes its own constituted values and

dispositions, it simultaneously works as a normative and exclusionary factor. In other words, the fixed category of women, which determines its boundary with women's unitary quality, cannot include all women with diverse cultural backgrounds, which intersects among axes of gender, race, class, ethnicity, age, and other characteristics of difference. Criticisms of ethnocentric and heterosexual-based Western, White, middle class feminism by women of color, self-identified lesbians, and women from underdeveloped nations in the late 1980s are good examples (Butler, 1992; Miller, 2010) for this issue. The women who are not included in the category of women with more power come to lose ways to express themselves and their lives. In this sense, individuals' complexly constituted materialities cannot be considered within a "foundational" and "essentialistic" collective category.

Strategic Provisionality

A predictable, monolithic, and permanent category generates blindness to recognizing individuals' diverse cultural locations and differences. Furthermore, it functions not only for exclusion of others but also shuts the door for transformative possibilities of the people who might be already included in the category. For this reason, the category should be malleable for contestation, flexible for resignification, and open to possible changes in dealing with political conflicts, dissensuses, and/or other discrepancies. The category, then, requires a system of temporal citation, which would work with diversely signified women. Butler's (1993b) concept of *strategic provisionality* elucidates this point specifically. Differentiating from the notion of strategic essentialism, she articulates:

How to use the sign and avow its temporal contingency at once? In avowing the sign's strategic provisionality (rather than its strategic essentialism), that identity can become a site of contest and revision, indeed, take on a future set of significations that those of us who use it now may not be able to foresee. It is in the safeguarding of the future of the political signifies—preserving the signifier as a site of rearticulation... (p. 312)

Whereas the notion of strategic essentialism operationally concedes a category's fixity, authenticity, and universality, the concept of strategic provisionality focuses on its contingency, flexibility, and unknowability. Particularly, the category of strategic provisionality is permanently open for the process of reconstruction of its boundary. The strategic and provisional category knows "when to let it [the sign] go, living its contingency and subjecting it to a political challenge concerning its usefulness" for invocation of one's identity (Butler et al., 1992).

With the concept of strategic provisionality, I reconsider whether the category of "good" mother is malleable enough for me to question, contest, and trouble my taken-for-granted knowledge of what it means to be a good mother. The category of good mother has been functioning for me to be constantly confused about if I would include or exclude myself, or if others would accept or not accept me in the frame of good mother—historically, socio-culturally, global-economically, and edu-politically constructed discourses of good mother. The discursively formulated category of good mother within multilayered power networks prompts me to constantly question whether or not my m/othering pattern fit the qualifications of good mothers. Yet, I, as m/other, steadily work with the category by expanding my m/othering boundary—provisionally signified and

resignified named as full-time mother, working-outside mother, working-home mother, Goose Mother, Educational Manager Mother, international student mother, and so forth. My identities, subjectivities, and performativities as m/other repeat the process of contingent re/citation of its ontological registers and continuously trouble the category of mother for new invocations.

In addition, my participants' diverse individualities in my master's thesis research cannot fall on any prescribed, singular, and universal identity categories. The college students with various cultural backgrounds, which intersect levels of identity indicators—gender, ethnicity/race, citizenship, residential status, age, and so on—fabricated each individual student's particular experiences and rich narratives. The complicatedly constructed individual student's identity cannot be explained within simplified identity categories. For example, the notion of "Asian students" are problematic. It includes students who grew up in the United States since childhood, students who just came to the United States as international students, or students who earned the United States citizenship at birth but grew up in several different countries due to their parents' careers. The students were confused when asked to discern their cultural originalities (Hwang, 2011). Their complex and dynamic cultural identities could not be expressed within monolithic and parochial categories of the East and the West. However, it does not mean that I negate the value of the categories. Their contingent citations and provisional ontological registers are necessary for my partial knowability, which constantly questions, challenges, and disrupts the signified for a political purpose. Instead of being closed, the category as a "site of permanent political contest" (Butler, 1992, p. 8) is actually open to invite new possible terms.

So far, I have discussed how individuals' diverse ontological statuses can be considered in a collective category drawing on the concept of strategic provisionality. In the following section, I investigate how individuals' diverse ontological statuses (differences) can be dealt with in communities with the image of pieces of clouds in the process of formulating and drifting in the sky.

Working with Otherness in Communities

My m/othering has been constituted within the "connection" of historical, socio-cultural, and educational contexts with other mothers in South Korea. South Korean mothers ("provisionally" called) can be specified with diverse titles based on their different situatedness in their mothering, for example, full-time home mothers, working-outside mothers, single mothers, divorced mothers, Helicopter mothers, Goose Mothers, immigrant mothers, defected mothers, lesbian mothers, and so forth. Although the degree of South Korean mothers' interests and emphases on child education may be varied, under the rigid and discursively normalized educational structure, how can those different mothers' political space be secured for their own and their children's quality of life? It appears to be a difficult, and even an im/possible task because situated in different cultural, socio-economic contexts, mothers not only have different positionalities but also intersect several specified identity referents simultaneously. In this ambiguous, complicating, and unstable category of South Korean mothers, how can those different mothers work together for their "political kinship" (Haraway, 2000, p. 296)?

For this issue, Donna Haraway (2000) presents the notion of "cyborg politic," which connotes an individual (woman)'s complex ontological status relating human and

social connections, questioning “which identities are available to ground such a potent political myth called ‘us’, and what could motivate enlistment in this collectivity?” (p. 296, emphasis in original). The concept of cyborg is a hybrid of machine and organism: a creature of social reality and imagination. The cyborg is the “disassembled and reassembled, a postmodern collective and person self” (p. 302); “it is our ontology; it gives us our politics” (p. 292). For Haraway (1991), the cyborg politics does not emerge from any pre-described or shared identity. Rather, she believes that it emerges from the “affinity” of one group for another because the cyborg focuses on multiple connections for their inessential coalition. The meaning of affinity is the sense of appealing which is derived from her chemistry view of “the appeal of one chemical nuclear group for another” (p. 155). That is, when each atomic group is linked to another, it works for its status by exchanging each other’s electrons. Haraway envisions potential individuals’ inessential coalition through “cyborg politics” which highlights intersubjective exchanges for diverse historical and political connections.

Considering the “inessential coalition” with others in dealing with difference, Butler (2001) also emphasizes the significance of “collective exchange” for transformative encounters. Due to one’s fundamental dependency on the other, Butler argues, individuals cannot exist without recognizing the other and being recognized by the other. Since individuals require and desire one another’s recognition, it means that the individuals cannot be the same each other. By exposing one’s difference to the other and being exposed by the other’s otherness as well, individuals are bound to one another in their singularity. Yet, this singularity does not mean sharing what we already have. Rather, it emerges through our encounters with constant exchanges. In addition, in the

point of transnational flows and mobilities, Miller (2006) affirms that collective transnational exchange “dislocates all of us from our positions, denies any version of an essentialized *self* or place, rejects possibilities of identifying with any collective *we*” (p. 46, emphasis in original). Through the exchange of each other’s specificity, other’s differences and inequalities are recognized; the articulated differences will be called into question, or simply sustained, or even subverted. Although this political process may entail unanticipated risks or bring up possible dissensus, they can be necessary conflicts and dissonances for each individual’s possible transformations through collective exchanges.

For this political process, Phelan (1993) suggests focusing not on what we share, but the question of “What might we share as we develop our identities through the process of coalition? What might we become?” (p. 779). Coalition is neither a catchy phrase to accommodate differences among individuals nor aims to find any universality within diverse struggles. The process is not predetermined, simplistic, or transparent; rather, it is an uncertain, multi-dimensional, and complex procedure full of questions, contestations, and openness for unknown differences. She argues neither to rely on the shared identity nor to be taken for granted for the connections with others to assimilate or reject each other. The connection emerges through constant exchanges of differences and the differences also surface through the act of exchanges. Phelan also highlights the importance of examining multiple networks of power and individuals’ resistances for “local politics” (1994). Rather than singular and grand movement of power, scrutinizing the multilayered practice of local power at the social periphery will be crucial to work with individuals’ specified and diverse resistances.

Individual mothers with their own particular cultural, socio-economic backgrounds in South Korea perhaps work together through “collective exchange” for “inessential (provisional) coalition,” which prompts them to recognize other mothers’ different situations and transforms individual mothers through interactions. Since none has lived others’ lives, understanding other mothers’ local narratives would be a good starting point to recognize each mother’s political needs and work on the differences, which emerge in the process of collective exchange. By exchanging each other’s difference, individual mothers understand more about other mothers’ different m/othering situations such as a different family structure, financial status, physical or psychological inability, gender complexity, and so forth being interconnected. A collective exchange as a process of provisional coalition does not target a unity of mothers’ voices to subvert the current educational system; rather, it focuses on articulations of complexities, interconnections with other mothers, exchanges problematic m/othering issues, and possible transformative encounters among different mothers.

A Drifting Subject as Cloud in the Sky

In his book, *Body Drift*, Kroker (2012) illustrates that a subject does not reside in its fixed name of body any longer. Rather, the body is multiply contoured with various capacities of its subjectivities. In addition, social norms, which shape the subject’s thinking and behaviors, do not have any real stability. Thus, the subject and social norms are both in drift randomly. The subject’s multiplicity of body is struggling for becoming; compulsive social norms are fluctuating during the work of intermediation. I want to relate the process of a drifting subject—interplaying with other subjects and working with

circulating social norms—in the world with the ways of formulating diverse, unpredictable, but contextualized patterns of clouds in the sky.



Figure 4. The image of floating clouds in the sky (photo image taken by the author)

Becoming a floating piece of cloud in the sky, two different (hydrogen and oxygen) atoms exchange their electrons to secure their statuses in a molecular structure. Coalesced as a tiny water drop, they travel underground, on the ground, and on the mountains; in the air, sea, river, and little ponds—wherever they drift. Without knowing where they would go and what would become, numerous water droplets float in the air. When the air becomes warm enough, they travel with the warm winds up in the sky; within the cold atmosphere, the water droplets and other ice crystals condense with each other to survive. When they become large enough, they appear as a white piece of cloud to me.

The shapes of pieces of cloud are diverse. Clouds move with the wind. The different patterns of clouds are formulated by the conditions of elements in Mother

Nature such as amounts of water vapor, temperatures of the height, winds, and the interactions with other masses. Just as human individuals' lives are constituted by discursive and complex historical, social, and cultural forces within the multilayered power structure, those pieces of clouds in the sky contour their height, shapes, thickness, and colors responding to repetitive but fluctuating nature phenomena surrounding them. The elements of Mother Nature such as wind speeds, temperature of atmosphere, and density of air also change their conditions within the relations with other elements via collective exchanges.

Clouds drifting in the sky can be recognized only when I look up into the sky. There can be a clear sky with scarce and loose clouds; sometimes the clouds look like feathers and sometimes they look like giant cotton balls. Tracing the movement of clouds requires a closer look. Yet, I cannot grasp their directions, plans, and statuses with my temporary investigation. The clouds may also not be able to know what to become, how to emerge, and how they will interact among others (e.g. water droplets, ice crystals, dusts, and so on) and Mother Nature. Their interplays are too complex and dynamic to be articulated within my imagination and factualization, in their repetitive and changeable formations.

The paradoxical moment of temporal citation with signifiers and provisional recognition of a category for contestation is a process of articulating a subject's ontological status and its further articulations (Butler, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 2004). The language term and category used for demarcating the subject's ontological capacity, become the site of questioning, resisting, and resignification, and an ongoing process to invite an unknown form of transformation. They are strategically provisional, being open

to something that has not been revealed yet—the excessiveness, concealment, and exclusion. The language term and category as strategically provisional signifiers, constantly work, rework, and/or unwork to deterritorialize a subject’s boundary—the limit.

Dealing with differences in communities can be considered individuals’ affinity within complex and multiple connections. Affinity (Haraway, 1991) in this context does not mean similarity. It engages each other’s recognition as a self and the Other and mother and the Other are dependents of one another. Through the process of recognition of otherness, individuals emerge anew via working with the difference. The collective exchange (Butler, 2001; Miller, 2006) displaces one another’s locations; articulates differences that surface; and questions, challenges, and sustains or subverts the differences. As a political agenda, denying any “essentialized” version of a subject, working with differences among diverse individuals in a malleable category requires vigilant investigations of the capillary nexus of power and individuals’ specific local narratives (Phelan, 1994). Bringing my ontological understanding of a self and the Other and their otherness as well as relationship in provisional collectivity, I reconsider how curriculum can be considered differently in terms of its ontological meanings and relationships dealing with otherness within different contexts, people, and ideas.

Dealing with Otherness in Internationalizing Curriculum

In response to the wave of globalization and its effects on complex political, economic, ecological, and cultural issues, a wide range of educational professionals in the world have turned their interest to the international dimension of curriculum. According to Pinar et al. (2008), studying other countries’ educational systems and curricula has

given rise to an expansion of international exchanges by comparing and/or exchanging educational information from nation to nation. In addition, in order to enhance international understanding and knowledge sharing, there have been efforts to incorporate global educational curricula into the traditional school curriculum through the introduction of international cultural items such as foods, arts, and customs (Pinar et al., 2008). In light of the internationalization of United States curriculum studies, the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies (AAACS) was founded to highlight the importance of working outside the United States field, concerning the United States curriculum and curriculum studies' somewhat narrowed, self-absorbed, and narcissistic stance (Miller, 2005). However, although global education aims to advance international awareness and connectedness, it has brought out the issue of creating superficial and fixed knowledge of difference among other countries via simple comparing, contrasting, and trading different educational practices. For this issue, Moon (2012) points out that curriculum conversations sometimes are limited in discussing differences within a nation-state level "without deeper interrogation into the complex sociopolitical, historical, and economic interactions among nation states" (p. 1). That is, curriculum seems expected, static, and separated among countries as if there is already existing, universalized curriculum, such as the "Korean" curriculum or the "United States" curriculum.

In particular, Miller (2005) is concerned about the dichotomous understanding of local-global, inside-outside in American curriculum studies which may be isolated from the rest of the world (e.g., representation of 9-11 or war against Iraq) or reduced to worldly circumstances (e.g., standardized education to raise United States students'

global competence). She suggests the notion of “worldliness” in curriculum studies, which focuses on “tensions” and “relations” in and around local and global contexts in order “to understand our work as potentially embedded in multiple local contexts of use, not only around the world but also in the world with/in relationships of power/knowledge” (p. 247). From her point of view, the balkanized local-global curriculum engenders the risk of narrowing and controlling the field of doing and understanding curriculum. She argues that working curriculum globally is to consider local, national, and global contexts *simultaneously* and to examine their social, cultural, and historical interconnectedness, embedded in discursive power/knowledge networks. Since globalized phenomena do not emerge in an isolated condition from the rest of the world, Miller (2005) advises that multidimensional investigation of discursively connected local and global contexts as well as complexity of political educational relations will be necessary to understand transnational curriculum studies.

Named as an “international” student, I may want to disrupt the category of the international which would trap my potential positioning in this world within the binary relation of local-global. Persuaded by Miller’s (2006) concept of “transnational flow and mobility,” which recognizes “flows of bodies, cultures, and identities as assemblages of relationalities” (p. 43), I want to be more attentive to my relational situatedness, embedded in transnational space open to constant changes rather than boundedness. My juxtaposition of educational contexts between the United States and South Korea is not limited to national comparison as collective pedagogical practices. It is not the work of contrasting, imitating, and/or rejecting one another’s particularities without questioning. Rather, my partial understanding and description of two countries’ educational practices

illustrates flows of neoliberal power and interconnectedness of curriculum practices across the border of two nations. By examining g/locally contextualized two nations' educational particularities, the strategically provisional statuses of educational practices in the United States and South Korea are exchanged, questioned, and reconsidered in their connections. In the process, otherness emerges between two countries; the differences prompt transformation of both countries' pedagogical practices in their relation. Without simultaneous investigation of both constantly shifting local and global contexts in the wave of globalization, the curriculum will be limited to managing snapshot versions of information, parochial understanding of global events, and superficial knowledge of difference of others.

Curriculum with Otherness in Provisional Collectivity

To investigate how individuals and their othernesses in a collective framework can be handled within curriculum studies, I turn to Janet Miller's (2005, 2010d) concept of "communities without consensus." In the early 1970s during in the movement of United States curriculum reconceptualization, divergent perspectives of theoretical and methodological stances—including historical, poststructural, hermeneutic, constructivist, neo-Marxist, feminist, psychoanalytic, queer, and phenomenological positionalities—among curriculum theorists encountered conflicts and tensions when working together in the field. Just as curriculum cannot be defined within one fixed, prescribed, and shared version of language due to its provisionality, working with diverse curriculum theorists with different interests generates "complicating" conversations and cannot reach one unanimous consensus within a stable notion of collective community. In this sense,

Miller (2005) advocates the concept of “communities without consensus,” which pursues working with others “without pressure to merge into one position or one right answer or one identity” (p. 84). Miller (2010d) advises that communities without consensus are “composed of *selves* and versions of curriculum work that re-form daily and differently in response to difference and to the unknown” (p. 96, emphasis in original). Thus, in communities without consensus, any singular, static, and unified group and/or version of curriculum studies will be disrupted through ongoing conversations, which is “never-ending, never completed, always in-the-making, always in-relation to others and to varying constructions of difference” (Miller, 2010d, p. 97). By scrutinizing differences that emerge from otherness, curriculum and curriculum studies transform within varied dimensions of curriculum perspectives and work for their possibilities and/or impossibilities. As such, the communities without consensus envision a communal space that refuses any universal notion of a self and the Other. Individuals’ contingent differences cannot be worked in a unitary and singular version of community; any static, essential notion of community loses its fixity. Any possible communities can emerge sporadically with a “cacophony of voices” in a “difficult crossroads” (Malewski, 2010) and attempt to address, challenge, and rewrite a status of curriculum.

If I wished to fit in the category of “good” mother, my sense of otherness, dilemma, and excessive accounts in m/othering needed to be hidden or reduced to the essentialized knowledge of “good” mother. If diverse voices from different interest groups on an education reform are neglected or ignored in a simplified notion of “equal” education, multiple aspects of political stances within the relations with other groups will be overlooked. Hence, instead of rushing to fit in the predefined category or reach an

expected agreement or solution, paying attention to different voices, mapping out the context laden with tensions, and working for different possibilities will be crucial in dealing with diversity issues in curriculum. To work with otherness in a transnational space where national boundaries are blurred, Miller (2006) emphasizes the notion of collective transnational exchange, which works “amidst a stream of flows and mobilities” (p. 46). Like drifting pieces of clouds in the sky and Haraway’s chemical nuclear groups in affinity, differences arise through constant collective exchanges, which dislocate individuals’ positions and reject any essentialized version of self or collective *we*, flowing with uncertain formations toward unknown directions. Collective exchanges of difference among individuals work within their relational and permeable boundary, not closed in a normative category.

Just as in “cyborg politics” (Haraway, 2000), curriculum can be disassembled and reassembled through continuous exchanges and inessential coalition within diverse historical and political connections. Curriculum as strategically provisional reiteratively questions, challenges, and reworks its ontological status for rearticulation within communities without consensus where the cacophony of diverse voices are respected and unknown pedagogical possibilities can be imagined. Working within communities without consensus does not rely on the shared identity or a fixed category to include or exclude one another. By focusing on the relationships and tensions, which emerge among individuals’ differences within communities without consensus, curriculum and curriculum studies can be worked within more diverse, specified, and proliferated contexts rather than under the centralized, unified, or exclusive framework.

CHAPTER VI

RECONNECTED WITH M/OTHER

While residing in the United States for my graduate studies, I have come to re/establish my mother/daughter relationship with my mother. The United States has become a particular space for my mother and me to spend our quality time distanced from other family members and events. In this chapter, I investigate interrelationality in my mother/daughter relationship by focusing on how otherness emerges and works between my mother and me. Drawing from the literature which supports the concept of “dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship” (Ahmed, 2000; Butler, 2001, 2006; Deleuze, 1993; Springgay, 2008), I reconsider how the relationship with my mother has been formulated within historically and socio-culturally constituted knowledge of “good” mother. Also I examine how our patterns of m/othering are interrelated in our m/othering contexts—both as a m/other and with my m/other. Further, by troubling my conventional notion of “weaving,” I reconceptualize a self/other relationship in the process of dealing with otherness.

Working Otherness with M/other (Hwang, 2017)¹²

I still vividly remember my childhood when I hung around market places with my mother holding her hand. I also remember the smell of my mother and the feeling of comfort when she folded me in her arms. Yet, the intimacy we once had has now mutated into awkwardness as time passes. Four decades later, my mother is with me again in a strange place, where I temporarily stay to pursue my higher education, but I do not know where to begin with her. Perhaps the lengthy period of detachment during my growth to become independent causes this sense of strangeness. I still want to be her child, but now I am standing next to her as an adult individual—a m/other like her.

I grew up in South Korea in a three-generation family with my parents, two younger siblings and paternal grandmother until I married my husband. I remember my mother was always busy with caring for her three-generation family and household as well as working as a weaving artist. I doubt if she has ever had any leisure time for herself in her lifetime. To me, she seemed to be born as an inherently diligent, sacrificing, and caring person. Whether or not my mother's way of mothering was her choice, she was devoted to us. I hardly felt my mother's empty place when she worked, because food was always prepared and waiting for me, and she did not leave home during the day for long.

Over two decades have passed since I married; many things have happened in my family. My siblings are all married and created their own families. During this time, my paternal grandmother and my father passed away, and suddenly, my mother was left alone looking for her own space to live. She appeared to concentrate more on her weaving projects and actively worked to extend her career position in the field. I barely remember her tears or sighs. To me, my mother was a strong, self-controlled, and

¹² With a minor revision, this chapter is drawn and written from my published article (Hwang, 2017). I have a permission to use the content of the article.

problem-solving person all of the time. When she faced family or financial issues in my childhood, I recall standing helplessly but anticipating that she would overcome the difficulty with her strength, wisdom, and self-reliance. She has been my life role model in cultivating her own space as she struggled with normative familial and societal discourses of what a married woman should be like.

Yet, as time flows, my mother's location in our family seems to have changed. From her 30s until her 50s, she raised three children and supported my father and grandmother. Her care for her family, which for all those years had been centered on our family alignment, has shifted. I remember a moment of surprise, which connected my mother and me in a different way, intersecting the memories of my past and present.

We had a pair of classical China-style mahogany curio cabinets in the corridor connecting the living room and kitchen in my childhood home. Each cabinet had three glass shelves full of my mother's collections of various shapes and kinds of souvenirs from her overseas trips, and one shelf held my father's collection of unusual and bizarre lighters. I used to stop at the cabinets, open the glass doors, and play with those exotic and interesting pieces. I also remember when my mother stood at the cabinets in contentment, polishing the objects with a dry cloth and rearranging them. Her collections were mostly unique specimens of teaspoons, miniatures of shoes, and small sizes of antique tablewares. I am still curious how she had accumulated all those treasures amid her varied responsibilities.

My mother married my father who lived with his mother. They all lived together over 40 years. The death of my grandmother and father occurred consecutively, so my younger sister's family decided to move in my mother's home, worrying about my mother's feelings of loss and isolation. At that time, I was married and I lived with my in-law family. No one knew whether or not my mother had ever imagined living alone, but my mother and my sister's family seemed to get along with each other quite well. Voluntarily or involuntarily, my mother seemed to freely travel more often and concentrate eagerly on her museum work while living with my sister's family.

However, one day my mother notified me via Internet chat that my younger sister faced a marriage crisis; I could not expect that this family incident would put my mother in a difficult situation having to live in the same house while this transpired.

A few weeks after our Internet chat, my mother texted me that she had decided to sell her treasures in the mahogany cabinets at a local antique market and she revealed her struggles and feelings of emptiness to me. She seemed to be downsizing her property to prepare to be alone. She was missing my father's presence so much. Although a married son in a family is expected to support his elderly parents in the Korean society, my mother seemed uncomfortable with the idea of being a burden or unwelcome in my brother's home. I thought living independently with more freedom would be a good experience for my mother because she was still young (at least to me) and had her own work. Yet, she might have been afraid of being neglected or forgotten by her family as she aged.

In the beginning of the texting, when my mother expressed her worry about some difficulties my sister was experiencing, I suggested that she should stay with my sister to help out, because "You're the Mom. She needs you." Abruptly, the flow of textual conversation ceased.



Figure5. My mother's collection in the curio cabinet

At the moment of disconnection, I thought again about what I had just advised her to do. My mother might have been put in an ambivalent situation: leaving my sister to secure her own space as an individual or staying with my sister to support her. My careless, taken for granted expectation for my mother—to be a "good" mother—might have hurt her heart and made her silent. To a woman who lost her place in her family complexity, I reminded her of her duty as Mother and touched her sore spot. In my presumption, my mother should always be there, yielding her comfort, and sacrificing what she has for her children, as I intend to do for my children. I was not sure how to help her because she did not tell me how she would like to handle this situation.

Would my mother's close friends be able to fathom her dilemma better than I could? I probably was not ready to admit my mother's dwindling position in our familial arrangement. In her role as my mother, I wonder if she regretted her honesty with me, her daughter. I wonder if the conversation would have been continued if I had responded

to my mother with less expectation, as others in her life would have done. Who is the real Other to my mother? Is it me, as a daughter who expects a mother's conventional role even from this distance? Or others who care for and advise her, and who are in proximity to her?

When I learned my mother wished to sell objects from the childhood cabinet, I requested that she not sell her treasures and memories to unknown others. I did not feel that the collection was only my mother's to dispose of at will; the objects are also embodied within my life and memories and perhaps in other family members' memories with their varying nuances. As a result of my request, I inherited three treasured baskets from my mother when I visited South Korea last summer. I uncovered a red cloth over one of the baskets. The collections no longer showed off their novelties as they had in the mahogany cabinet; instead, they were piled on top of each other in three plastic baskets. Some pieces were wrapped with soft tissues to prevent breakage. I felt like I was able to sense my mother's emotions and touches when she removed the items from their place in the cabinet and packed her histories and memories in those baskets. Memories of standing on my toes to reach the curio cabinet and hearing my mother's humming sound when she polished each item with a dry cloth came flooding back to me. However, the piled objects generate different meanings for me at this moment. They have evoked my curiosity about my mother's solitude and my desire to know more about her.

When I was a child, I must have been just fascinated with the uniqueness of those treasures. Yet I am now curious to hear my mother's stories about each item—where and how she obtained these special objects, and what her emotional status was when she encountered them. I wonder how other family members would remember that collection

in the curio cabinet. If I had not requested the items from my mother, the collection might have been scattered into other people's lives and stories. The treasures constantly create new meanings in response to my questions, interacting with my discursive memories with/of my mother as channels of intergenerational communication.

Those objects do not always-already exist there for me offering static meanings. Rather, I engage with them as "evocative companions" to, "material remnants" of, "touchstones" for, and "storehouses" of our family life journey (Bailey, 2016). I particularly pay attention to my m/other relationship, and ponder about how this transforms their physicality and ontological meanings. Indeed, they shift from their place in my childhood past to my adult present, from my memories of my mother to my relationship with my m/other.

Through the family incident of relocating my mother's residence, I came to reconsider distance and proximity between my mother and me. We are interconnected with various forms within the unit of family as mother and daughter, woman, and *individual*, but there is no way for me to know my mother's individual space. I only partially know and understand my mother's life and her status in connection and disconnection with my situatedness, which constantly flows and shifts. Our dis/connections are unexpected, multi-directed, entangled, and overwrapped by, with, and around one another. When my mother and I encounter a moment of disconnection, which arises in the midst of our taken for granted mother-daughter understanding, we are surprised by and question each other's otherness; we challenge and redirect the route of our relationship. Although we rarely discuss our relationship directly, I can sense that the layers within our bonds are shaped through our engagement and they also extend to

unknown areas. In the following section, I examine our m/other relationship by analyzing my mother's and my own m/othering contexts, which have shaped our m/othering performativities and subjectivities, and our interconnections as women as well as individuals.

M/othering Contextualization: M/other to M/other

My mother was born in 1948 and raised in Incheon, South Korea when my country underwent its independence from Japanese occupation and the Korean War. The whole nation was struggling to overcome devastation from the war and endeavoring to develop the country from a poor, agricultural society into a strategically industrialized nation. During our interview for my research, my mother reflected that she lived her childhood feeling relatively less deficit than others due to my maternal grandfather's growing business in running several barges. At that time, the patriarchal tradition preferred son to daughter in Korea. My mother, however, was treated specially as the eldest and only daughter in her family, which included her four younger brothers. For example, at meal times she was served with my maternal grandfather at a separate dining table, while the other four younger brothers sat with my maternal grandmother. Despite this unusual treatment for a female child, when my mother grew up and prepared to leave home, her life was gradually directed and molded into what society had valued, expected, and practiced for women.

During this period, "scientific homemaking and childrearing" (Choi, 2009; Lee, 1999) were regarded as important knowledge for women in the effort to modernize the family unit. Criticizing the patriarchal Neo-Confucian tradition prevalent in the early 20th

century, the Western women missionaries in Korea highlighted the importance of women's education and training in scientific domesticity claiming, "the best families now demand an educated daughter-in-law" (Choi, 2009). Within this socio-cultural atmosphere, my mother proceeded to enter college, majoring in home economics, which was the most popular area of study for young women pursuing a college degree in the late '60s in South Korea. My mother recollected that most of her colleagues believed that becoming a wise mother and good wife was the ultimate virtue of married women. Being married to a "good" man and having children as early as possible after college graduation was a common ideal for my mother and her colleagues at that time.

In addition, the wave of scientific mothering encouraged mothers to attend to their children's needs and development through seeking out information and utilizing it. As the nation developed in the '60s and '70s, the significance of early childhood care and education came to be increasingly recognized, with greater emphasis on the mother's role as an educational manager of her children's education (Lee, 1999). In South Korea, children's education has been highly valued for family wellbeing and national prosperity, ever since the Neo-Confucian tradition was propagated from China as ruling principles of establishing the Joseon Dynasty (as far back as 1392). The Neo-Confucian emphasis on the "rank of order" and "distribution of roles" in family organization rationalized mother's domestic care for the children's education as means to help perpetuate the system of social hierarchy and class inequality. Educational level legitimated an individual's social status and a family's dignity. Therefore, mothers were expected to "bring up their children to be winners with high intelligence, ability, and motivation to succeed in a competitive world" (Lee, 1999, p. 17). By taking a full control of scheduling

her children's educational programs, continuously seeking new information, and expending a great deal of time and financial resources, mothers were responsible for their children's academic success, and in the end, for their families' wellbeing and honor. In South Korea's stable economic era of the 1980s, fueling a capitalist consumer society, the private education industry bloomed.

I remember that I had some private learning experiences in my childhood. It was the 1980s when I was an elementary student. I learned about computer operating systems, playing the piano, and painting skills in nearby private institutes (called Hagwons). These learning experiences helped me explore diverse disciplines beyond the school curriculum. When I was in secondary school, I took some math and English lessons from a college student even though the law did not fully allow such private tutoring. Why did my mother take those risks in arranging tutors and private academies for me? Despite the cost and her busy schedule, why did she care about arranging my after school program? Thinking about my m/othering routine in South Korea, the m/othering pattern of my mother's and mine appear iterative and similar to each other in sharing particular time and space although a generation had passed. My mother's and my m/othering patterns seem gradually changing, responding to our temporally situated m/othering contexts.

Furthermore, different from the "ideal" image of mother that my mother had shown to me in her mothering of me, she did not teach me "what a girl/woman should be like." My mother did not send me to a "bride school" to prepare me to be a *better* wife, mother, and daughter-in-law for my "secure" marriage life. When I married in 1995, specialized institutions (e.g. the Korean Traditional Cultural School and cooking classes for brides) taught lessons about effective house management, child rearing, and traditional etiquettes for in-law families. Learning proper behaviors and manners to be a wife, mother, and daughter-in-law was overtly regarded as a virtue for brides from certain social classes in Korean society. Nevertheless, my mother did not let me hang around in the kitchen because she knew that after marriage I would inevitably have kitchen duty to support my own family. She probably did not want me and my sister to comply with

women's scripted duties while she cared for us. She might have wished us to enjoy a kitchen-free life while we could.

She also often expressed to me how she hated my paternal grandmother when she did not show up to see and celebrate my younger sister's birth because she was not a boy. My paternal grandmother was expecting a grandson from my mother, but when my mother had another girl after me, she was upset and worried that she would not have a son to continue the family's bloodline. The Neo-Confucian tradition of patrilineal society regarded a daughter as a temporary member of her natal family; upon her marriage, she belonged to her husband's family. To maintain her husband's lineage, the woman was obligated to produce a boy. Without a son, the woman could be legitimately divorced by her husband and his family because not bearing a son was one of the seven sins that a married woman could commit (七去之惡). This included: disobedience to parent-in-law, bearing no son, adultery, jealousy, hereditary disease, garrulity, and larceny (Lee, 2005; Lee & Park, 2001).

The Neo-Confucian ideal on sustaining harmony in a family and society required women's sacrifice and concession as their virtues. The Neo-Confucian gender norm urges women to accept "the burden of nurture and reproduction as their ultimate duties, and keep their proper place in the interior of the household" (Lee, 2005, p. 96). My mother also confessed her ambition that she once dreamed of being a successful business owner because her rattan woven furniture was on market with a surging number of orders. And yet, she decided to relinquish her desire by prioritizing her family duties to support her mother-in-law, husband, and three children. If she were selfish and courageous enough to sacrifice her children and household for her dream, what would have happened to me and

my family? My mother's narratives about her m/othering as well as her life as a married woman in socio-cultural norms were surprising but resonated with my own m/othering ambivalence which is "camouflaged, masked by the normative discourse of motherhood," (O'Reilly, 2004, p. 14) in the process of challenging the denial of such reality.

Interwoven M/othering

The society and people's perceptions have been gradually changing, but my struggles within the binary option between caring for family and cultivating my career appear similar to my mother's. Having a "good" balance between the two seems im/possible because any choice could raise family conflicts, constant agonizing, and endless questions to me. When I had to quit my first job to focus more on my family; when I decided to resign my teaching vocation outside again and work at home to care more for my children; when I was overwhelmed by others' expectations of me as wife, mother, and daughter-in-law, I was troubled with questions of what "a good enough" woman should be like. Although my mother did not overtly teach me any patriarchal lessons, they remain in the network of systems and people's beliefs, constantly disrupted and contested, and inform my inconsistent ways of thinking and behaving.

Interestingly, I married young, during the year of my college graduation, and began my newlywed life with my husband and in-law parents as if I were chasing the way my mother had lived. My in-law parents wished to keep us close to them because my husband was the only son in the family. I could not resist the request because I grew up learning through popular proverbs, folk tales, media, and from my own parents how practicing filial piety (孝) for parents would be an important quality in order to be a good offspring. In retrospect, I realized that accepting my reality and duties within my marriage structure would be wise. Old sayings had taught me: "Once married, you should become a ghost of the in-law family" and "Live three years as dumb, deaf, and blind after marriage," emphasizing the virtue of obedience and patience for married women. Sure

enough, I had internalized these old teachings, and I did not problematize my position in the structured family organization because I believed that my silence would secure my family's harmony. I persuaded myself that raising my children with their grandparents' love and teaching them reverence for the elderly in an extended family setting would also be blessings for my children. In some sense, I might have been proud of myself to be complimented for being a "good" daughter-in-law who "wisely" sustained peace in the family. Yet, fulfilling my expected roles for my in-laws, husband, and children had been a complex life course for me.

In addition, the Neo-Confucian emphasis on honoring family and national prosperity remains also relevant to my mothering as I try to meet these societal demands by raising my children to become highly qualified human resources in the neoliberal flow of globalization. Rather than supporting my children to find their ways of learning and giving enough time for exploration, I might have rushed them to produce their visible outcomes. In the name of education, I might have driven my children to live for success, hoping that they gain better recognition in the world of reckless competition. To win the race of neoliberal education, I could not help but join the complicity which might blind my children and me to know what they really want and need to learn, and how I want and need to help them, swayed by the contemporary educational norms. I might have guided them to learn how to excel and surpass other children with better-prepared strategies, but indeed I did not want to choose this path of education for my children. In this context, a mother is encouraged to perform as an "Educational Manager" (Park, 2010) for her children, taking a full control of scheduling their private lesson programs, seeking out new information, and always being ready to provide transformation. The mother should

always be accessible and responsible for her children's academic fulfillment, and ultimately, for her family's wellbeing and honor. In this situation, if a mother is not a full-time mother, she can feel guilty, isolated, and excluded due to her lack of availability in providing enough time and effort for her children's education.

Considering my m/othering performativity for my children, I might have been repeating my mother's way of m/othering. My mother's effort to provide me with private education, dedication to her family and home management, sacrifice of her career advantages, and resistance to patriarchal rules might have been shaped by the forces that had affected her throughout her lifetime. Although a generation separated us, our m/othering patterns might be iterative and appear similar in degrees, as our m/othering contexts have gradually shifted responding to particular socio-political and economic demands of the society and world. As my mother's m/othering performativity had been shaped within the forces of historically, socio-culturally, and politically formulated Neo-Confucian, scientific, and neoliberal mothering discourses, so these discourses have also influenced the formation of my m/othering in continuum. As a form of resistance to the patriarchal role distribution in the familial structure, my mother refused to teach me what a girl/woman should be like. Instead, she provided me with rich learning environments and modeled her resistance to the effects of the normative constraints of mothering for me. In my m/othering turn, the effect of neoliberal globalization was added; it encourages people to equip for global competence and participate in free competition. Perhaps my transnational m/othering in the United States was promoted by pushes and pulls among the remnant of Neo-Confucian ideals which forced me to be a good mother in response to global trends for raising my children. My transnational m/othering, as a form of resisting

institutionalized familial structure and the normative educational context in South Korea, is still marked by ambiguity and uncertainty, constantly troubled by questioning the meaning of “good” education, seeking other possible ways of doing mothering by repeatedly rearticulating my self as m/other.

Knowing m/other is never complete, transparent, and universal as I constantly reshape my m/othering narratives, which exceed any categorical descriptions of “good” mother in contemporary mothering discourses. In the following section, I examine how otherness (excessiveness) in m/othering can be recognized and dealt within a self/other relationship via theoretical exploration.

Working with Otherness in a Self/other Relationship

The Flower

*Before I called her name,
she was nothing but a gesture.*

*When I called her name,
she came to me
and became a flower.*

*Like I called her name,
will someone please call my name
that suits my color and fragrance?*

I, too, long to become her flower.

We all yearn to become unforgettable meaning.

You to me, I to you

Long to become a gaze that won't be forgotten.

(Kim Chun-Su, 1958, translated by the author)

I vividly remember the moment that I wrote this poem on the inside cover of my notebook when I was pondering the meaning of *recognition* that I encountered in my first semester course, Multicultural and Diversity Issues in Curriculum in my doctoral program. Reconsidering the meaning of *difference* in a self/other relationship had a huge impact on me and problematized my taken for granted knowledge about multiculturalism, which might have essentialized, reduced, and generalized other's particularities. When I wrote this poem on my notebook, I was fascinated with articulating the moment of recognizing and the meaning-making process between a self and the Other. However, in this poem, the self (I) recognizes the Other (her) with full consciousness and entitles her as a flower (unforgettable meaning) through the act of calling her name. The Other remains as a mere gesture until being called by the self. That is, the self and the Other are separated from the beginning and inherently distinguished from each other in their relationship until the recognition happens. Although the poem illustrates the process of recognition between a self and the Other descriptively, the act of recognition (calling) actually limits each other's form of becoming with the affirmation of becoming something ideal (flower as unforgettable meaning).

Yet, I argue that the process of recognizing and dealing with *otherness* in a self/other relationship does not happen in that simplified, causal, or sequential setting. The process is dynamic, complex, and even risky because it brings tension between two different elements to get stuck, push against each other, and move beyond the boundary. The movement uses and troubles the boundary of the self and the Other simultaneously and brings fertile new practices between them (Lather, 2007). In addition, Springgay (2008) challenges the dualistic understanding of self-other relationship by reconsidering

the meaning of “stranger.” A stranger (the Other) is not out there separated from the self, but a some-body who is already recognized by the self as a stranger. It means that the self and the Other are not inherently differentiated from the beginning, as the poem *The Flower* describes; rather, they are already connected, recognized as something. Thus, the Other is not an any-body who is “always-already-different,” but a some-body who is already recognized with the name of “the Other.” This self/other relationship is not detached from one another; instead, it is already interconnected, open to uncertain and provisional interactions.

In my m/othering process, my taken for granted knowledge of *good* mother as the Other has been detached from my self as an illusory model that I never attain but always desire to be. Yet, my m/othering actually has been constituted, enmeshed with the illusionary image of the good mother. My conventional knowledge of good mother has been constructed throughout my lifetime via my private/public learning experiences about good mothering—from my mother’s mothering, others’ recognitions, media sources and inputs, and interactions with friends, relatives, and other mothers. The discursively constructed knowledge of good mother has permeated my experiences throughout my life course, and I have absorbed and embodied this knowledge in my thinking and behavior. It has played an important role in both determining and evaluating my m/othering. In addition, the otherness of my mother emerges only in encountering my expectations for my mother, particularly when I place us in a binary relation of mother-daughter. In the already-different frame of self-other relation, if my mother deviates from my taken for granted image of the good mother, a moment of tension surfaces: a surprise, silence, hesitancy, and breakage between us.

In *Transformative Encounters* (2001), Judith Butler articulates that when a self and the Other encounter they are already becoming something new. Their recognition of otherness constantly compels them to move beyond what they have been at the moment of encounter. Springgay describes the interrelations as “contiguous and folded, blurring the border” (2008, p. 60). As my interview experience with my mother raised the question of our distance within a separated, power-imbalanced researcher-researched setting, my attempt to know about my mother as a researcher startled, confused, and pushed me to contemplate the otherness of my mother as well as the boundary in our relationship. The moment of abrupt disconnection while texting with my mother from the opposite side of the world as she was struggling to figure out her next living arrangements actually touched and unsettled the boundary between us that I had taken for granted.

Furthermore, the otherness cannot be known, planned, or determined prior to the encounters. My encounter with my mother’s otherness in this particular time and space was not intentional or expected. My subjectivity in a transnational space works in a temporal path for reestablishing our mother/daughter relationship, connecting two geographical points (South Korea and the United States). I neither anticipated nor predicted encountering the memories of my mother’s collections in the mahogany cabinet. I recognized the distance with no plan during the process of researching on/with my mother. Plus, I experienced my mother’s private space through an abrupt communication via texting. These encounters enabled my mother and me to emerge as something new, producing changes in our mother/daughter boundary. Through these encounters, the boundary of taken for granted mother-daughter relationship can be

blurred; binary ways of being and thinking can be redirected. The moments of dis/connection and re/connection with my mother also continuously disrupt my normalized and routinized knowledge of good mother.

Yet, in the process of troubling the boundary between a mother and the Other, I often find myself being located in an ambivalent situation in thinking of the issue of ethics—the question of *how I treat otherness well*. Under the pressure of normalized expectations, rules, and principles, there is always one absolute answer to fit in the category of right or wrong. To be regarded as a good mother and a good daughter, I am supposed to ignore or silence my resistance to the category of good mother. Discursively constructed societal norms usually tell me how to think and act, but if I deviate from the range of what society labels *normal*, I come to struggle against the feelings of being abnormal and I bind my self within a set of norms where it is unclear who set it for whose sake. Nevertheless, I work to fit the prescribed (artificial) criteria and become a closer image of perfection—the romanticized and illusory version of oneself.

Regarding my question of how I can deal with the otherness well, Butler (2006) poses a more sophisticated inquiry: “how to treat the Other well when the Other is never fully other, when one’s own separateness is a function of one’s dependency on the Other, when the difference between the Other and myself is from the start equivocal” (p. 116). Ahmed (2000) regards ethics as “a question of how one encounters others as other” (p. 138). In a self/other relationship, we recognize differences provisionally through temporal interactions within particular contexts. It is problematic to place a certain standard in a fixed category. The moments of tension within a self/other relationship emerge through colliding with fixed, preset, and taken for granted assumptions for each

other. If I expect my mother to be always strong, sacrificing, loving, and understanding, she will be isolated and reduced in the knowledge of what a “good” mother should be like. In contrast, if my mother always presupposes my filial, obedient, and caring attitudes for her, which are coded within historically and socio-culturally constituted Neo-Confucian teaching of the “good” daughter, I would feel displaced, excluded, and distant from my mother. However, any excessive component that surpasses what is regarded as normal is not something to be expelled; rather it needs to be understood as “force, desire, and relationality” (Springgay, 2008, p. 18), which invites more possibilities in the relationship toward ever yet known.

The excessive component resists the normalized knowledge and practice, which insist on maintaining stability in the relationship and controlling one another’s process of becoming. The resistance destabilizes existing norms, creates a spot for a new possibility, works again to build new understanding in the relationship as my mother’s unspeakable story complicated my presumed understanding of my mother and produces new knowledge of my mother. By undergoing this process, my mother and I seem to gain more layers of stories in our relationship than we had ever imagined. Yet, this process is not organized in a linear order; the boundary of the relationship will shift with new encounters. The unexpected and contingent moment of excessiveness opens spaces for an unknowable and unforeseeable “more” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 55). My mother and I have been embodied and embedded within socially and culturally constructed gendered norms and codes, formulated over a long period of time, within a nexus of patriarchal and neoliberal power. By interrogating multilayered power operations and their discursive ways of knowledge production, we may be able to map out how the normalized practices

reduce and restrain us in terms of living as mother and daughter in family and society as well as how they impact our daily lives.

In the following section, I investigate the way of recognizing complexity and dynamics in constituting my m/other relationship by troubling my conventional understanding of *weaving*. Focusing on the process of weaving, I reconceptualize a self/other relationship and its working with otherness as visual analysis.

Weaving: A Way of Thinking and Knowing

Weaving has been my mother's lifetime career as well as a source of personal pleasure for over 40 years. Nonetheless, I have few memories of my mother and I weaving something together. Weaving might have been my mother's private work in which she could enjoy her solitude, distanced from her family duties and routines. Memories of my participation in her weaving remain rare, but I clearly remember the quiet moments in my childhood when I sat by her and watched her weave. I used to concentrate on her calm but skillful hand movements creating a simple knot into a new pattern. I became engaged with my mother's weaving again while I was helping my mother with her project with a Cherokee Nation basket-weaving artist over the three decades later in the United States. The act of weaving resonated differently with me this time—more closely related and connected with my inquiry of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship. During my mother's visit to the United States, I asked my mother to teach me how to weave a basket for the first time. When she returned to South Korea, I practiced weaving at home using my backyard vines by removing leaves from the stems. Learning how to weave requires time in order to adjust to the complicated rules and

patterns, but, once learned, the act of weaving becomes therapeutic. Surrounded with the aroma of moist greens, I became absorbed in touching the leaves and stems of the plants and with the process of repetition to create something new.



Figure 6. My first weaving in the United States with backyard vines

Practicing weaving often inspires me to think about one's identity formation process in a community, which has been my core inquiry throughout my graduate studies. I also thought that weaving was a great metaphor for describing a relationship of self and the Other. Yet, when I tried to see the meaning of weaving with my

predetermined and separate understanding of a self and the Other, nothing but a neatly woven structure, which is calculated and pre-designed for its purpose, appeared. There was no way for me to imagine any dynamics and complexities within its neatly organized structure. To my knowledge, the two different strands for weaving were static and objectified materials waiting to be woven within a preset order.



Figure 7. “Order and Change” woven with sedge by my mother

The image of the basket above is my mother’s woven artwork, exhibited in the 2009 Philadelphia Art Craft Show in the United States. When I appreciate the woven basket from a holistic view, I see a beautifully woven basket, textured with very dense layers of repetitive patterns. The woven layers are so tight; they do not seem to allow any space among those woven knots. The title of artwork is *Order and Change*. The artist’s description explains, “Order is inconvenient but gives us comfort. Change can be chaotic but grants freedom. Beauty is created by repeating order and change” (Joun, 2012). If I had read this before my graduate journey, I would have never suspected the clarity of these phrases. In her description, the binary pair of order-change, inconvenience-comfort, and chaos-freedom constructs beauty. Through the repetition of the divided notion of order and change, beauty can be constructed. Yet, the quality of beauty cannot be constituted by the simplistic dichotomy. As far as I am concerned, there needs to be more elaborations when describing the process of creation of beauty, particularly, in terms of

articulating its complexities and dynamics. Those definitive statements seem to reduce and abbreviate the materiality of the artwork. Weaving prescribed patterns, which would repeat a bifurcated act of “order and change,” impedes imagining something more to appreciate. Then, how can the conventional understanding of weaving as holistic, divided, and pre-structured be reconsidered? In the following part, I probe different ways of thinking about weaving and connect the new idea into analyzing my m/other relationship by focusing on a process of weaving.

Thinking Differently in Weaving

When my mother stays with me in the United States, she weaves new creatures with various materials: a geometric napkin basket with honeysuckle and coasters with unnamed vines from my backyard, and a sewing box woven with cattails collected from local swamp areas. After learning about the Cherokee Nation’s traditional weaving patterns from local weaving artists, she wove a traditional Korean square tray with bundles of sedge, which she had brought from Korea, incorporating Cherokee weaving patterns. I was surprised with my mother’s rapid weaving of the tray despite it being her first attempt to weave new patterns, which clearly required different skills. Yet, the technique was not totally foreign to my mother; she was able to apply her previous weaving strategy and knowledge to weaving Cherokee traditional patterns.



*Who are you?
Where are you 'originally' from?
Whom do you want to be called?
I don't know who I am; I don't know who you are.
But we are encountered, connected, entangled,
and created with recurrent movements.
And constantly transform
our contours and nuances in different milieus.*

Figure 8. A square tray with Cherokee patterns

This patterned tray emerged anew through interactions with two different cultures enmeshed within my mother's desire of weaving new possibilities. By incorporating a design of Korean traditional tray with the Cherokee patterns and symbols using the material harvested from South Korea, my mother was able to weave and connect these two cultures together. The newly created tray involves provisional, multiple, complex meanings of "culture," woven in the transnational space where national and geographical distinctions blur. Although I know that my mother wove this tray after exchanging different weaving techniques with the Cherokee Nation's basket weavers, I do not know all of the stories that this tray holds. I do not know what inspired my mother to weave this tray, why she attempted to weave it using the material that she transported from Korea, or the other possible designs she considered. The materiality of the woven tray does not have any fixed origin or destination; its meanings are open-ended, derivable, and still in the making.

Working Self/other in Weaving

The act of weaving involves crossing two pieces of strands. The warp becomes a wall (supporter), and the weft weaves around the warp. In order to produce a woven dimension, it is necessary for both the warp and the weft to be bound firmly, so that neither is loose. If the warp and the weft do not cross each other, nothing new can be created. They define themselves through their existences and interactions. The warp, usually hidden beneath the weft's weaving, serves as a frame, providing strength to the whole weaving structure.

The two different elements touch and cross each other in proximity to build up woven lines. Similar to Deleuzian understanding of “the fold” (1993)¹³, in weaving, the warp and weft work together; they create a dimension inside as well as outside at the same time. Each weft takes turns to weave the warp, which includes repeating weaving and unweaving. This doubled



Figure 9. A process of weaving

¹³ Deleuze's figuration of “the fold” (1993) conceptualizes an interrelationship between soul and matter, challenging the Cartesian separation in mind and body. In his view, a fold creates inside and outside simultaneously. In the boundary of inside and outside, the fold creates a space of tension and excitement. The doubled act of repetitive folding and unfolding produces additional folds, interconnected. In the movement of un/folding, a fold invites another fold when touched by one another.

work invites an additional weaving and brings sustainability in its connectivity; in the place of touching and crossing each other, a new pattern emerges. Although the warp and the weft stand separately, they are interdependent in creating patterns. They interact in a complementary position to add an aesthetic component as well as to provide the durable quality of weaving. By touching and interacting with each other, the warp and the weft transform simultaneously from a single piece of strand to the complex and entangled status of being “interwoven.”

In addition, in the case that the weft weaves to the end of its length, another cord is connected to the current strand. The un/expected linkage might cause fragmented connections in lines or inconsistent woven surfaces. The hues, thickness, strength, and flexibility of each strand cannot be identical, nor are the weaving conditions always the same. They can be varied depending on weaving material’s status, weaving environment, and the weaver’s mood or use of techniques. Also, the moment of “dropping a stitch” adds more traces on unknown weaving surface through the act of un/weaving. The hesitancy or delay does not necessitate hasty correction for the seamless; rather, it invites new narratives in the weaving space.

As the warp and the weft touch and cross, creating a pattern in their boundary, another woven space emerges. The boundary of the interwoven space does not just stay still by offering the venue of weaving. Rather, it facilitates the doubled movement between the two elements and joins the very changes. At the very moment of intersecting two different strands, small spaces are created in-between the woven lines. The act of weaving does not separate the relationship of the weaving element: the warp, the weft,

and their boundary. All elements are closely and complexly related to each other, producing patterns and transforming themselves.

Just as in weaving, where nothing new is created without touching and crossing of each strand, my m/othering subjectivities, performativity, and relationship with m/other are formulated through interacting closely with our particular m/othering conditions, which the dominant circulation of power can easily simplify and regulate. Just as the style of my basket emerged through interweaving of my stream of thoughts, technical effects, and weaving strands, my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other are shaped within diverse m/othering conditions. Just as a mother is signified and resignified as naturally caring, devoting, and educationally successful within a network of mothering discourses (the Neo-Confucian ideal, scientific mothering campaign, educational reforms, media inputs, others' gazes, and so on), the woven lines are generated through a combination of multiple effects of a weaver's finger pressing, frictions among weaving materials, and the weaver's intuition.

As two different weaving strands repeat the movement of weaving and unweaving in a weaving structure, my mother's and my m/othering constantly formulates and reformulates our performativities by repeating and/or failing to repeat the regulated mothering norms. While resisting dominant m/othering discourses, my mother and I continue to seek other possibilities in our m/othering, cultivating our own space as m/others as well as individuals. Whether we construct our m/other relationship or our relationship is fabricated by the force of compulsive mothering norms, in the interwoven dimension, it is complex to discern the point of origin due to their simultaneous work.

In weaving, the warp does not stand stiff and wait to be woven by the weft; instead, their synchronized and recurrent acts of un/weaving indeed blur the distinction between the act of weaving and being woven. As m/others constantly question and challenge their ways of being, m/othering discourses are expanded and enriched with other possible m/othering vocabularies; while the m/othering context modifies its realm, the boundary of m/othering performativities transforms. This instantaneous work entangles the connectivity of m/other, mother/daughter, and mother/context in the m/other relationship.

Just as a moment of “dropping a stitch” in weaving, a moment of surprise and disruption emerge in the m/other relationship. The fragmentations and inconsistencies add more vibrancy to the woven textures as otherness and excessiveness bring more narratives into my m/other relationship. Any seamless, fixed, and monolithic version of understanding the m/other relationship is unthinkable due to its fluidity, mobility, and changeability. Rather than arriving at a fast conclusion or suggesting a simplified remedy to my question of understanding m/other, mapping out entanglement in a self/other relationship will facilitate a close examination of the segments in the woven space, which are temporally signified by the network of multiple forces and open to another unknown segmentations. Interplays with the discursive effects in our m/other relationship—historical, cultural, gendered, socio-economics, familial, global, and educational—will bring particular complexities and dynamics to the arrangement, delineation, and nuances in the interwoven m/other relationship.

CHAPTER VII

WEAVING WITH M/OTHER IN RHIZOME

In this chapter, I explore how I extend the discourses on otherness within a self/other relationship through weaving projects. I examine a self/other relationship conceptually in the process of weaving with my mother and by myself. Connecting my m/othering inquiry from previous chapters, I focus on the process of constituting one's materialities such as subjectivity, relationship, weaving, and otherness. This chapter includes three weaving projects: *Random Weaving*, *Weaving Lines of Dynamics and Complexities*, and *Weaving in Rhizome*. In *Random Weaving*, with the subtitle of *Materiality within Entanglement*, I reconsider my understanding of *weaving* and *material*, thinking with my m/othering inquiry. In the project of *Weaving Lines of Dynamics and Complexities*, I interrogate how to see woven knots and segments in the woven lines by inquiring the relation between a web of forces and weaving. Lastly, through the project of *Weaving in Rhizome*, I articulate how otherness can emerge and work within entanglement in weaving different materials by problematizing a dualistic understanding of self-other relationship.

For this inquiry, I incorporate Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *plane of consistency* and *lines of flight*, and Butler's theories of *performativity* and *strategic provisionality*, reviewing the process of constructing my m/othering subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other. In particular, I focus on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *rhizome* in weaving, juxtaposing their concepts of Tree and Rhizome. Ultimately, I connect my analysis of rhizomatic self/other relationship into curriculum theorizing.

Project #1 Random Weaving: Materiality within Entanglement

Through the project of random weaving, I explore my weaving experience with new weaving technique (random weaving) and new material (ramie) to rethink my understanding of *weaving* and *material*. By weaving a pair of ducks with my mother in South Korea, I focus on my feelings of otherness from my mother, weaving, and the material in the process of weaving a duckling. In addition, I illustrate a random weaving process, concentrating on the movement of weaving points, formulation of lines, and their entangled woven status. By scrutinizing the formation of the webs of entanglement, I consider the meaning of a self/other relationship differently within their discursively constructed relations.

Random Weaving

Last summer, when I visited South Korea to see my family, I suggested to my mother that we weave something together. She brought a pair of roughly shaped grass masses to me, which appeared to be a mother duck and her duckling. Weaving the pair of ducks was my mother's summer project that used a random weaving skill. She taught me

how to weave randomly by demonstrating several stitches. The new weaving technique



Figure 10. Bundles of ramie strands

fascinated me because the texture of instantaneity, complicatedness, and connectedness could be delicately expressed on the woven surface. Different from conventional weaving techniques, random weaving skill did not require any pre-calculated or regulated technique, which repeated movements of weaving inside and outside, creating predesigned patterns. Instead of using fingers, I stitched with a threaded needle randomly by creating various lines and wove the dimension of the duckling.

I brought the mold of the duckling that my mother roughly made to my home in a large bag with a weaving material, ramie. I was supposed to weave around the grass mold of the duckling and meet with my mother to check the progress on weekends during my stay in the summer. My mother's studio was located in Gwangju, Gyeonggi-do in South Korea and I lived in the northern part of Incheon, near the west seaside of South Korea. It took me roughly one hour to drive from my home to my mother's studio when traffic was

not so heavy. When I had questions while weaving my duckling, I texted and called her for immediate help. I unfolded my weaving bag as soon as I arrived home in Incheon, and took out a large bundle of ramie plant with excitement; then, I laid my weaving tools on my table: little metal scissors and a big-eye weaving needle. At that moment I felt like I became a real weaver! With no hesitation, I embarked on weaving the duckling.



Figure 11. Beginning of random weaving with ramie on my mother's roughly woven duckling

For my first stitch, I carefully pulled out a ramie strand from its bundle. Interestingly, the ramie strand was thinned out as I attempted to split it. The thickness of a ramie strand could be as thin as a corn silk or as thick as a noodle stripe. I was mesmerized with the textual varieties of ramie threads. With thinner lines of ramie, the stitches added more delicacy on the woven surface; with stiff and thicker threads, the grain of duckling's feathers appeared to be slick and strong. Multiple layers of

overlapped lines emerged with the number of and the direction of stitches that I wove. As I crossed and passed the ramie strand close to the one that I already stitched, the depth of entanglement was increased and a complicatedly interwoven surface was created.



Figure 12. Images of how random weaving connects lines in woven space I, II



Figure 13. Encountering un/familiarities in the process of weaving ramie strands: Rethinking of weaving, my mother's weaving life, and ramie's materiality

experiences unless I wove my duckling in person. These unexpected encounters

prompted me to think about my mother's aches and her weaving world anew.

Furthermore, I was curious to know more about the ramie plant, which constantly surprised me with its materiality in the process of weaving.

Transformative Materialities of Ramie

Many thoughts came in and out of my mind consecutively while I was weaving. Although I enjoyed weaving, I began to feel little pains on my fingers, wrists, and shoulder areas caused from extended sitting and the repetitive use of the same muscles; the soreness and stiffness of my muscles interfered with my focus. I felt like I was able to understand how my mother's pains on her shoulders would have been because she used to voice her discomfort to me. In addition, flying dust particles and bits of thread from the movements of ramie strands made my nostrils itch and disturbed my breathing rhythms. I would not have been able to encounter those

Who are you?

Where are you from?

Are you really the historically popular plant that I have known so far?

Were you really used to weave delicate and sophisticated clothes for steamy hot summers in old times?

I have known who you were through textbooks, media, and by word of mouth.

but I have come to know you anew while I split, touch, and weave my duckling.

I wanted to know more about you so I researched you (Ramie, 2017; Swicofl, n.d.)

You have heart-shaped leaves

and the underside of those leaves is covered with white hairs that appear to be silvery in color.

You provide a large number of unbranched stems derived from your rhizomes for weaving,

and thankfully, we can harvest you up to six times a year.

Your stems would be ready for harvest when your flowers begin to open, when your stems change color from green to yellow, and when your leaves start to drop.

You like to grow in warm and humid places and spread worldwide to the countries of China, Brazil, Philippines, India, South Korea, and Thailand, etc.

People believe that you originated in the Malay Peninsula, but do you really think that you began your trip from there to the world?

As you're known by diverse sizes and colors with different names in the world,

you must have been transforming your ways of living, responding to your situated environment by modifying your traits.

*Then, what would be your **real** trait, the one that can be legitimately called Ramie?*

Who decided that you're ramie and who defined what you are? Are you a real ramie?

How do you want to be called?

Boehmeria nivea, 苧麻, 苧, China grass, white ramie, green ramie, or rhea?

I am confused

because people say that you can be recognized in eight kinds (B. spicata, B. nipponivea, B. pannosa, B. tricusois, B. platanifolia, and so on.) at least in South Korea under the family of Urticaceae in plant order.

Where are you originally from? And how can I call you as ramie, if I am not sure in which category you fit?

Yes, as I experienced, you're characterized as easily breakable, but you increase your strength when wet.

The dust fallen from your strands might be dried chemicals added in the process of removing sticky elements in your stem.

Your materiality is differentiated from other fibre such as flax, linen, and silk in terms of durability, elasticity, and the different treatment process.

But you may be blended and woven with other fibres to transform your characteristics.

Your stiffness may be woven into a lightweight open-weave pattern that must be very cool and refreshing in humid climates.

As you are woven with other fibres, you would be able to soften your rigidity.

People also say that you can even be used in the automotive industry for bio-plastic made from cellulose instead of petroleum.

What surprise transformative possibilities of you!



Figure 14. Different forms of ramie through different processing I, II

Varieties in ramie's types and names illustrate uncertainty and ambiguity of knowing ramie's originality, just as the materiality and relationship as/with m/other cannot be defined and essentialized with certain qualifications. My superficial knowledge about ramie was limited to a cloth material that was popular in old times, which had not so close connection with me. Yet, I came to have more interests in learning as I engaged with weaving ramie. At the moments of encountering ramie's un/familiarities, my imagination of ramie was sparked and expanded to various other areas, enriching my experiences. My partial, temporal learning about ramie added different contours and stories on the woven lines, just as I re/collected my mother and her weaving life in my memories. Responding to different conditions of its habitation—temperature, soil, and precipitation—ramie changes its shape, such as height, width of leaves, and colors of its body. As an individual fibre, ramie can be differentiated from other plant materials in its texture, durability, and elasticity. Yet, working with other fibre enables ramie to experience infinite possibilities of change in its materialities as my subjectivities as m/other and relationship with my mother constantly shift their statuses through interactions.

Points, Lines, and their Entanglement

When I connected a ramie strand from one point to the other point in my random weaving of the duckling, the connected line was not just a static line. It was formulated via movement of the line of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), which escaped the binary understanding of simple connection of here and there. It passed, ran, crossed, inserted, intersected, and intervened many other woven lines in no clear direction. The connected line has neither a beginning nor an ending point. The one point could be a departure for a

new creation; the other point could be another departure point, ready to be connected into a different and unknown point of weaving. To express my artistic intention, I might plan the weaving direction in advance for its representation, but in random weaving, dynamic shifts in weaving directions carried more powerful flows and twists on the arrangement of woven lines.



Figure 15. Construction of dynamic lines on a woven surface in random weaving of the duckling

Although my mother suggested to me that weaving in a consistent direction should add more refinement to the work, I liked to see dynamics on a woven surface because of its expression of energy from the change. Weaving uni-directionally might portray a *realistic* texture of the duckling's feather, but I wanted to focus more on *the web of entanglement* to appreciate its complexity, which emerged among diverse woven lines. Therefore, my mother's duck appeared more arranged, neat, and completed while my duckling looked messy, tangled, and incomplete. Although my mother's duck was

coated with glue to fix fuzzy, fine fibers for its final touch, my duckling remained entangled with hairs sticking out of its complicatedly connected lines. For my duckling, disorganized connections involved degrees of intensity from tensions, which emerged among entangled woven lines of stretch, speed, resistance, and even delay in my weaving course. In addition, the fine lines of entanglement portrayed incessant travels of ramie threads: fuzzy, messy hairs illustrate each ramie strand's temporal figure and its history of weaving and unweaving as well as being woven and unwoven in their interwoven status.



Figure 16. A duckling with its mother woven by my mother (left) and the author (right)

There was no clear beginning or ending point in random weaving because to create a line two different points required simultaneous involvement in connection. Those woven lines were enmeshed within multiplicities of stitches. The textures on the lines of interconnection might appear similar as straight, but their intensity on straightness

differed from one another in qualities according to my controls of speed and pulling pressure on my needling a thread. As a more experienced weaver, my mother's stitches looked like they carried more boldness and determinedness while mine displayed hesitancy and looseness in its connections. Yet, when I was stuck trying to decide where to add, stop, and turn a direction of lines, the pause prompted me to question its ambiguity and uncertainty, just as I felt lost my track of understanding my m/othering and relationship with my mother and interrogate their constitutions.

The two different points—my mother/I, weaving/I, duckling/I, and ramie/I—could not be thought about separately. Each point worked in simultaneous collaboration to make a line, to learn and to be learned more about each other, and to experience transformative moments of one another. Each point was engaged in the web of relations, which constantly constituted lines of new understandings and narratives in their woven space. Points of intersection among lines were the sites where tension poised; new segments in woven textures were created as I encountered moments of surprise, question, and redirected my m/other relationships. New segments and woven knots invited further encounters and layers of woven lines and segments in constructing particular woven dimensions. Mother, weaving, duckling, and ramie as the Other—their otherness spurred me to question who I was, who they were, and how we would become. They were not fixed objects waiting to be discovered, used, and created for my desire. The two different points joined together simultaneously in making lines, engaged in their connections, and reinforced each other's changes in their entanglement.



Figure 17. Becoming a duckling I, II

The random weaving project extended my understanding of weaving, weaving material, and its process and transformed my prior knowing of them. I scrutinized how I would feel, see, and think about weaving, mother, ramie, and my duckling differently during the project, by focusing on the weaving point, movements of lines, and lines of entanglement on the woven surface. Although my mother and I wove different objects in separate locations in South Korea and our weaving styles were different, the difference and separation did not represent pure dissimilarity. The difference is connected discursively and creates a new quality. My mother and I were able to communicate via phone calls and image texting to check each other's progress; my mother's coaching was embodied in/throughout my weaving of my duckling. Otherness from the new weaving technique and ramie did not emerge from nothing. They were already involved in my work of knowing and weaving and I partially, temporally recognized them and produced my new understandings through interplays. Just as connections of points and lines within the woven space were entangled within the woven space (with no clear distinction of

directions or beginning/ending points), complexities and dynamics constantly occurred in constructing my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other as well as dealing with the otherness in their relations throughout my inquiry process. In the following project, I examine what I encounter during a weaving process, focusing on articulating the relation between the webs of force and materiality construction of weaving and m/other.

Project #2 Weaving Lines of Dynamics and Complexities

In this project, I wove an untitled artifact by myself in the United States on top of my mother's incomplete woven piece. I focused on dynamics and complexities, which I encountered during the process of weaving. Particularly, I probed the points of node, knot, segmentation, and intersection where they were formulated responding to the web of effects in weaving. Connecting the concepts of Deleuze and Guattari's *Line of flight* and *Plane of Consistency* (1987) with Judith Butler's *Strategic Provisionality* (1992, 1993b), I consider my moment of confusion with, question of, and resistance to the knowledge of "good" mother in the process of constructing my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other within the relations throughout this weaving project.

Weaving a Cylindrical Basket: Encountering Complexities

While searching for some weaving materials for my dissertation project, I found a box in which my mother packed her weaving materials for later use in my home in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Inside the box, there were naturally dried bundles of plants such as sedge, ramie, and cattails that she transported from Korea along with coils of local plants that we collected together from local weaving artists as well as through our road travelling in the United States. In the pile of weaving materials, I encountered a piece of woven structure that appeared incomplete. It looked like a cylindrical basket that my mother stopped in its initial stage of weaving with sedge. I wanted to continue to weave the basket. Yet, instead of using the same material with which my mother wove, I attempted to weave with different and various materials—colored yarns and raffia, and strips of paper of my writing. On top of my mother's neatly woven lines, I began to add my rough

woven lines, intertwining those different materials to articulate my ideas of how to deal with difference in a self/other relationship.



Figure 18. My mother’s unfinished weaving (left) and my twining on top of hers (right)

I did not want to ruin my mother’s initial design; in an attempt to keep its shape, I used a cylinder type of glass vase as a frame. Without the frame, I felt like I was not able to maintain its “right” shape. However, as I wove around the frame, I recognized that standing strands (warps) were bent to the direction where my force was added to the structure—at the moment of twisting two wefts around the warp tightly. Despite my effort to hold the warp upright, pressures carried from my upper body to my fingers, controlling power to maintain the cylindrical format from the glass vase, and frictions to resist each other among weaving materials, pushed and pulled together and bent its shape toward one side. In addition, as warps began to break due to being too dry, I held those cracked points together by taping them, hoping to conceal the messiness. The web of forces in weaving conditions affected the shape of woven textures as well as style of my

woven work. Responding to those multiple power sources, diverse woven segments and knots were fabricated.



Figure 19. Encountering webs of forces on the woven surface



Figure 20. Weaving different materials within diverse effects in messiness

Lines of Flight: Dynamics in Weaving

In a Deleuze-Guattarian term, the *line of flight* is an operation, movement, force, and energy that spurs breakages and ruptures and allows multiplicities in a territory. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) accentuate that “multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities” (p. 9). Through the dynamic interruption of the line of flight, a territory is deterritorialized, reterritorialized, and transformed; the work of line of flight brings multiplicities in a terrestrial dimension.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) consider this terrestrial dimension as “strata” and the process of building up the layer of earthy sediments as “stratification” from their geological standpoint. The strata are constituted via interactions among terrestrial substances and shift their statuses by reacting to earthly effects such as flows of wind, water, and light. Within the strata, all the disparate and heterogeneous elements are convoked and consolidate into assemblages, and Deleuze and Guattari name this zone of aggregates *the plane of consistency*. In the strata, many dynamic events can happen. The strata involve the plane of consistency as diverse substances are coded by environmental conditions and expressed within certain formats. Although the substances appear solidified and stable, locked within the plane of consistency, they do not remain static or permanently the same. Rather, within the consistency, diverse unnamed materials are gathered and work with forceful factors of terrestrial movements—their velocity, densification, intensification, intervention, insertion, and the like, which occur in so many intercalary events (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Thus, the plane of consistency is not a fixed organization of already formed substances. Rather, it is the emerged assemblage

which ties into entangled networks among substances; associates varied systems of stratification; and accompanies the movement of *the line of flight* that may enable unforeseen transformations. The line of flight passes, runs, and crosses among substances; the territory is disrupted, simultaneously deterritorialized and reterritorialized. Against any notion of fixation, originality and/or finality, the plane of consistency works in the middle of assemblage running from one point to the other point.

Just as Deleuze and Guattari's investigation of the process of deterritorialization of the plane of consistency through the movement of the line of flight, the woven lines in my basket are not simply accumulated through the repetition of the act of twining.

Rather, they are the complexes where diverse elements of materials and forces engage and constantly transform their territories. Working with differences in hues, thicknesses,



Figure 21. Formulating woven lines

widths, textures, and pressures against each other, the woven lines create new versions of channels and spaces for the unknown more to come. In my woven plane of consistency, a new strand is connected into the previous woven line; two stands (wefts) constantly intersect each other, wrapping around the supporting strand (warp); those weaving materials create woven knots, segments and layers. The woven segments are not dividing woven lines; instead, the lines of segment plug one point into the other segment in a continuum of weaving. The woven lines continue to build up their strata, which constitute

their forms responding to multiple networks of forces, as my subjectivity and relationship as/with m/other are assembled within normative gendered and neoliberal m/othering discourses.

Weaving *Plane of Consistency* with *Strategic Provisionality*

I connect the concept of the *plane of consistency* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) and Judith Butler's idea of *strategic provisionality* (1992, 1993b) into examining complexities, which occur in the course of weaving. I relate these concepts with the process of constructing my subjectivity, performativity, and relationship as/with m/other which engages the moments of questions, challenge, and re/signification in the process of constructing one's materialities. Similar to constituting the plane of consistency, my subjectivities and relationship with m/other are formulated through interactions among m/other, mother/daughter, and m/other/context (or among 'substances' in a Deleuzeguttarian term) within the effect of diverse forces and its normalizing practices. From Butler's (1990, 1993a) point of view, one's identity is neither pre-given nor fixed; rather, it is always in the process of construction within the iterative effect of socially created norms. As the direction of warps in my woven basket is bent to face to the effect of multiple sources of power, one's performances are generated and repeated reacting to the circulation of power; one's identity can be constantly signified and resignified through its *performativity*. Yet, the discursively constructed social norms are neither static nor stable; the norms also mutate their forms through the process of repeating or failing to repeat (Butler, 1993a). Hence, one's subjectivity and relationships with others cannot be preset. Since a self and the Other (substances) are avowing their connection, the relationship continues to transform, becoming something new (Butler, 2001).

In terms of issues of originality or foundation in articulating one's materiality, Deleuze and Guattari, and Butler focus on the moment of intervention or disruption in the course of one's becoming. Butler (1992, 1993b) considers signifying one's materiality as "partial representation" and/or "provisional totalization." For her, if a subject is determined as a certain term, the subject is locked in the term and the subject's excessive qualities come to remain excluded and concealed. Therefore, at the moment of signification, the term is called into question, disrupted, and worked for rearticulation. For Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the plane of consistency is not the zone of static sedimentary layers where earthly materials are accumulated in order and consolidated. The consistency is the "act that produces consolidated aggregates of succession as well as of coexistence" with "intercalated elements, intervals, and articulations of superposition" (p. 221). The assemblage and/or signification is not a terminal status for expression but already involves all of the process of interactions such as questioning, intervening, disrupting, deterritorializing, and reterritorializing (rearticulation) in its construction. Rather than totalizing or structuring its assemblage with hierarchies or causalities, the plane of consistency focuses on the movement of the line of flight, which runs, passes, and disturbs the connections among heterogeneous and disparate substances. Its energy troubles those substances' previous orders and forms, and deterritorializes and reterritorializes their boundaries.

My basket weaving was formulated through working with my streams of thoughts, technical effects, and weaving materials. Similarly, my subjectivities and relationship as/with m/other are being constructed through the process of interplays within complex m/othering relations and conditions. My subjectivity and relationship

as/with mother have been constructed in response to my historically, socio-culturally, economically, and edu-politically contextualized m/othering milieu. My incomplete woven basket gained its textures through working with its diverse effects and the lines of flight which create segments and redirect to invite another woven segment by disrupting the prior segment's fixity. The texture of my basket was not constituted by homogenous material. It was composed of multiple layers of lines and diverse segmentations interwoven with my mother's sedge, multiple colors of raffia and scrubby yarn, my chunks of thought, and dynamic and complex energies and effects. These woven layers could not be even due to their movements of back/forth, up/down, loose/tight, straight/curved, and in parallel/perpendicular lines toward un/predictable directions and forms. The woven layers were continuously modified in their forms and patterns as they work with other materials and are influenced by other technical effects.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), the form of expression cannot represent the form of content due to their heterogeneities. In the strata, the regime of sign ceaselessly moves from one register to another on unformed materials; there is neither correspondence nor conformity from one to the other; through this provisionality, the strata themselves are activated, animated, temporally defined by "relative speed of deterritorialization" (p. 70). In the moment of signification, the qualities of content and expression are disrupted simultaneously via the force of the line of flight and likely to be intermingled within the stratum. The segment of the form of content and the form of expression constantly intertwine and embed themselves in one another just like the act of weaving. Deleuze and Guattari articulate the complex relation of the form of content and the form of expression with the process of weaving:

The form of expression is constituted by the warp of expresseds, and the form of content by the woof of bodies... The independence of the two kinds of forms, forms of expression and forms of content, is not contradicted but confirmed by the fact that the expression or expressed are inserted into or intervene in contents, not to represent them but to anticipate them or move them back, slow them down or speed them up, separate or combine them, delimit them in a different way. The warp of the instantaneous transformation is always inserted into the woof of the continuous modifications. (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 86)

As different materials of warp and the woofs (also called wefts) modify and transform their shapes through the acts of inserting, intervening, and intertwining in my weaving, the form of content and the form of expression constitute an interwoven relation not as contradicting materials. Since the form of content and the form of expression are not congruent with each other, they cannot mirror or represent one another. Since the form of content and the form of expression cannot be also irrelevant, they are bound to constantly work together in certain forms. The two different elements formulate their assemblages through dynamic interactions. In the moment of stratification of their assemblages, the movements of the line of flight prompt to work in their interstices by connecting and disconnecting, inserting, and crossing for constant re/articulations.

As multiple forces in my woven basket affect the shape of segments of woven lines, machinic webs of power intervene the way of one's construction of subjectivity and relationship with others. The assemblage of one's subjectivities as well as a self/other relationship involves variations and mutations on their forms in response to the machinic power. As each segment of the assemblage comes up via movements of the line of flight

in-between spaces where flows run dry, each knot in the woven lines in my basket is the point of questioning of the flow of the effects and becomes a site of departure for weaving a new line. As the woven layers are formulated experiencing combinations of multiple, complex, and microscopic level of effects, one's construction of subjectivity and relationship with others are constituted through constant partial and contingent enunciations, concerting the regime of signs. For the following weaving project, I introduce the Deleuzeguattarian concept of *rhizome* to investigate dynamics and complexities, which emerge in discursively constructed one's materiality and self/other relationship. By examining interrelationality between the concept of *Tree* and *Rhizome*, I trouble the binary understanding of m-other, mother-daughter, and self-other relationship in dealing with otherness.

Project #3 Weaving in Rhizome

Tree Branches versus Rhizomes

In order to understand the system of rhizome, in this section, I first juxtapose the concept of rhizome with the system of tree. A *rhizome* is an underground stem plant, which spreads lateral shoots. It is not easily extracted from the ground because of the massive networks of entanglement. The rhizome connects one another—one alongside the other—towards unidentified directions; it is difficult to discern where it begins and finishes. The network of rhizome is constituted with diverse such as thin/thick, short/tall, and dried/moist and multiple forms of stems; it is not countable in its entanglement.



Figure 22. Rhizomes of entangled crabgrass in my backyard

Critiquing pre-established and dichotomized Western thought, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue against the tree-root system, taking an example of Noam Chomsky's linguistic model. That is, the regimen of signs and grammatical rules in the language system confines and reduces the quality of one's materiality into a certain form. The tree-root system is explicit, linear, and structural; it is running from bottom to top in a singular direction and travels through a preset path. The tree-root system searches for foundation: the apparent point of beginning and ending. In contrast, the system of rhizome runs in the middle by connecting one point to the other point, rather than separating. It focuses on the performance of the line of flight, which runs, inserts, and intervenes the site of signification and segmentation in the process of assemblage of complex entanglement.

Unlike a tree-root system, a rhizomatic system is poly-centered and open to unknown possible connections. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) illustrate the system of rhizome as follows:

Make rhizome, not roots, never plant! Don't sow, grow offshoots! Don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point! Speed turns the point into a line! Be quick, even when standing still! Line of chance, line of hips, line of flight. Don't bring out the General in you!... A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and...and...and..." The conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be." (p. 24, 25, emphasis in original)

As such, the system of rhizome resists any singular, causal, or finite approach of thinking. Rather, it focuses on the processes, movements, and connections in constituting entangled relationships. Different from a tree-root structure which works in a fixed, predetermined, and universalized arrangement, the rhizomatic system performs with the impetus of movements of lines of flight which connects a point into a point and a line to a line. Instead of a premade or quantitative static being, the system of rhizome investigates one's process of becoming, which constantly disrupts boundaries and transforms into the unknown.

My home in Stillwater, Oklahoma has a beautiful backyard with various kinds of trees and vines. Surrounding a little garden pond and birdbath, there are three big, oriental pine trees. Next to the pine trees, bushes of honeysuckle vines grow and across the pond, a short redbud tree sits spreading large branches. I did not know that redbud branches could be used for weaving material until I researched about weaving culture in the United States. My backyard is full of weaving plants—pine leaves for coiling; honey suckle, redbud, and willow branches for weaving after splitting; and many other unknown vines and rhizome grasses. One day I trimmed some overgrown branches from the redbud tree; they became my weaving materials.



Figure 23. Trimmed redbud branches from my backyard

Tree Branches and Rhizomes

In this weaving, I consider the system of tree in relation to the rhizome. It is an irony if rhizomatic connection is understood in a binary separation, as opposed to the tree-root system. Then, how can I think of *difference* between the system of tree-root and the one of rhizome? In order to look into traits of the tree, I cut big tree branches into small pieces. Although the tree branches' regularly superposed position of shoots and hues appeared similar to each other, the pieces of twigs came in diverse forms—long/short, thin/thick, big/small,



Figure 24. Pieces of redbud twigs

straight/bent, and so forth. I attempted to weave those diverse tree twigs. Yet, weaving individual tree twigs seemed im/possible due to their lack of flexibility and capacity to hold each other. Their rigidity and thickness did not allow me to bend or weave them well. When I attempted to bend them to suspend onto one another, they were easily

broken into smaller pieces because of their stiffness and dryness. Their possible connections turned out very weak and loose without supporting materials.

Weaving Tree Branches with Pieces of Paper

I wanted to make their connections closer and tighter by weaving them together with a different material than when weaving only with tree twigs. I attempted to weave the redbud twigs with my knowledge represented in a paper format. I tore the sheets of paper in pieces with my hands to weave with small pieces of tree twigs. The paper's dry and stiff conditions did not seem to function well for connection; I soaked them in water

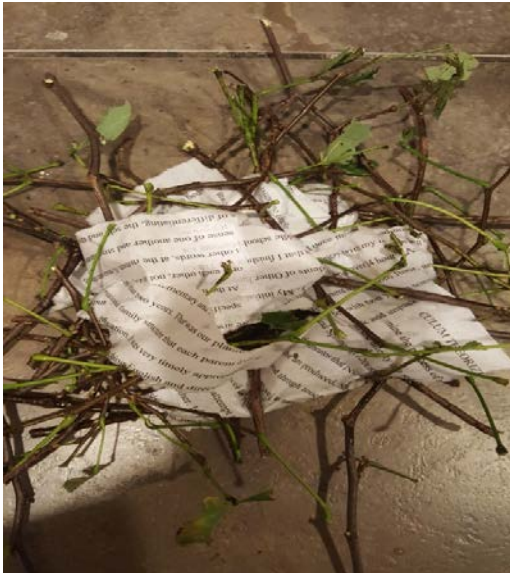


Figure 25. Weaving twigs into ideas

for a while and took them out to connect with tree twigs as well as among pieces of paper.

The wet condition of paper gained adhesiveness; after they dried out, the pieces of paper seemed become durable. The twigs pushed and pulled each other responding to my control; the pieces of paper were pressed, wrinkled, and penetrated by the tree twigs. As

if the line of flight ran, passed, and inserted among their complex connections to bring more diverse linkages, unexpected intersections emerged; by doing so, some previous connections were loosened. The pieces of paper's dimension provided tree twigs with space for resting, hooking, and passing through to enhance connectivity in their networks.

The two different weaving materials—my knowledge scattered in pieces of paper and redbud tree twigs—created their particular shapes and connections ad hoc, along with my inquiry of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship and intuitive artistic handling. In their entangled connection, it is difficult to discern if the piece of paper wove the tree twigs or the twigs wove the piece of paper. With a hasty look, their originality might be considered similar because we know they both come from plant, but I do not know which tree produced this paper. The pieces of paper were not just paper. They experienced a transformative process weighed with my thoughts from the wet to the dried condition. The redbud twigs were not just tree twigs. They were disassembled from a big tree branch, reassembled as the form of small pieces of twigs, and connected into the pieces of paper in their changed form. As time passed by, the amounts of moisture evaporated from the twigs and the pieces of paper; their hues, tones, weights, and intensities also changed. The mass of connections emerged with no clear directions, engaging each other's insertion and intervention. The energy and performance produced in the process of weaving together continuously deformed and reformed their arrangement and added more contours in their connections. Although the traits of paper and tree twigs were different, it required a close examination and imagination to consider how they were different. With different materialities, they were entangled in their particular forms, responding to my handling. As otherness, which emerged from my m/othering could be varied within my situated contexts (South Korea and the United States), the differences between different materials arise being contextualized.

Weaving with Twigs and Ramie: Dualistic Relation?

This time, I wove redbud twigs and strands of ramie which have “fairly different” materialities: weaving the system of Tree with the system of Rhizome. Although those two different materials may have contrasting traits—a tree as central, hierarchical, and causal versus a rhizome as poly-centered, random, and entangled connection—they are not separate from each other; they both include each other’s tendencies. For instance, although a rhizome is a stem, it is also called a creeping rootstalk. As its name indicates, a rhizome branches out shoots and roots from its nodes. Even though a rhizome spreads its stems horizontally under the soil, its stems grow upright on the ground. Like a tree, a rhizome has a very firm, solid, and woody quality of segments on its underground stems (Rhizome, 2017). In addition, a tree contains offshoots and rhizomatic roots in its system just as a rhizome has. As such, a tree and a rhizome appear to contrast each other; yet, they are actually interconnected in their heterogeneities. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) articulate this point:

Every rhizome contains lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed, etc., as well as lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees. There is a rupture in the rhizome whenever segmentary lines explode into a line of flight, but the line of flight is part of the rhizome. These lines always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and bad. You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject... (p. 9)



Figure 26. A piece of ramie rhizome (left) and ramie plants (right)

For Deleuze and Guattari, both the system of tree and the one of rhizome conceive segmentarity which confines, solidifies, and fixes their statuses. Yet, different from the work of segmentation and linearity in a tree system, which stabilizes its position, the segmentary lines in the system of rhizome are in motion to disrupt, intervene, and redirect its segmentarity at the moments of rupture. The segmentation in a tree system and rhizome system do not function in dualistic separation as both systems already involve each other's traits in their materiality formulation. Therefore, it is im/possible to consider "fundamental" or "original" difference among substances because they are already connected in certain ways, just as a stranger is already recognized as "stranger" by a self in a self/other connection (Springgay, 2008). Therefore, rather than determining simple distinctions among substances, the questions of "to what extent they are different" and "under what condition the difference emerges" will be vital in order to recognize and deal with otherness in a self/other relationship.



Figure 27. The process of weaving tree branches and strands of ramie I, II, III

The strands of ramie were woven with the redbud twigs. I used a needle for this weaving because the ramie fibre was too thin and soft for hand weaving. Although those two weaving materials had notably different characteristics in thickness, flexibility, and textures—twigs as thick, solid, and straight versus ramie as thin, soft, and flexible—when they were woven randomly together, the woven space emerged like webs of chaos. Due to both materials' weakness on pressure, presuming where to make points of connections and how to create patterns was im/possible. When tension functioned between a tree twig and a ramie strand, their linkage was easily fragmented with their weak durability. Yet, the abrupt stoppages invited a different stitch of weaving and created particular entangled woven space by repeating the process of connection and disconnection repeatedly.

Despite a tree twig and a ramie strand, both were weak to a tensional effect, their qualities which reacted to the force, were different. The twig was thick and solid but lacked of moisture; the thickness or width of the ramie strand was not consistent and it thinned out easily. Therefore, it was nearly impossible to define and predict the moment of rupture as well as estimate the durability of each material. Since the systems of tree and rhizome involve the function of segmentarity, although they are both easily broken to the pressure, the two different materials cannot be considered within a simple category of same or different due to their particularities. They are differentiated but not opposing; they look similar but not the same. Hence, a dualistic understanding is in work only when it needs to be strategically signified for challenging the points of fixity (segmentarity).

As I examined the weaving process above, determining and dealing with otherness was confusing, difficult, and provisional. Even though tree twigs can be called a particular name (redbud tree twigs) categorized in a group, each tree twig cannot be treated as the same material due to its difference in size, shape, and other qualities that I did/could not name. Most people believe that tree and paper come from the “same” origin—the plant—but they are different in kind. Although I wove “fairly different” materials together (ramie and twig), I was able to recognize more detailed differences by interacting with those two different materials in the particular weaving context. Thus, when I consider a substance’s materiality, the point is not to ask what is different, but rather, how they are different. The multiple traits of weaving materials are already related to one another in their contexts. In addition, my tree twigs and knowledge printed in paper constantly transform their materialities responding to my ideas, designs, handlings as well as the time elapsed. Therefore, a substance’s materiality cannot be reduced by

reduced judgment because it continuously comes up within multiplicities, which are un/countable, un/namable, and even un/predictable. My knowledge of “good” mother has been formulated within/through discourses, involving my mother’s mothering, others’ recognitions, teachers’ instructions at schools, media sources’ inputs, and interactions with friends, relatives, and other mothers. The materialities of knowledge, object, and individuals are complex, tricky, and demand on-going and sensitive investigation. The sense of otherness that I have experienced via othering my self and mother from my knowledge of “good” mother does not exist outside of my self. Rather, the otherness has been embodied, embedded, recognized, and dealt within/throughout my life over time, emerging occasionally, being contextualized and situated.

Weaving Differently in Multiplicities

My knowledge of weaving was challenged when I was stuck in a tree-model technique, which weaves in predesigned, regulated, and unified formats. The conventional idea was questioned, challenged, and disrupted in the process of weaving with different materials in multiplicities, which focused on qualitative difference and its moment of emergence. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) suggest, the multiplicities are neither countable nor a static concept; rather, it is “continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities” (p. 249). Its transformation is open to further interactions, changes, signification, and resignification, engaging with the movement and velocity of the line of flight which dynamically stimulates my strata of knowledge and understanding; it constantly deterritorializes and reterritorializes the boundary of my weaving.

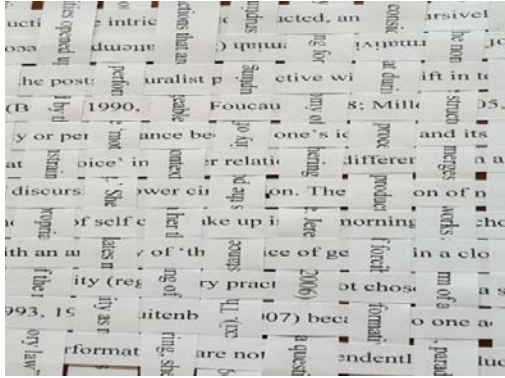


Figure 28. Weaving in multiplicities I, II, III, IV

The conventional weaving structure is constituted in pre-calculated layers of woven lines trapped in the horizontal and vertical order. Weaving in a tree system may overlook its dynamics and complexities, which may arise in-between layers as well as within the effect of multiple forces in the process of weaving which characterizes a woven artifact's materialities. The woven textures are formulated through interactions among different materials and multiple effects of forces—my stream of thoughts, frictions among weaving materials, pressures carried from my upper body to my finger, technical controls, and so forth. The point of signification is the place where segmentation arises, a woven knot is created, and the stratification begins. At the very

moment, its rigidity and occlusiveness are questioned, disrupted, and re/worked for re/articulation. In this sense, the clear-cut, unified, and essentialized dualistic relation can be incorporated temporally and provisionally for the work of relocation, reterritorialization, and resignification for bringing multiplicities in weaving.

Inquiry of dealing with otherness in an entangled self/other (m/other) relationship via diverse weaving projects prompts understanding the process of shaping, troubling, and reshaping of one's subjectivities and relationships. Two different points are connected and create a line as a segment. Woven layers are formulated in continuum through dynamic and complex interactions among multiple webs of forces and materials. The moments of stoppage, breakage, and rupture occur simultaneously when the line of flight performs with speeds by running, disrupting, and inserting the interstices of weaving space where signification and segmentation are in operation. Through the movement of the line of flight, difference can be recognized; complexities in woven layers are scrutinized; weaving territories are transformed via redirected stitches.

The line of flight works within a system of rhizome through which connections, processes, and dynamics are investigated in the process of weaving one's materialities (subjectivity, performativity, relationship, otherness and so forth). Differentiated from a tree-root system, which runs from bottom to top in a preset path, a system of rhizome works in the middle, open to any possible transformation, with no clear beginning and ending points. The differences between a tree-root system and a rhizomatic system are seemingly contrasting, but they are different qualitatively. Thus, the two different systems cannot be considered within an oversimplified dualistic category. The otherness may arise and function differently in particular situations; yet, they are already immanent

in both systems as a tree and a rhizome involve each other's characteristics in their own systems. As my analyses of weaving projects could be shifted according to my point of focus, my partial and temporal interpretations can be expanded, open to unknown possibilities. As multiplicities in my weaving materials and their ways of weaving boosted their potentials for their own transformations, one's materialities and the relationships of self/other, m/other, mother/daughter, I/weaving, and ramie/twig neither can be predicted with fixed knowledge nor reduced within a dualistic frame. In the following section, bringing my understanding of weaving into my curriculum inquiry, I examine how otherness can be recognized and dealt with within a self/other relationship in diverse pedagogical practices.

Understanding Curriculum Rhizomatically

In this section, I problematize working with *knowledge* in curriculum, particularly, in terms of questioning what to teach (content knowledge) and current pedagogical practices (teaching and learning for the institutionalized educational agenda) via rhizomatic ways of thinking. Rather than providing a solution or points of improvement, I investigate the question of how knowledge can be worked in the process of teaching and learning; how the relationship of *the real* and *the possible* can be considered in contemporary "outcome-oriented" pedagogical practices; and how dynamics of *interventions* can be performed for curriculum deterritorialization.

Working with Knowledge: Mapping out the Process of Knowledge Construction

In South Korea, there is a tradition in which predicts a baby's future profession by having the baby choose an item on the baby's one-year birthday party. The items are a pencil, money, and stethoscope, which may represent a scholar, wealthy person, and

doctor. Family members and guests expect the baby to pick up one of the items. This event is called “doljabi” and with the baby’s choice, people at the birthday party foretell the baby’s future. Of course, this event is held for entertainment and wishing the baby’s bright future during the event. Yet, I think this tradition reflects people’s expectations and longings for a certain career position, social status, and achievement in life.

Although learning can happen any time and any place, I remember that I spent most of my time at school during my childhood and adolescence. I focused on previewing and reviewing the content of lessons at home as a knowhow of receiving good grades at school; listening to teachers’ words attentively was always emphasized as a rule of being a “good” student. I used to copy and write down what my teacher wrote on the blackboard and memorize the contents to prepare for quizzes and exams at the end of months and semesters. I do not think I ever questioned why I had to go to school every day or what I wanted to learn at school. I might have attended school habitually and passively, thinking that learning might be boring, demanding, but important anyway.

When I created a lesson plan in a template for my students as an English teacher, my teaching objective was clear with numeral points and set up for a complete lesson unit. To make a more effective lesson plan, I used to dissect the class hour minute by minute and simulate all the interactions among students and the teacher.

When knowledge is taught, the knowledge becomes an “object,” which needs to be delivered from a textbook to students via a teacher’s performance. In this separate knowledge-teacher-students structure, the knowledge is regarded as absolute; a teacher transfers knowledge to students; students as passive knowledge receivers accept and digest the knowledge for their intellectual growth. On the contrary, in a rhizomatic connection of knowledge/teacher/students, knowledge as a substance is constantly formulated and transforms, affected through a discursive circulation of power. The teacher and students are also not in a static, linear relationship in a giver-taker frame; instead, they produce new knowledge together via multiplicities of variables such as unexpected interactions and/or sudden encounters of different learning situations. In this pedagogical space, learning cannot be predicted; rather, it happens randomly through exchanges within connections. The teacher can be a learner; students can be knowledge

producers. Knowledge is not secured and stored in a physical place. Rather it permeates into students' and teachers' lives, which is continuously questioned, challenged, modified, and regenerated via dynamic interplays among students and teachers. Through this process, students and teachers can be critical in constituting their knowledge. By considering themselves within their relation to knowledge, students and teachers can map out the context of knowledge construction and relations, and become active participants of new knowledge production, sharing their views with others in their learning space.

Yet, troubling the conventional way of teaching and learning does not mean that one needs to refuse the significance of learning academic contents. Without ample understanding the content of area, it is im/possible to be critical of the knowledge. By troubling the structure of disciplinarity, the students and teacher can understand the flow of complex webs of power and its effects on their daily lives. As I interrogate my m/othering context, they call into question about their own struggles and in doing so they might be able to think why certain knowledge is important and how the knowledge is related to their everyday work. As Nadler (2015) articulates via the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), students need to be disciplined enough to be able to know “when things, persons, even situations, force you to [think and do]” (p.3) and respond to their hegemonic reality and deterritorialize it. Through the process, a boundary of knowledge is transformed from a predetermined discipline to other emergent forms of knowledge; the students and teacher become involved simultaneously in the knowledge making process and experience their pedagogical practices differently. Rather than teaching and learning knowledge in an expected, planned, or predesigned model without questioning, in a rhizomatic pedagogy, students and teachers can address power dynamics as well as

the effects they have on their own daily life experiences by constantly disrupting the fixity and disciplinarity of knowledge.

The Real and the Possible in Curriculum: Dualism in Rhizome

Learning to be competent in the wave of neoliberal globalization or growing to be a socially recognized person with a lucrative career seems to become an educational goal for living in the contemporary dominant educational discourses. In a dualistic frame of real-possible and present-future, learning (living) for a preset goal mirrors the future; the real reduces the quality of the possible, which has not come or known yet. That is, the real structures the possible for a predetermined goal; the possible confines the life of the real. In this framework, there is no room for thinking other possibilities except following the preset track in a real learning life.

In this vein, Wallin (2010, 2011) contradicts a Tylerian purpose-oriented approach in designing curriculum, which focuses on answering those questions—“What educational purposes should the school seek to attain? What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?” (Tyler, 1949, p.1). Wallin points out that Tyler’s realization of curriculum limits pedagogical experiences to preexisting possibilities by militating students’ learning into normative conditions and the needs of the State. The priori image of curriculum and its accordingly planned curriculum homogenize every particular student’s educational experience and aspire to realize the students’ pedagogical practices within the rule of institutionalized schooling. As a predominant norm, Wallin (2011) argues, the Tylerian rationale engenders “resentment, suffering, and enslavement” because “it suggests that what might become is figured by

what it is” (p. 289). The goal-oriented curriculum is intolerant with points of uncertainty, ambiguity, and incompleteness in pedagogical practices; it lacks the capacity to envision the potential, which might emerge in the process of working between the real and the possible.

Yet, in a rhizomatic thinking, the real (present) and the possible (future) are not separated; rather, they are always-already included in one another in their substances. The relation between the real and the possible is not what exists but “what becomes.” Therefore, the rhizomatic connection between the real and the possible concentrates on the *process* and in the event of *encounter* in the space of in-between and its duration of time. The contemporary teleological pedagogy practices—Tylerian rationale, teaching to the tests, and standardization of students’ academic achievements—confine students’ learning experiences into the prescribed normative agenda and overlook students’ learning potentials by directing them in the ready-made course of pedagogical life. The difference between the real and the possible is incommensurable due to their own particularities. They might pass and intersect some points of similarity or contradiction; yet, their qualities are neither pre-determinative nor categorizable with any signifiers or universalized image. The rhizomatic linkage of the real and the possible prompts multiplicities on their connection and their own transformation simultaneously via the constant work of the line of flight, which performs creativity in their relationship.

Dynamic Interventions: Forces of Curriculum Deterritorialization

In a rhizomatic understanding, curriculum is not static as a noun. Curriculum continuously runs, flows, passes, and intervenes in the middle of its construction. The

movements of the line of flight constantly trouble fixed forms of knowledge and normalized pedagogical practices at the moment of signification and segmentation. The force, energy, and speed of movements disrupt the territorialization of curriculum and bring new ideas and practices. For instance, a rigid, prescribed pedagogical practice is questioned via dynamic interactions among curricular discourses, including knowledge, teacher, student, and multiple axes of power. The impetus of the line of flight works on the gaps and fissures between what students need and what bureaucratized education demands, seeking other possible ways of doing and thinking curriculum. Yet, the line of flight in curriculum does not set aside time for disturbing its territory, or follow specific directions in modifying its boundary; rather, the random work of the line of flight already involves the process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of curriculum and constructs the creative entanglement in its substantiality.

As Roy (2003) articulates, echoing with Deleuze and Guattari (1987), rhizomatic thinking works within connections, avoiding being trapped in any fixity and linearity in thinking and doing curriculum. The rhizomatic curriculum as performative, procedural, and relational focuses on its contingency, temporality, and provisionality because rhizomes are “offshoots, not sowings; irregular growths, not deliberate planting” (Roy, 2003, p. 9). The indeterminacy of curriculum in a rhizomatic connection engages with the lines of speed, intensity, and flow, which operate complex, local, micro, unnamed particles into pedagogical possibilities. The dynamic movements of lines of flight crack open interstices in a huge binary chunk and bring multiplicities into curriculum. The rhizomatic curriculum always-already intervenes the territory of curriculum and constantly transforms its cartography through newly emerged differences by spreading its

offshoots. This connection of proliferation “carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb ‘to be’” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25, emphasis in original) in thinking and doing curriculum.

As such, othering curriculum from the dominant discourse of education—prescribed disciplinary knowledge, standardized curriculum, teaching to the test, predetermined teaching and learning models, teaching and learning for competition, and so forth—prompts me to rethink and trouble the normalized educational practices. The bifurcation of good-bad knowledge and the real-the possible curriculum reduces potentiality in education. The division of “good” and the “bad” curriculum mirrors one another trapped in their fixed relationship. Yet, a rhizomatic approach in curriculum focuses on understanding relations among substances and their entanglement in the process of constructing contemporary curriculum practices. Curriculum as a rhizome works in the middle of both sides of curriculum by constantly intervening and disrupting their rigidity, exclusiveness, and universality in their forms. The otherness emerges in the process of working two different elements together simultaneously (Butler, 2006; Lather, 2007; Springgay, 2008). I suggest that curricularists examine the moments of confusion, conflict, and resistance at the site of pushing and pulling in formulation of contemporary curriculum discourses where the line of flight operates actively, producing diverse formats of pedagogical possibilities.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION: THINKING M/OTHERING AND CURRICULUM WITHIN RELATION AND PROCESS

A Little Hole in a Woven Space

Can you see a little hole in a complexly interwoven space?

Have you imagined that

The little hole could become the site

where all the possibilities never cease to spring up and work together?

If you want to see it,

You don't need a hasty mind to discover what you want to see

Bring your tranquility to understand

the web of connections and the emergence of differences.

Be attentive to untold stories beyond what you hear.

You can trace the lines of woven layers at your first sight.

You may be able to notice the linkage of woven nodes.

You may be able to appreciate how different each segmentation is:

The different qualities in hues, thicknesses, lengths, intensities...

You may be able to see even more

If you continue to doubt, question, and reconsider

What you already see.

You can't see any sure difference in a complete woven basket alone.

Because differences emerge un/expectedly

At the point of intersection

Responding to their diverse woven situations.

Therefore,

in the complexly interwoven space,

Knowing the distinction between

weaver/woven, mother/othered mother, curriculum/othered curriculum

is an im/possible work

due to their embedded, embodied, and enmeshed performativities.

Always-already braided together,

Their boundaries are questioned, pushed, pulled, and rubbed

And create new space of particular patterns and nuances

Inviting us to appreciate, think, and act

More attentively and differently

For un/known multiple possible changes.

Do you see a little hole in a weaving space?

Do you see what is not seen to you?

A little hole in a tightly woven space does not come in sight easily if my vantage point is limited to its surface level which finds a simplified woven pattern or a seamless woven structure. Unless I attempt to imagine the un/seen and un/known spot where more possible woven lines could be added, connected, and created in different nuances and textures, the woven space would be only seen locked in my habitual way of seeing which

makes a hasty decision and concludes with a simplified appreciation. I consider a formulation of woven space a process of working of a self, other, and context. Responding to one another's partial and temporal interactions, the self, other, and context shift their forms simultaneously. By examining otherness which emerges through discursive interplays, they constantly work, rework, and shape their own materialities; their relationships are fabricated. In this sense, imagination of un/known possibilities in the interwoven space does not happen in a preconceived or complete view. In order to grasp and articulate the constantly changing self, other, and context and their interwoven relationships, it requires permanent openness, flexibility, and sensitivity to appreciate the possible more in a little hole in a weaving space.

In this discussion chapter, I put forward the overarching theme of my dissertation study, "*focusing on the connection and process*" in dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship. Thinking with curriculum, I revisit my inquiry points: a) In what ways have my subjectivities as m/other been constructed within the transnational mothering context? b) How has the notion of otherness been challenged in shaping my m/other relationship? c) How is the theorization of m/othering through weaving interrelated with the recent curriculum discourse of dealing with otherness in a self/other relationship? I advocate the importance of recognizing *interconnectivity, changeability, and multiplicities* in ontological understanding of a self/other relationship and its working with otherness. To do so, I first articulate the process of constructing my m/othering subjectivities and curriculum as *performative, multiple, and always in motion* in terms of understanding their ontological statuses. I then highlight the importance of recognizing otherness and *othering* process which prompt multiple possibilities in the space of m/othering and

curriculum. Lastly, I argue for the significance of focusing on *connection and process* rather than dualism in my inquiries of m/other and curriculum through weaving in understanding the ontological statuses of a self, other, and context and construction of their self/other relationships as well as working with otherness.

Ontological Understanding of M/other and Curriculum

Through my feminist poststructuralist autobiographical inquiry of m/othering, I theorize my subjectivities as m/other and curriculum as performative, multiple, and constantly shifting in constructing their ontological statuses within their situated contexts. I refer to this meaning because my m/othering subjectivities and curriculum are neither singular nor static but constantly formulated in diverse forms in response to the effect of webs of socio-cultural norms. Ontological meanings of m/other and curriculum are produced within discursively constituted contemporary mothering and educational discourses and knowledge, which are also subject to change their forms through interactions with subjects (e.g. m/other and curriculum) in their self/other (e.g. self/context) relationships. In these movements, I argue that my subjectivities of m/other, curriculum, and their contexts cannot be unitary, coherent, or permanent; rather, they transform reacting to one another's changes and particularities in un/expected and multiple manners. In this section, I discuss performativity, changeability, and multiplicity in constructing subjectivities as m/other and ontological meanings of curriculum in thinking with weaving.

Performative M/othering and Curriculum

I have argued that my maternal subjectivities are formulated through working within discursively constituted historical, global/national economic, and socio-political, and educational mothering discourses in specific time and space. Likewise, curriculum is constituted responding to complex networks of social, cultural, edu-political, and neoliberal economic forces in transnational space. That is, performativities of m/othering and curriculum are produced through dynamic interactions with the iterative effects of discursively created mothering and educational norms. The performativities of m/othering and curriculum are signified and resignified through their work with the circulation of power, knowledge, discourse, and socio-cultural norms. Yet, the nexus of power is neither fixed nor stable; rather, it also mutates its forms through the process of repeating or failing to repeat its effect (Butler, 1990, 1993a).

For instance, my transnational m/othering performativities have been formulated within discursively constituted mothering discourses and have shifted interacting with my different m/othering contexts—e.g. crossing geographical boundaries of South Korea and the United States. My maternal thinking and behaviors have emerged differently upon my transnational migration to fulfill my and my children’s educational aspirations. Situated in the different mothering environment—as a mother who pursues her doctoral degree in the “foreign” country instead of an always-available mother in the three-generation household in the “home” country; performing single parenting remote from other family members; being exposed to different ideas, interpretations, and attitudes regarding the question of “What are *good* mothering and education?”—my mothering knowledge and practices have been transformed discursively toward unknown directions. M/othering and

curriculum as learning experiences in my life course are closely interrelated with one another embedded in current normative educational discourses.

Multiplicities in M/othering and Curriculum

In weaving, complex interwoven layers emerge when different weaving materials create diverse segments and points of intersection being connected into one another. Just as performativities of m/othering and curriculum are formulated within their discursive interconnections with their situated contexts, multiple woven patterns are fabricated through different weaving materials' interplays responding to diverse weaving conditions, such as a weaver's intuitions, use of techniques, and weaving materials' characteristics. Since weaving conditions as well as the contexts of m/othering and curriculum never pre-exist but vary in particular time and space, ontological understanding of m/othering and curriculum cannot happen in any pre-given, singular, or generalized frame. Just as qualitatively different weaving strands and their weaving effects are involved in creating diverse woven lines, m/othering, curriculum, and their situated conditions are intricately interrelated producing rhizomatically entangled connections. In this scheme, I urge that the rhizomatically entangled materialities of m/othering and curriculum should be vigilantly investigated in order to understand their complex networks of interrelations. They also require openness to invite more unknown connections. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) illustrates, rhizomatic entanglement is comprised of the "conjunction" which constantly adds a connection to its system. This conjunction of "and, and, and..." generates multiplicities in its connections; the multiplicity is neither countable nor limited to a certain form due to its simultaneous, instant, and undetermined work. The impetus of producing fertile networks enables

m/othering and curriculum to continually transform their ontological statuses and meanings and be connected into further multiplicities of possibilities.

Transformative M/othering and Curriculum

Connected into power-embedded and discursively constituted mothering and educational contexts, m/othering and curriculum constantly change their forms shaping their multidimensional ontological meanings. Their continual flows and moves create various nuances in constructing their materialities. Just as diverse woven patterns are fabricated reacting to physical pressures and technical controls in the process of weaving, performativities of m/othering and curriculum are constantly produced working within transnationally constituted socio-political, cultural, and educational discourses and their discursively constructed connections. Since performativities of m/othering and curriculum are transformative, relational, and procedural, any unitary rendering of m/othering and curriculum will close, limit, and neglect their multidimensional aspects. Any fixed version of understanding of m/othering and curriculum will also ignore, simplify, and minimize other potential changes in their constitutions. Due to the fluidity, changeability, and flexibility of m/othering, curriculum, and their situated contexts, performativities of m/othering and curriculum are incomplete, temporal, and always in the process of formulation. Rather than coherent, consistent, and definitive understanding of m/othering and curriculum, I argue that scrutinizing the flow and movement in constructing multiple, intersecting, and partial meanings and statuses of m/othering and curriculum is important to investigate complex interrelations in their self/context relationship. Paying a special attention to the dynamics among changeability of m/othering and curriculum, their movable contexts, and their interactions within the

network will provide an insight to understand discursive construction of m/othering and curriculum.

Dealing with Otherness in a Self/other Relationship

In this section, moving my discussion point from the understanding of ontological meanings and statuses of m/othering and curriculum to the dealing with otherness in a self/other (self/context) relationship, I highlight the significance of the “othering” process which troubles any fixed and separated understanding of self-other relationship. I argue for the importance of recognizing and working with excessive accounts (otherness) in the process of othering because it brings more diverse ways of thinking and doing in m/othering and curriculum.

In an interconnected self/other relationship, a self and the Other transform and change their boundary of the relationship through their interplays (Ahmed, 2002; Springgay 2008). Due to two different subjects’ construction of unstable, partial, and multifaceted relationship, their senses of otherness cannot be also considered in a consistent, presumed, or predetermined form. Rather, otherness emerges un/expectedly within complex layers of relation through dynamic interactions among a self, the Other, and their situated contexts. When I encounter otherness from my self and from my mother deviated from my taken for granted knowledge of what a good mother should be like, I come to attend to the moment of *othering*, and question the discrepancy between my (our) mothering ideals and live(s) as m/other in reality. The process of othering has been important in my inquiry of m/othering and curriculum because it challenges, disrupts, and rebuilds any seemingly pre-fixed, closed, and separated relation between me

and my normalized mothering knowledge, as well as me and my mother in a self/other relationship. The othering process pries open the interstice between a self and the Other, summoning any hidden, masked, and conflicting accounts and makes a space for the unnamed to be counted for working and reworking against its categorical limit in their materiality construction.

Othered Mother and Othered Curriculum

In my autobiographical inquiry of m/other and curriculum, contemporary neoliberal educational discourses have pushed me to question current teleological, success-oriented, and outcome-centered educational practices. Living within the compulsive educational discourses and social norms, I have been constantly dealing with feelings of ambiguity, uncertainty, and ambivalence in my doubled situatedness between how I am supposed to educate and how I desire to raise my children. For example, when contemporary mothering norms directed me to plan, design, and monitor my children's educational achievement, I encountered a different subjectivity in me who confronted and resisted those normative constraints. I then became perplexed, constantly interrogated and struggled to work and rework the forceful network of mothering discourses. I, as an othered mother (m/other) persistently seek out other ways of mothering as a form of resistance (e.g. working mother, staying-home mother, transnational mother, and unnamable mother). Challenging the normative mothering discourses which compelled me to be an "educational manager" in the world of endless competition, my status of quo was reconsidered, re-visualized, and reworked.

Likewise, when curriculum fails to conform and exceeds current educational norms, the othered curriculum surfaces at the site of othering which constantly disrupts the normalizing process of standardization, unlimited competition, and outcome-centered education. As Miller (2005) suggests, othering enlarges our capacities and visions to acknowledge “what should be and what might be otherwise” and to rearticulate “already known situations and identities as fixed, immutable, locked into normalized thus often exclusionary of what and who are possible” (p. 54). The othered curriculum as an element which connects the disparity between the real and the possible enunciates one’s double(d) status and rethinks its fixed and normalized pedagogical practices. Thus, responding to the otherness of the curriculum is a political act to navigate the nexus of power, which might shift dominant curriculum discourses and practices. Yet, encountering otherness and othering moments are neither scheduled nor linear work; instead, those political actions which work on/with/through the otherness emerge with un/predicted forms, making multiple and transformative m/othering and curriculum possible.

M/othering and Curriculum as Strategically Provisional

This partial, instantaneous, and simultaneous process of othering as a personal/political work happens “strategically provisional” (Butler, 1993b) in disturbing, marking, and remarking one’s ontological status. The moment of othering, questioning, and troubling as “the site of permanent openness and resignifiability” (Butler, 1992, p. 160) constantly signifies and resignifies one’s ontological meanings and positionings. For example, the normalized transnational mothering term, “Goose Mothering” has been challenged by my diverse, particular, and ever changing transnational mothering patterns.

The categorical term does not count my complex situatedness in an institutionalized family structure or other private reasons why my family members willingly supported my and my children's migration in spite of long-time separation. My academic career as well as scholarly advancement motivated me to consider study abroad with my children. They were concealed in the name of "Goose Mothering," which mainly centers on parents' sacrifices on behalf of their children's educational success. My reluctance and suspicion of being categorized as Goose Mother have challenged the universalized and taken for granted meaning of goose mothering and dismantled the seemingly fixed and limited version of signification; the meaning of the term has been reinscribed and the realm of the signification of goose mothering has been modified.

In terms of thinking with weaving, any woven segment, knot, and moments of hesitance or dropping a stitch can be the place for a weaver to halt her weaving for a second, examine her woven lines, and redirect her further weaving. Yet, the process does not follow any linear order or occur in any planned or predesigned manner. It flows discursively in the continuum of weaving. It is rather spontaneous, incomplete, and temporal work to intervene and reformulate weaving, m/othering, and curriculum for working with multiple possibilities. Due to the inconsistency, changeability, and instantaneity, the formation of strategically provisional curriculum and m/othering cannot be easily expected or pinned down in a(n) generalized term or attribution. The strategically provisional m/othering and curriculum constantly work with otherness which emerges against the moment of fixation, stability, and essentialization in the subject materialization process.

Focusing on Connection and Process in M/othering and Curriculum

Troubling a Fixed and Binary Frame in a Self-Other Relationship

In this section, I problematize any static, monolithic and reduced version of a subject and a self/other relationship which confines one's becoming process and their possible transformations into a fixed frame. I underscore the investigation of interrelationality and process in the construction of a subject and a self/other relationship. Furthermore, I urge to map out their web of connections, movements, and points of contestation, intersections, as well as disconnections in order to understand the complex and dynamic work of dealing with otherness in constituting a self and the Other and their relationship.

Many existing feminist studies of mother and motherhood have focused on knowing mothers' biologically or psychologically predetermined mothering as nurturing, reproductive, and always deficient under phallogentricity (Rich, 1978). On the contrary to this position, a different feminist understanding of mothering, which empowers maternal subjects, has emerged highlighting the point of socio-politically constituted mothering practices (Jeremiah, 2004, 2006). Yet, separating the relationship between women and men, it argues "motherhood" as male-defined and "mothering" as female-defined (O'Reilly, 2004a, 2006). The notion of matrophobia (Rich, 1978) perpetuates "mothers" as helpless and oppressed subjects under patriarchy for her daughter to fear for becoming a mother. Gilligan (1982) accentuates women's and men's and boys' and girls' distinctive moral development. In contrary to these studies, I delved into the process and connection in the course of constituting my maternal subjectivities and relationship with my mother, I analyzed multiple networks of discursively formulated mothering and educational discourses and norms focusing on the moments of encountering with

otherness (excessive accounts), othering processes, and transformative construction of my maternal subjectivities, performativities, and the *interrelationship* within the self/context and self/other relationship.

Understanding a subject and its self/other relationship in a fixed category or binary separation is an insufficient, exclusionary, occlusive, and even dangerous work because their unknown, in-the-making, and other potential materialities might be ignored or neglected in a simplified or rigid frame (Butler, 1990; Miller, 2005). For example, it is problematic if my relationship with my mother is reduced to a biologically or socially normalized mother-daughter dyad: namely, mother is always caring, sacrificing, and modeling her mothering for her daughter; daughter is filial, obedient, and domesticated to imitate her mother's mothering. Other possible relationships with my mother will be restricted closed in its firm and forceful boundary. Similar to this approach to m/othering, it is challenging to regard curriculum framed by the seemingly bifurcated educational practice. The division between the real and the possible curriculum generates problems as if they were separate from the beginning. The detached thinking and doing curriculum between the real and the possible promote an artificial work to make two elements consolidate or permanently differentiate from one another. In an effort to reach a future goal to provide "equal" education for "all" students and/or to earn education as means of winning the competition, current curriculum practices have been universalized, regulated, and controlled, pursuing the standardized teaching and learning reinforced by predesigned educational programs and pre-calculated pedagogical outcomes (Miller, 2005; Pinar, 2012; Taubman, 2009). Standardized goals on teaching and learning inflect teachers, students, school administrators, and other decision makers' daily lives in reality;

their prescribed “possibility” haunts “real” educational practices at the expense of one another.

However, in an interrelated self/other relationship, each element (e.g. the real and the possible) is already involved in constructing their materialities and constantly transforms through interactions (Ahmed, 2001; Butler, 2001; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Springgay, 2008). Therefore, a self and the Other do not remain static where they have been; rather, they attend their own changes by joining one another’s transformation, and modifying their range of limit in their relationship. Two elements’ ontological statuses are created by/in/through/with each other’s performativities, engagement, and involvement in their working within multiple axes of power circulations. Thus, it is hard to find an isolated self and its Other in their relationship. For instance, contemporary educational norms of “good” education have been formulated in diverse forms responding to the web of global economy, socio-political, and cultural educational discourses locally as well as transnationally. Therefore, making a clear distinction between “good” and “bad” education is problematic because power does not operate alone to produce a dominant educational norm to decide what is good or bad. They are constituted like an entangled web intertwined with the complex patterns of effects such as different governmental focuses, global trends, and collaborations with corporations and societal demands throughout the globe. The meaning of “good” or “bad” education is arbitrary in line with different standpoints and continues to mutate their nuances at the site of othering in diverse pedagogical contexts.

Therefore, understanding curriculum and m/other within a fixed binary category of “good mother-bad mother” or “possible education-real education” polarizes their

materialities and completes, concludes, and totalizes their constant emergence of becoming. When m/othering and curriculum are signified in certain language forms, those terms are subject to rethink, interrogate, and contest for their resignifications. A self and the Other's multiply, discursively, and continuously constituted ontological statuses cannot be recognized in any generalized or bifurcated scope because their excessive accounts, entangled connections, and simultaneous interactions can be miscounted, neglected, or even ignored. As I emphasize the significance of othering process, the moments of question, doubt, and resistance on feelings of otherness create a space of recognizing the gap between the self and the Other and works within the gap by connecting and disconnecting their relationship. It also prompts each subject to deal with tensions arisen by otherness and invites other ways of thinking and doing m/othering and curriculum. Thus, this transformative, temporal, and procedural self/other relationship cannot be predicted or reduced by any separated, fixed or simplified scheme. Rather, a scrutiny on the connections among a self, other, context, and their interactions, particularly in their tensional moments of othering is crucial to understand the process of constituting ontological meanings of curriculum and m/othering and their complex and dynamic interrelations to articulate its shifting, embedded, and entangled relationships.

Interwoven Self/other Relationship

My m/othering subjectivities, relationship with my mother, and the otherness within the self/other relationship constantly emerge and shift through interactions within discursively constituted contexts. It is im/possible to examine interrelationalities and the ways of working with otherness in their self/other relationships without mapping out the *process* of formulation of their ontological statuses and *connections* within their situated

contexts. *Thinking within connection and process* has been my ongoing praxis throughout my dissertation research journey which troubles “Whatness: what are a self, the Other, the relationship, and the difference between them?” to inquire “How: to what extent and under what condition has one’s materiality been constituted? How can otherness be recognized and worked with?”

In weaving, two different weaving materials as a warp and a weft are intersected, intertwined, and entangled in creating woven patterns. Connecting one point to the other point, repetitive work of weft and warp creates layers of woven lines. Yet, the linkage is not just a collection of static lines. It is formulated via movements of the “line of flight” (Deleuze & Guatari, 1987) which trouble any static and bifurcated understanding and simple connection of this/that or here/there. As the movement of line of flight crosses, intersects, and intervenes a monolithic construction of woven line, the points of segmentation and entanglement in fabricating a particular woven pattern need to be carefully examined within its *process and connection* among strands for a deeper analysis of their interwoven statuses. As the concept of “transformative relationship” illustrates that a self and the Other avow their interconnection and move beyond what they have been through dynamic interactions (Butler, 2001), two different weaving points are already interconnected and constitute a particular woven segment which cannot be consistent, universal, or ever the same with other woven knots in their woven space. Woven layers are fabricated in continuum through repetitive interactions of weaving materials responding to multiple webs of forces, just as a self/other relationship is intertwined.

As Butler (2001) and Springgay (2008) posit, a self and the Other are not separate but different within their connection. They already concede their linkage and involve transformation of one another's, their own, and even their boundaries. In my m/other relationship, my normalized knowledge of "good" mother as the Other was not my mothering ideal separated from my m/othering realities. My knowledge of good mother has been permeated, embodied, and embedded in my life via diverse effects of media inputs, parent teaching, old sayings, other mothers' mothering, and others' gazes for a long time. It is unclear to discern if I learned the knowledge in a public or personal setting.

In this regard, I rethink a classroom context with my interpretation of a self and the Other and m/othering. A teacher, student, and knowledge are complexly interconnected one another in their self/other relationships. Their ontological meanings and statuses are discursively formulated open to possible interactions and unknown situations. No preexisting knowledge or identity exists before students interact with teachers and other peers. At the point of intersection in constituting knowledge of their own, a distinction between a teacher and a student becomes unclear because their daily lives are already socially, culturally, and politically interrelated with one another. The entanglement in their connections cannot be the same among participants in class: some lines of entanglement can be heavily linked with more complex issues and/or some layers can be less complicating with fewer lines of traffics. Therefore, a taken-for-granted relation among a teacher, a student, and knowledge—knowledge as an absolute object to teach and learn, a teacher as a knowledge transferor, and a student as a passive knowledge receiver—simplifies, neglects, and closes any possible emergence of new

teaching, learning, and knowledge construction. Dynamics in teaching and learning do not occur in any preset relation or in a detached form from the connection and process in knowledge making.

In addition, the otherness does not preexist in a self/other relationship. Just as the Butler (2006)'s argument on the contingency of otherness, the otherness is obscure to be differentiated from their discursively intertwined self/other relationship. For instance, my mother as the Other is already imbricated within biological, social and familial arrangements as a(n) mother, daughter, woman, as well as individual. Our mothering contexts, which have been constituted within the capitalist, neoliberal, and patriarchal nexus of power, have formulated our normalized mothering knowledge and affected differently responding to my and my mother's particular situatedness in producing our qualitatively different m/othering performativities. As my encounter with otherness of my mother startled me to consider my mother's individual space and other possible ways of being a mother, the distance (otherness) in a self/other relationship is neither presumed nor fixed. Rather, it is elastic and always changeable open to possible connections and/or disconnections. As my knowledge of mother transforms, otherness surfaces and locates differently. I come to understand my mother anew; our mother/daughter relationship can be rearranged.

As such, understanding a self/other relationship and dealing with otherness focusing on *connection and process* through the inquiries of m/othering through weaving trouble and shift our mother/daughter boundary bringing more hues and stories in my partial knowing of my m/other. By examining "the personal and the political not as binary but rather as entangled, embodied, and embedded, constantly changing and

reconstructing influences on my own and other(s)” (Miller, 2005, p. 137), new and diverse discourses of mother can be recognized and a traditional definition of m/other can be rearticulated within the relation with the Other. Thus, knowing my m/other in a fixed binary self-other relationship perpetuates, displaces, and reduces my mother who constantly becomes anew modifying her ways of being in the web of connection. The discursively constituted and complexly interwoven subjects are not supposed to be understood in any singular and unitary scope in their self/other connection.

Admittedly, otherness in a self/other relationship shifts responding to actual interactions and connections with other issues. Due to the temporal and contingent work of otherness in a self/other relationship, I posit that educators do not simply understand students with the use of ready-made categorical significations. Individuals’ emergent and transformative differences should be recognized, respected, continually worked and reworked. As Janet Miller (2005, 2010d) highlights on her concept of “communities without consensus” where diverse selves interplay with no pressure to merge into one absolute answer or one identity and constantly work with differences open to the unknown, I believe that a pedagogical space should be the place where we attend to all the questions which we encounter in the course of teaching and learning in dealing with otherness. Recognizing each participant’s own struggle with and resistance to the multiple network of power will be important to understand the multilayered and local effects on individuals and their life styles. Just as a different weaving strand involves in creating a particular woven pattern, the connection between a self and the Other in a classroom emerges through constant exchanges of differences.

Further, a self/other relationship in curriculum practices such as knower/known, theory/practice, and real/possible education, also works in process and connection—braided, intertwined, and already involved in one another’s otherness—constantly questioning the points where knots and segments are made in their entanglement, just as two different strands are interwoven disrupting the distinction between the weaver and the woven. I believe that understanding the “rhizomatically entangled” curriculum is to map out how curriculum has been constructed responding to the effect of multiple layers of forces; how the nexus of power has been dis/connected and transformed in formulation of the contemporary curriculum practices. In this sense, I argue for working with othered curriculum from the rhetoric of “good” education which engages a deeper analysis of complex networks of power in contextualizing the current pedagogical practices. Butler (1990) highlights that a subject and its self/other relationship are formulated in/through/with power circulations. Drawing from her point, I suggest interrogating the interrelationality between curriculum practices and the work of nexus of forces. Understanding the connection with multiple effects within the process of materialization of curriculum will provide an insight for us to move on and work for other pedagogical possibilities as a “site of cultural critique and social change” (Miller, 2005, p. 50).

Therefore, curriculum can be neither predetermined nor prescribed because it constantly flows and shifts within the dynamic, complex nexus of forces (Miller, 2005; Nadler, 2015; Roy, 2003; Wallin 2010, 2011). As my m/othering performativity constantly emerges anew in transnational space by questioning, troubling, and resisting its otherness formulated between my m/othering reality and conventional knowledge of what a good mother should be like, everyday-doing curriculum as performative and

strategically provisional destabilizes and deterritorializes its boundary in the process of working with reiterative significations in hegemonic educational practices. The interrelationality and process in concocting a subject as well as its self/other relationship in m/othering and curriculum cannot be limited in any dualistic frame due to their malleability, temporality, and ongoing working for re/construction.

M/othering and curriculum—not as a foundation or destination but as the middle of assemblage—continue to transform their territories. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) delineates that this process of becoming happens where “speed turns the point into a line” and the impetus of movements carries enough strength to “shake and uproot the verb ‘to be’” (p. 25). Supporting the Deleuzeguttarian thought, I emphasize the importance of working with otherness in m/othering and curriculum as a political gesture responding to constantly emerging questions, doubts, and confusions. The force, energy, and speed of daily work of othering will connect a point into a point and unsettle an already-made web of lines in the rhizomatic system of m/othering and curriculum. Since otherness does not come up prior to interactions, a self, other, and their situated contexts are always-in-the-making momentarily, intermittently, and recursively at the site of encountering otherness and continuously re/invent themselves (Miller, 2005). Through persistent interrogations, mapping-outs, and contestations, m/othering and curriculum examine their situatedness and understand how they arrived at their interwoven points. They put an effort to disrupt their seemingly rigid, static, and normative boundaries and make a space for more unnamed possibilities and unknown connections which can be also falling in a tensional moment dealing with its otherness. Just as diverse lines of linkage formulate un/expected intersections in weaving, patterns of m/othering and curriculum are being created

repeating weaving and unweaving within forceful and enmeshed connections in the middle of assemblage.

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