

FANTASIES OF ADOPTED ADULTS: AN INTERPRETATIVE
PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

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The present study aimed to explore the fantasies of adult adoptees in Turkey by focusing on their lived experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six Turkish female adoptees. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Seven superordinate themes emerged as follows: 1) abandonment fantasies, 2) threatening fantasies, 3) loss fantasies, 4) self-worth repairing fantasies, 5) ideal family fantasies, 6) connection fantasies, and 7) recontact fantasies. The researcher discussed the study findings in light of the existing literature on adoption and outlined the clinical and research implications. Finally, the limitations of the study and directions for future research were also discussed.

Keywords: Adoption, Adult Adoptees, Fantasy, Loss, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

ÖZ

EVLAT EDİNİLMİŞ YETİŞKİNLERİN FANTEZİLERİ: BİR YORUMLAYICI FENOMENOLOJİK ANALİZ

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Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerini, yaşadıkları deneyimlere odaklanarak keşfetmeyi amaçlamıştır. Çalışmada evlat edinilmiş altı Türk kadın ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmelerin yazıya dökülmüş hali Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir. Aşağıda belirtilen yedi üst tema ortaya çıkmıştır: 1) terk edilme fantezileri, 2) tehdit edici fanteziler, 3) kayıp fantezileri, 4) öz-değer onarıcı fanteziler, 5) ideal aile fantezileri, 6) bağlantı fantezileri ve 7) yeniden temas fantezileri. Çalışmanın bulguları, evlat edinmeye ilişkin mevcut literatür ışığında tartışılmış ve klinik ve araştırma çıkarımları özetlenmiştir. Son olarak, çalışmanın sınırlılıkları ve gelecekteki araştırmalar için yönlendirmeler de ayrıca ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Evlat Edinme, Yetişkin Evlat Edinilenler, Fantezi, Kayıp, Travma, Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz

To my beloved wife

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Adoption narratives possess a unique depth and complexity that resonate through the experiences of those involved. In this realm, Betty Jean Lifton offers a compelling analogy: “The story of adoption is a ghost story, full of fantasy, mystery, and missing persons, who, for the most part, are ‘as if’ dead, unlike respectable ghosts, who are unambiguously dead.” (Lifton, 2009, p.72). This vivid imagery captures the intricate blend of absence and presence that characterizes the adoption experience, setting the stage for a deeper exploration of its psychological and emotional dimensions. From the adoptee’s perspective, this story includes narratives of abandonment, loss, trauma, identity formation, attachment, and search. As Lifton (2009) noted, different characters accompany the adoptee in this story. These characters may be the birth mother, birth father, birth siblings, the possible self of the adoptee who was never adopted, adoptive parents, or the child the adoptive parents could not have. Depending on the inner world of the adoptee at a given moment, various stories are produced. Such stories and the characters involved reveal the fantasy world of the adoptee, which is the subject of the present study. This chapter provides an overview of adoption, first in general terms, then exploring the lifelong impact of adoption on adoptees and their fantasies related to it, and finally describing the purpose of the present study.

1.1. Adoption

Adoption is defined as “legal placement of abandoned, relinquished or orphaned children within an adoptive family” (Juffer & van Ijzendoorn, 2007, p. 1067). The adoption triad refers to the three parties involved in an adoption: the birth parent(s), the adoptive parent(s), and the adopted child or adult (Treacher & Katz, 2001). The concept of adoption triad emerged from research in the mid-20th century that looked at the complex relationships and psychological impacts surrounding adoption

(Grotevant et al, 2010). Adoption is a lifelong process that affects all three parties across the lifespan, not just a single event or transaction (Silverstein & Kaplan, 1988). Each member of the triad experiences both unique joys and challenges associated with adoption (Brodzinsky, 1990). Recent statistics reveal some significant demographic information to further illustrate the scope and trends of adoption.

According to the United Nations (2009), an estimated 260,000 children are adopted worldwide each year. Of these, 60% are under the age of 5 at the time of adoption. The numbers of girls adopted both domestically and internationally are higher than boys, and adoptive parents tend to be in the 30-44 age range, with an equal number of women and men among adoptive parents (United Nations, 2009). UNICEF estimated that at least 153 million children worldwide are orphaned or abandoned, and there are an estimated 105 per 100,000 children in residential care worldwide, which highlights a significant global challenge (2018). Although adoption takes place in every society around the world, it has been very difficult to collect consistent data on adoption (Palacios et al. 2019). Adoption practice has been closely linked to the needs of individuals and society and has been regulated by laws in each country. With a general understanding of adoption in place, it is pertinent to examine how these practices and regulations manifest specifically within the Turkish context.

1.1.1. Adoption in Turkey

Adoption is regulated under Articles 305 to 320 of the Turkish Civil Code and the statute entitled “Execution of Interventions Regarding Adoption”. The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption has been effective in Turkey since September 1, 2004.

Private adoptions are prohibited in Turkey. All adoptions must be conducted through institutions authorized by the Council of Ministers. The General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection (Social Services for short) holds the legal authority to oversee the implementation of adoption procedures. Legally, Turkey operates under a simple adoption system. This system establishes a new legal parent-child relationship between the child and their adoptive parents without terminating the parent-child relationship between the child and the birth parents (Aygül, 2012). To initiate the adoption process, individuals or couples may reach out personally (or jointly in the

case of spouses) to provincial social welfare offices to find a child suited for adoption, or they may connect with the child's birth parents or legal guardians. Both pathways are closely monitored by the social welfare offices.

Article 314 of the Turkish Civil Code ensures confidentiality in adoption procedures: "Records, documents, and information related to the adoption may not be disclosed in any way unless there is a court decision, or the adoptee requests it." If an adopted individual wishes to seek information about their biological family, they are required to provide the necessary documentation to the Provincial Directorate of Family and Social Services, especially if the court that finalized the adoption is within the same province. Should an individual reside outside the province where the adoption was decreed, or if other specified conditions are not met, the search must be conducted through the Ministry's General Directorate of Children's Services.

According to the annual reports of the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs (2023), the number of children under institutional care in Turkey was 14141 in 2022. Institutional care includes children living in orphanages, child protection homes, and other residential care facilities under the authority of the Ministry. The number of foster families (koruyucu aile) was 7439, and the number of children in foster care was 9011. In the foster care system, children remain under the legal custody of their biological parents, but are cared for by foster families. In contrast, 556 children were adopted in Turkey in 2022, where adoptive parents (evlat edinilen aile) gain full legal custody of the child. Between 2003 and 2022, the Ministry has facilitated the adoption of 18947 children. These statistics provide an overview of the current state of the child welfare system in Turkey, highlighting the number of children in institutional care, foster care, and those who have been adopted. With a foundational understanding of adoption and its implementation in Turkey, we can now explore the profound lifelong impact that the adoption experience can have on adoptees.

1.2. The Lifelong Impact of Adoption on Adoptees

The experience of adoption profoundly shapes the inner world of adoptees. Psychoanalytic studies showed that adoptees face numerous challenges, experiencing increased vulnerability to psychological problems compared to non-adopted individuals (Blum, 1983; Palacios & Brodzinsky, 2010). Adoption experience not only

shapes the psychological development of the adoptee but also presents unique challenges in navigating typical developmental stages (Brodzinsky et al., 1993). While adopted and non-adopted children face similar developmental tasks; issues of identity, self-worth, and loss have profound and distinct implications for adoptees (Brodzinsky et al., 1993). Smit (2002) emphasized that while adoption does not necessarily lead to psychopathology, it does force the adoptee to confront complex emotional issues such as rejection and grief from an early age. In addition, the dynamics of the parent-child relationship in adoption are uniquely influenced by the realities of the adoption experience (Blum, 1983). For example, an adoptee may struggle with the feeling that they were not ‘chosen’ by their birth parents, which can lead to profound questions about self-worth and belonging—issues that might be compounded during adolescence, a time when the search for personal identity becomes paramount.

Research by Baden and O’Leary Wiley (2007) highlighted that adoptees often face lifelong developmental and psychological challenges, with the most significant issues being identity formation, the quest for self, and coping with loss. Moreover, as Brodzinsky (2013) discussed, adoptees often struggle with feelings of loss, rejection, and a fragmented identity as they come to understand that their birth parents gave them up. Finally, Roszia and Maxon (2019) described seven core issues in adoption: loss, rejection, shame and guilt, grief, identity, intimacy, and mastery and control. The following sections focused on the interconnected aspects of adoption, such as loss, trauma, attachment, identity formation, and searching, due to their critical importance and profound implications within the subject matter of this study.

1.2.1. Loss

Loss, as a central theme in adoption, profoundly affects adoptees, birth families, and adoptive families (Roszia & Maxon, 2019). Verrier (1993) explained this by noting the multifaceted nature of loss within the adoption triad: adoptees feel the loss of their birth parents, birth parents experience the loss of their child, and adoptive parents face the loss associated with infertility and lack of genetic continuity. Smit (2002) asserted that the very nature of adoption is rooted in loss, which differs from other life experiences such as death or divorce, because of its pervasive, profound nature and the limited social recognition it receives (Brodzinsky et al., 1993).

In particular, adoptees face a variety of losses, including separation from their birth families and cultural heritage, which is particularly pronounced in international or transracial adoptions, and for late adoptees, the loss extends to their familiar environment and established relationships. Brodzinsky et al. (1993) discussed how adoptees grapple with the loss of their birth parents, parts of their own identity, the loss of a unified self, and genetic continuity. This ambiguous loss, characterized by grief for physically absent but psychologically present figures, extends to the nuanced relationship with birth parents, who are often still alive but absent, and the lack of a biological connection to adoptive parents (Hodges, 1984). Adoptees also experience emotional turmoil related to safety, control, a sense of otherness, and grief for unknown biological parents (Kavanaugh & Fiorini, 2009; Shallcross, 2011). Powell and Afifi's (2005) research further explored how adoptees navigate this landscape of uncertainty and ambiguous loss, emphasizing that the quality of openness and the nature of contact with birth families play a critical role in coping with these feelings.

The process of loss often leads to a complex grief process (Brodzinsky et al., 1993) that manifests itself in a variety of ways, including anger, unhappiness, vulnerability, and feelings of meaninglessness. The struggle with loss and grief is a lifelong challenge for adoptees, with issues re-emerging at key life stages and transitions such as parenthood, marriage, or the loss of adoptive parents, potentially complicating their ability to successfully navigate life's developmental milestones (Kavanaugh & Fiorini, 2009; Shallcross, 2011). For some, this grief process may be less apparent, but it is still a significant aspect of their experience. In summary, the experience of loss in adoption is a deeply rooted and multifaceted aspect that profoundly shapes the emotional and psychological world of those involved in the adoption process. Closely tied to the experience of loss is the traumatic dimension of separation from the biological mother, which has significant psychological consequences.

1.2.2. Trauma

In the realm of adoption, trauma emerges as a fundamental element, profoundly shaping the psychology of the adopted child. Verrier (1993) introduced the concept of the "primal wound," a psychic trauma that occurs when an infant is separated from their biological mother. This act of separation and surrender to strangers, as Lifton

(1994) noted, is the basis for profound psychological effects. Lifton described adoption as an “invisible trauma” and emphasized its role in creating insecurities in life and relationships. Soll (2000) further elaborated on this by characterizing the infant’s loss as equivalent to the psychological death of the mother, a loss that can lead to long-standing effects like hypervigilance.

Verrier (2003) identified three residual effects of this initial abandonment trauma - terror, disconnection, and captivity, manifested as dissociation, anxiety, and hyperarousal. These symptoms often persist, leading individuals to relive the abandonment continually or to avoid triggering situations. The preverbal nature of these traumas, as highlighted by Verrier (1993) and supported by Green et al. (2010), implies that traumatic memories are encoded in sensations and images, remaining unprocessed and embedded in the psyche.

Prenatal experiences also play a significant role in shaping an individual’s psychology, as suggested by Pollak et al. (2010). Wirth (2001) emphasized the profound impact of the mother’s emotional state on the fetus, noting that the unborn child not only shares these emotional experiences but also begins forming memories and consciousness in utero. This indicates the possibility of trauma occurring even before birth, especially in cases where the child is unwanted.

Palacios and Brodzinsky (2010) pointed out that early trauma has lasting effects, leading to difficulties in interpersonal relationships, stress management, and emotional regulation. Furthermore, Herman (2009) discussed how abandonment can transform a child’s sense of helplessness into hopelessness, fostering a belief that the world is unsafe. The manifestations of early trauma are diverse, as Novak (2004) described, ranging from learning and language disabilities to impulsivity and self-destructive behaviors. Canham (1999) added that such experiences can distort a child’s perception of time, affecting their understanding of development and causality. Gatti (2011) described these early traumatic experiences as “undigested ghosts of a traumatic memory,” which present significant challenges in therapy and personal expression. Lifton (2009) expanded on this, discussing the concept of the Ghost Kingdom,” a realm within the adoption triad filled with unresolved grief and loss that therapists must navigate to address these deep-seated traumas effectively.

According to Kalsched (2013), early trauma can profoundly affect an individual's self-care system, which is responsible for regulating and protecting the psyche. When a child experiences severe trauma, the psyche may split into two parts: a vulnerable, wounded part that carries the pain of the trauma and a protective, defensive part that tries to shield the wounded part from further harm. However, this protective part can become rigid and maladaptive, forming negative internalized objects or inner voices. These internalized objects are often modeled after the abusive or neglectful caregivers from the child's past and can take on a punitive, critical, or even persecutory nature. As a result, the individual may find themselves caught in a cycle of reenactment, where they unconsciously seek out relationships or situations that mirror the dynamics of their early traumatic experiences.

This cycle of reenactment can be manifested in various ways, such as engaging in self-destructive behaviors or relationships that resemble the abuse or neglect they experienced as a child, developing a harsh, self-critical inner voice that constantly berates or undermines their self-worth, echoing the negative messages they received from their early caregivers and struggling to form healthy, trusting relationships due to a deep-seated fear of abandonment or betrayal rooted in their early experiences of loss or inconsistent care. Kalsched (2013) emphasized that this cycle of reenactment is not a conscious choice but rather an unconscious attempt by the psyche to master and resolve the unprocessed trauma. However, without proper therapeutic intervention, these patterns can persist, leading to ongoing emotional distress and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. With an understanding of the trauma associated with adoption, it is imperative to explore how these experiences affect attachment, a critical aspect of the emotional and social development of adoptees.

1.2.3. Attachment

Loss and trauma in adoption have a significant impact on the experience of attachment, a topic that has been widely explored in adoption research. Bowlby (1982) and Ainsworth (1989) stressed the importance of secure early attachments as predictors of emotional health in later life. For adoptees, Brodzinsky et al. (1992) highlighted the grief associated with losing the primary bond with birth or foster caregivers before entering an adoptive family. This grief can be intensified by pre-adoption experiences

in institutional care, which have been shown to profoundly affect a child's ability to form attachments (Chaffin et al., 2006; Haugaard, 2004; Smyke et al., 2012). These experiences underline the intertwined nature of loss, trauma, and attachment difficulties in adopted children.

The establishment of secure attachment in adoptive relationships is pivotal for both emotional well-being and social development. Researchers indicated that secure attachment relationships with adoptive parents are positively correlated with an adoptee's social development (Juffer & Van IJzendoorn, 2007). However, adoptees face unique challenges in forming these secure attachments due to severed biological connections and the need to form new bonds with adoptive family members. The age at which adoption occurs is significant; infants adopted before six months are less likely to face long-term attachment issues, whereas older adoptees might face problems related to peer connections (Howe & Fearnley, 2003).

Research findings on attachment in adopted individuals reveal a complex picture. Studies, including those by Van Londen, Juffer, and van IJzendoorn (2007), showed that infants adopted before one year of age generally do not risk insecure attachment. However, those adopted at older ages may experience developmental delays. According to research by Irhammar and Bengtsson (2004), adult adoptees generally display similar attachment patterns to non-adoptees, with some exceptions. Insecure and disorganized attachment in adoptees has been linked to various factors, including late adoption and a lack of information about biological backgrounds (Feeney et al., 2007). These findings point to the nuanced nature of attachment in adoptees, shaped by age at adoption and knowledge of their origins.

1.2.4. Identity Formation

Identity formation of adopted individuals encompass a unique process of understanding oneself in the context of adoption. Von Korff and Grotevant (2011) defined adoptive identity as an adoptee's perception of themselves in relation to their adoption status, its significance, and its influence on their interactions with others. Hernandez et al. (2006) emphasized the importance of a stable *sense* of self for emotional well-being, noting that challenges in identity formation can lead to feelings of being lost.

Identity development is acknowledged as a complex, multifactorial process, especially challenging for adoptees compared to non-adoptees (Brodzinsky, Schechter, et al., 1992; Groza & Rosenberg, 2001; Lifton, 1994). Unique challenges for adoptees, such as the absence of biological ties and potential feelings of low self-worth, are highlighted by Reitz and Watson (1992). They explained that adopted children may face difficulties in identity formation due to incomplete information about their genetic and birth history, a sense of partial belonging in their adoptive family, and the emotional burden of having been abandoned by their birth families.

McGinn (2007) expanded on this, explaining that adoptees not only lose their birth parents but also lack vital information such as medical history, racial identity, and other existential details that non-adoptees often take for granted. This gap in personal history can lead to the sensation of genealogical bewilderment. Lifton (2009) defined *genealogical bewilderment*, as a state of uncertainty and intense curiosity about one's genetic ancestry. Such lack of information is thought to impede the formation of a secure sense of self.

Von Korff and Grotevant (2011) found that open adoption-related family conversations contribute positively to adoptive identity formation. Such discussions help adoptees create a narrative around their identity and understand the meaning of their adoption in their lives. Smit (2002) advised that adoptive parents should provide as much factual information as possible but avoid fabricating details in the absence of information, as this can lead to further fantasizing by the adoptee.

Adoptees' search for their biological families is sometimes seen as a key aspect of adoptive identity development (Brodzinsky et al., 1992; Grotevant, 1997; Reynolds et al., 2016). This pursuit is often seen not only as a search for missing relatives but also as an integral part of shaping one's identity within the adoption narrative. As identity formation is closely linked to adoptees' quest for knowledge about their origins, the following section delves into the phenomenon of searching for birth families.

1.2.5. Searching

Searching for birth families is a common experience among adoptees as they develop their adoptive identity. The motivations for seeking information can vary widely, as

can the intensity and dedication to the search. However, most adoptees desire to know more about their birth families at least once, with a particular curiosity emerging in adolescence and young adulthood (Wrobel et al., 2013).

Müller and Perry (2001) established three theoretical models of search motivation: searching as a normative process, searching in the context of sociocultural norms that surround adoption and family life in general, and searching that is motivated by psychopathology. The normative developmental model characterizes the search for more information as common among adoptees and frames the search as a form of identity development specific to adoptees. The model emphasizes the life cycle and the circular connection of birth and death, such that understanding one's life and death also requires understanding one's birth (Müller & Perry, 2001). Researchers have established that searching is a normative process allowing adoptees to answer questions and develop a sense of self. Wrobel and Dillon (2009) found that a high percentage of adopted adolescents were highly or moderately curious about family traits, their birth parents and other family members, and reasons for being placed for adoption. For adoptees, answering such questions could be necessary for the normative identity development process. McGinnis et al. (2009) noted that for adoptees, "gaining information about their origins is not [only] a matter of curiosity, but a matter of gaining the raw information needed to fill in the missing pieces of their lives and to derive an integrated sense of self" (p.50).

According to the second model, searching in the context of sociocultural norms that surround adoption and family life, adoptees may search for their biological families because society tends to value blood relations and often stigmatizes adoption as being less legitimate than blood-familial ties (Fisher, 2003; Palacios, 2009). The sociocultural model proposes that adoptees search for information due to sociocultural norms and expectations, placing the adoptee search in the context of the cultural expectation of kinship and blood connection (Müller & Perry, 2001).

Müller and Perry's (2001) third theoretical model, searching that is motivated by psychopathology, can be viewed more from a critical perspective. Historically, searching for birth families has often been considered a sign of an unsuccessful adoption (Tieman et al., 2008). Yet, the decision to search does not depend on a single

or straightforward psychological process but is the outcome of a more complex process weighing different expectations based on specific biographical situations (Howe & Feast, 2000; Muller & Perry, 2001). Because those reasons were sometimes previously understood from a psychopathological framework, adoptees who searched for their birth parents were viewed by some as being ungrateful or mentally unstable. However, since searching for one's birth parents has become more normative, adoptees who search for their birth parents should not be viewed as if something must be wrong with them (Samuels, 2001). More recent literature has raised questions about the perceived positive correlation between searching and social adjustment. The majority of searchers in most relatively recent studies are well-adjusted (Tieman et al., 2008; Müller & Perry, 2001; Grotevant et al., 2000).

In addition, Brodzinsky's adoption search theory references six universal themes to the adoption search process: loss and mourning, envy, sexual identity, consolidation of identity, cognitive dissonance, and body image (Brodzinsky et al., 1993). Adoptees may be faced with many losses throughout their lifetimes, including the loss of their birth parents, loss of relationship with their biological family members, and loss of the status of being raised in a household with their birth parents. These losses often lead to natural feelings of grief, and sometimes, the search for a birth parent is initiated by mourning over the loss of an adoptive parent (Strauss, 1994). The second theme, envy, relates to the jealousy adoptees may feel towards non-adoptees who have access to their biological history, medical records, and genetic relations. These feelings can catalyze the search process. Sexual identity, the third theme, highlights the complex feelings adoptees may develop as they reach the age when their birth mother relinquished them. Adoptees may approach intimacy and relationships differently, knowing that they could be the product of various circumstances. The search for birth parents can help adoptees navigate these feelings and establish a stronger sense of identity, which is crucial for forming intimate relationships. The fourth theme, consolidation of identity, refers to the internal conflict adoptees may experience between their "false" adoptive identity and their "real" biological identity. This dual identity can lead adoptees to search for their biological families to reconcile these two selves. Cognitive dissonance, the fifth theme, occurs when adoptees receive contradictory messages about their adoption. For example, being told they were "chosen" by their adoptive family, while also realizing that their birth family had to

relinquish them. This dissonance can prompt adoptees to seek answers through the search process. The final theme, body image, relates to adoptees' desire to find physical resemblances and genetic traits within their biological family. Growing up without knowing where certain characteristics come from can lead to feelings of isolation, and the search for birth relatives can provide answers to these questions.

Studies that provided estimates of the numbers of searchers have been based mainly on voluntary samples of adoptees. According to these studies, between 30% and 65% of adoptees expressed a strong desire to search or were actively searching for their birth parents (Curtis & Pearson, 2010). Researchers have indicated the following reasons for why adoptees search for their birth parents or relatives: curiosity, wanting a sense of belonging, seeking medical information, developing a sense of personal identity, and genealogy (Feast & Howe, 2001; Grotevant & McRoy, 2009).

The most critical part of these findings was that those adoptees who were searching for their biological family had higher levels of distress than the other adoptees in the study's sample (Farr et al., 2016). However, it is not uncommon for adoptive parents to feel threatened by the wish to search. As a result, it is not surprising that many adoptees feel they cannot go through with searching. There are many reasons why adoptees decide not to search, including fear of what doors they will open, fear that the process will lead to rejection yet again, fear about how their own lives will change, and fear of losing their identity that many have worked hard to attain (Benson, 2019).

In conclusion, searching for the birth family is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by various factors, including normative developmental processes, sociocultural norms and expectations, and individual biographical situations. While searching has historically been viewed as a sign of an unsuccessful adoption, more recent research has challenged this view and suggested that searching is a normative process for many adoptees. However, the decision to search is not always easy, and adoptees may face a range of barriers and fears that prevent them from pursuing a search. Ultimately, the search process is a deeply personal and individual experience that can significantly affect an adoptee's sense of identity and well-being. Having explored the core issues surrounding adoption, we now turn our attention to the central focus of this study - the role of fantasy in the lives of adoptees.

1.3. Fantasy and Adoption

1.3.1. Fantasy in psychoanalytic theory

In psychoanalytic theory, the concept of fantasy is pivotal, playing a significant role in understanding the human mind and its pathologies). It involves creating personal scenarios in the mind that serve various psychological needs and functions (Akhtar, 2009). Essentially, fantasy is defined as an imagined sequence of events or a narrative similar to a story in which the imagining individual plays a central role, often in situations of emotional intensity (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012).

In psychoanalytic thought, exploring conscious and unconscious fantasies offers profound insights into the human psyche. Fantasies, which can be both conscious and unconscious, serve as a critical means by which individuals process and express their innermost desires, fears, and conflicts.

Conscious fantasies often manifest as daydreams in which individuals engage in imaginative scenarios that range from the pleasurable and fulfilling to the frightening and punishing (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012). These daydreams are not isolated mental events but are deeply connected to a more stable and enduring structure of unconscious fantasies. As Auchincloss and Samberg (2012) pointed out, conscious fantasies are derivatives of these underlying unconscious fantasies, which remain relatively insulated from the immediate effects of reality. This distinction between conscious fantasies and their unconscious counterparts underscores the multifaceted complexity of human mental life.

Unconscious fantasies are deemed more structured within the psyche because they are thought to be tied to our earliest, most fundamental emotional experiences that guide our perceptions and behaviors. These unconscious fantasies organize our thoughts and feelings before we are even aware of them, influencing our conscious mind and actions (Akhtar, 2009). This structure arises from the psyche's need to maintain a sense of continuity and coherence throughout our development.

This concept is further extended by Knafo and Feiner (2005), who argued that unconscious fantasy formation involves a degree of secondary process functioning; which means these fantasies are not just random thoughts but are organized in a way

that is more reality-oriented and logical compared to the raw, impulsive thoughts of the primary process. They agreed with Freud (1905), Arlow (1969), and Loewald (1978) that there is no clear boundary between conscious and unconscious fantasy. This blurring of boundaries implies that the creation of fantasy is a dynamic and fluid process in which the conscious and unconscious elements of the mind continually interact.

The concept of fantasy has undergone significant development in psychoanalytic theory, as detailed by Bohleber et al. (2015). Initially, Freud associated fantasies with daydreams and wish-fulfillments arising from instinctual frustrations and repressed desires, as seen in his early writings like “Studies on Hysteria” (1895). Freud’s letter to Wilhelm Fliess in 1897 marked a turning point, where he began considering unconscious fantasy as a key element in symptom formation, dreams, and daydreams, suggesting that unconscious fantasies stem from both our personal experiences and the stories, culture, and family narratives we are exposed to, which we then personalize and modify over time. These fantasies could be either inherently unconscious or repressed conscious fantasies, the latter often being daydreams that have been deliberately forgotten. Freud also spoke of primal fantasies, which he believed were inherited from human prehistory and included themes such as witnessing sexual intercourse between the parents, seduction, and castration (Spillius, 2001).

The Kleinian approach to unconscious fantasy, developed by Susan Isaacs (1948), greatly expanded this concept. Klein and her followers posited that unconscious fantasies are present from birth and underlie all mental functioning and, thus, are more than just repressed thoughts. These early psychic activities establish the infant’s connection to the external world and are expressed through feelings, sensations, and bodily states. Klein (1946) and Segal (1957) proposed that infants are actively engaged in distinguishing between positive and negative experiences. Central to this process is the concept of unconscious fantasies, which represent the infant’s unwanted desires and impulses. A critical aspect of this developmental process is the infant’s gradual recognition of the *good mother* and the *bad mother*, leading to an understanding of the mother and the self as distinct entities (“me” and “not-me”). This differentiation is essential for the child to symbolically process and integrate what was initially perceived as frightening fantasies into potential aspects of the self. As the child’s

ability to form symbolic meanings develops, his or her thinking becomes more organized and integrated. Klein described this transition as moving from a *paranoid-schizoid position*, characterized by persecutory anxieties, to a *depressive position*, where there is a greater capacity to integrate and cope with depressive anxieties and guilt.

Isaacs (1952) explained that Melanie Klein perceived unconscious fantasy as being essentially the same as unconscious thought and feeling. Klein's preference for the term 'phantasy' instead of 'thought' might be rooted in the observation that the thoughts of her child patients were often more imaginative and less bound by rationality compared to typical adult thought processes. Isaacs (1948) emphasized that the earliest fantasies are deeply intertwined with the individual's limited but real experiences of the objective world. This concept suggests that even in normal infants, there is an ongoing process of testing fantasies against reality to determine whether satisfaction can be obtained from external objects. Spillius (2001) expanded on Klein's theory, emphasizing that unconscious fantasies are central to all fundamental internal and external communications and relationships, whether with oneself or others. She believed that even defense mechanisms, such as schizoid mechanisms like splitting, projective identification, idealization, magical omnipotent denial, or manic defenses such as triumph, contempt, and control, or even obsessional defenses and repression, are, in essence, more enduring forms of fantasies. These defense mechanisms are viewed not merely as temporary psychological strategies but as more fixed or 'concretized' fantasies within the individual's psyche.

Jacob Arlow's North American ego psychology and Sandler and Sandler's contemporary Freudian approach offered distinctive perspectives in modern psychoanalytic theory. Arlow (1969) viewed unconscious fantasies as organized, coherent, and composed of verbal content. He saw these fantasies as ongoing mental functions that influence the perception of reality. Arlow's (1969) view of the seamless continuum between daydreaming and unconscious fantasy was that both conscious and unconscious fantasy activities are constant features of mental life. Sandler and Sandler (1994), on the other hand, distinguished between past unconscious fantasies and present unconscious fantasies, with past fantasies formed in early childhood and accessible only through psychoanalytic interpretation.

Ornstein and Ornstein's (2008) self-psychological conceptualization shifted the focus from instinctual drives to environmental responses, suggesting that environmental and individual childhood experiences significantly shape unconscious fantasies. They described unconscious fantasies as either shaped by traumatic experiences or representing a search for desired change. Ornstein and Ornstein (2008) highlighted the critical role of the analyst's participation in the patient's mental processes during therapy. They emphasized that so-called self-object transferences contain unconscious fantasies, which play a pivotal role in organizing and processing early traumatic experiences. Additionally, these transferences embody reparative unconscious fantasies of hopes and expectations, indicating that unconscious fantasies are not only about past traumas but also about future aspirations and healing prospects.

In addition to Ornstein and Ornstein's (2008) perspective, Bromberg (2008) discussed dissociated self-states in relation to fantasies. Bromberg (2008) explained that parts of the self may not be fully integrated into consciousness, often because they contain painful or conflicting experiences. These dissociated aspects can become enacted in therapy, meaning they are expressed through behavior rather than just verbalized, allowing them to be symbolically understood and integrated.

Developmental research has also influenced the understanding of unconscious fantasy. Contemporary research suggested that children form implicit knowledge and expectations about interactions with caregivers that become the basis for unconscious fantasies in early cognitive development (Eagle, 2011; Erreich, 2003). In summary, the concept of unconscious fantasy in psychoanalytic theory has evolved from Freud's initial ideas to encompass a wide range of perspectives that emphasize the influence of early experiences, environmental factors, and the complex interplay between conscious and unconscious mental processes. (Bohleber et al., 2015). With a solid understanding of the role of fantasy in psychoanalytic theory, the next section will explore the functions of fantasy, specifically in the context of adoption.

1.3.2. Functions of fantasy

The function of fantasy is a multifaceted topic that various researchers have explored. Person (1995) provided a comprehensive list of the psychological functions of fantasies. Fantasies can express desires, compensate for life's deficiencies, heal past

wounds, and create hope for the future. Fantasies also facilitate emotional regulation, arousal, and neurosis formation. They can serve as rehearsals for future actions or life choices by translating or symbolically expressing the narrative content of the fantasy. Knafo and Feiner (2005) described fantasies as universal constructs children use to cope with complex developmental challenges such as separation, identity formation, and self-esteem regulation. They viewed fantasies as representations and solutions to complicated emotional relationships with parents that involve essential issues of identity, belonging, and family roles. Knafo and Feiner also noted that unconscious fantasies may lose their emotional charge and fade away as developmental tasks are mastered. However, these fantasies can resurface under certain circumstances similar to their origins. Sometimes, these fantasies can become maladaptive, turning into repetitive, compulsive thoughts and behaviors designed to provide safety, regulate affect, and cope with trauma (Person, 1995).

Moore and Fine (1990) expanded the functions of fantasy beyond dreams and symptoms, emphasizing its role in empathetic understanding and enjoyment of creative works. Fantasy influences how we perceive and organize life events, blending external stimuli with unconscious fantasy. This commonality in human fantasies enhances our ability to empathize with one another. Auchincloss and Samberg (2012) further argued that unconscious fantasy organizes all mental life and behavior, serving as a template for organizing new experiences. In addition, unconscious fantasies are vital ego functions that promote growth (Arlow, 1969). Akhtar (2009) discussed the dual purposes of fantasy as either instinctual release or ego defense, emphasizing the importance of distinguishing the primary purpose. In summary, fantasies play a critical role in development, providing mechanisms for coping, understanding, and preparing for various life challenges and transitions. Given these various functions, the specific context of adoption brings unique aspects to the role of fantasy, which will be examined next.

1.3.3. Fantasy in adoption

In the context of adoption, the concept of fantasy acquires a profound significance in understanding the inner world of adoptees. Knafo and Feiner (2005) highlighted that the essence of fantasy is intricately linked with the notion of *absence*. This concept of

absence is particularly resonant in the context of adoption. For adoptees, absence may present as a lack of knowledge about their biological origins, the tangible separation from birth parents, or the emotional vacuum created by unresolved questions about their identity and history. Notably, the nature of this absence transcends mere physical separations or unmet desires; it encompasses any form of void that the mind endeavors to fill through the creation of fantasy. This absence, manifesting as a gap, deficit, or loss, catalyzes the mind's creative and imaginative processes and provide a fertile ground for the emergence of fantasies.

Fantasies arising from the adoptees' sense of absence are more than mere daydreams; they serve as critical psychological mechanisms (Lifton, 1994). These imaginative constructs act as bridges, linking the known to the unknown and the visible to the invisible aspects of their identities. They play an essential role in helping adoptees navigate and make sense of their unique experiences and histories, offering a means to process and understand their inner worlds (Brodzinsky et al., 1992).

The struggles, aspirations, and apprehensions associated with adoption are expressed and potentially reconciled within fantasies. Understanding the role of fantasy in the context of adoption is, therefore, pivotal not only for grasping the inner world of adoptees but also for addressing the emotional and psychological complexities that stem from their experiences of absence and loss. This insight is crucial for developing empathetic and practical approaches to support adoptees in their journey toward self-discovery and healing.

The concept of adoption and the fantasies associated with it occupy a complex and multifaceted place in psychoanalytic theory. Fantasy creation becomes critical in understanding and addressing adoptees' emotional needs and realities. These fantasies, which often stem from a lack of concrete information about their origins, give adoptees a sense of control over their history (Robinson, 2005). Brodzinsky (1992) emphasized that in the absence of information about biological origins, adoptees tend to compensate by constructing their own narratives or fantasies. Leon (2002) asserted that when adoptees have minimal or no information about their origins, their fantasies tend to be tinged with a sense of loss. Fantasy may persist into adulthood unless it can be resolved (Treacher & Katz, 2000). Fantasy in adoption is not limited to adoptees

but extends to the entire adoption triad-adoptees, adoptive parents, and birth mothers-as discussed by Barbara D'Amato (2007). Each member of this triad may have their own set of fantasies related to the adoption experience.

Siegel and Siegel (2001) emphasized the importance of the adopted child's persistent fantasy of an idealized birth parent. They suggested that this fantasy represents the child's deep unconscious need to connect with an omnipotent figure. The persistence of such fantasies is attributed to complications in the child's relationship with the adoptive parents, particularly in the area of idealization. For example, an adopted child might imagine their birth parent as a heroic character or as a figure of grand affection and limitless capabilities, which stands in stark contrast to the imperfections they perceive in their everyday interactions with their adoptive parents. In some cases, the child might develop this fantasy as a coping mechanism to fill emotional gaps or to compensate for feelings of loss and uncertainty about their origin.

Quinodoz (1996) and Wieder (1977) noted that adoptees' fantasies about their birth parents are not always idealized. Instead, they may focus on feelings of abandonment or being unloved. Psychoanalytic studies have highlighted the unique conflicts experienced by adoptees, particularly around loss and abandonment. These conflicts can be understood as a form of psychic loss deeply embedded in the psyche of the adoptee and lead to creation of abandonment or loss-related fantasies. Betty Jean Lifton (2009) delved into how the loss of birth parents profoundly impacts adoptees, suggesting more vivid and intense fantasy lives compared to non-adoptees. These fantasies, often a form of psychic loss, are seen as a necessary mechanism in the lives of adoptees, maintaining a connection to their lost parents.

The study of the adoption experience from a psychoanalytic perspective, particularly the research and clinical work conducted at the Anna Freud Center and by Hodges, has contributed significantly to our understanding of the experiences of adopted children, particularly those who have suffered abuse, neglect, or early trauma. Hodges' (1990) discussion of children's inner worlds emphasized the role of both conscious and unconscious fantasies in shaping perception of reality and sense of self and others.

Adopted children's fantasies about their adoption were compared by Hodges (1984) to the earliest fantasies of children who were raised by their biological parents.

Reconciling these fantasies with the realities of their unique experiences is an ongoing task for adopted children. Hodges articulated two fundamental questions these children often struggle with: “Who were my first parents, and what were they like?” and “Why did they give me up?” For those who have experienced abuse or trauma at the hands of their biological parents, an additional pressing question was, “What happened and why?” The Anna Freud Center Research Group has found recurring themes in the material of adopted children, including fantasies of not being wanted, of being stolen or kidnapped, or of having a deceased or ill biological mother. These themes reflect the internal representation of a parent, the self, and the nature of their interaction. For example, the fantasy of being kidnapped by the adoptive parents can serve as an antidote to the profoundly disturbing reality of having been given up by biological parents. This fantasy transforms the “unwanted” child into a child wanted twice over (Hodges, 1990, p. 64).

McAuley’s (1987) study of 122 adult adoptees also revealed a widespread tendency to fantasize about birth parents. She categorized adoptees’ fantasies into types: devalued, idealized, a combination of both, and no fantasy. For example, adoptees with idealized fantasies tended to have close relationships with their adoptive parents more often than those with devalued fantasies. McAuley also found that the earlier an adoptee was told about their adoption (before age 3), the less likely they were to have a devalued fantasy, suggesting that the timing of adoption disclosure may influence the type of fantasy an adoptee develops. While McAuley refrained from theorizing about the functions of these fantasies, her study provided valuable insights into the different types of fantasies adoptees may have and the potential factors influencing them. For instance, the study found no significant differences between the degree of familial conflict in each of the adoptee groups with different fantasy types, challenging the notion that idealized fantasies only develop in adoptees with poor adoptive family relationships or significant familial dysfunction. Furthermore, her study highlighted the complexity of adoptees’ experiences and the importance of considering various factors, such as the timing of adoption disclosure and the quality of adoptive family relationships, when examining adoptees’ fantasies about their birth parents.

Similarly, Rosenberg (1992) discussed how adopted children’s fantasies of “noble” birth parents help them cope with emotional challenges and maintain an idealized

image of their birth parents. These children often imagine various scenarios that explain their separation from idealized “noble” birth parents and the resulting life with adoptive families. These fantasies, which include feelings of forcible removal or loss of birth parents under various circumstances, focus on the loss of perfect birth parents and adjustment to life with adoptive families that are perceived as less ideal. These imaginative narratives serve as a coping mechanism for disappointment and allow children to create idealized birth parents as figures of perfection.

Nydam (1994) examined how fantasies affect the emotional well-being of adopted adults who are searching for their birth parents. These fantasies serve two primary purposes: to maintain a psychological connection to birth parents and to cope with emotional pain. They function as transitional phenomena, providing comfort and a sense of connection in the absence of birth parents. These fantasies can embody both positive and negative images in adoptees. On the one hand, they provide comfort and a way to cope with the pain of abandonment or rejection; on the other hand, they can become fixations that impede psychological growth. Adoptees may use these fantasies as a defense against emotional distress, creating idealized or negative scenarios that help them process their feelings about their birth parents and their adoptive experiences. This study underscored the complex role of birthparent fantasies in both maintaining connections with absent birth parents and coping with related emotional challenges.

Miller-Havens (1996) studied the birth mother fantasies of adult women who had been adopted in infancy or childhood, many of whom had searched for or reunited with their birth mothers. She postulated that adopted women who embark on a search for their birth origins articulate their experience of being disconnected from their biological mother and express a longing for reconnection through the creation of fantasy images. She found that fantasies about re-establishing a bond with the birth mother (connection) were twice as prevalent as those depicting a separation or loss (disconnection). Contrary to Freud’s construct of family romance, only a minority of participants idealized their birth parents over their adoptive parents, with most fantasies showing a tendency to idealize or portray birth mothers in a non-culpable light. Connecting fantasies were more common, indicating a strong desire for a relationship with the birth mother and underlying the importance of relationships in

women's development. The study also found that these fantasies often did not match actual information about birth mothers, highlighting that such fantasies reflect internal processes rather than external realities. Having established the role and functions of fantasy in adoption, it is important to explore a specific type of fantasy commonly found in adoptees, known as the family romance fantasy.

1.3.4. Family romance fantasy in adoption

In the realm of psychoanalytic theory, the concept of the “family romance” fantasy, (Freud, 1909), offers a profound insight into the developmental psychology of both adopted and non-adopted children. According to this theory, it is common for children to experience conflicting feelings of love and hate toward their parents during their developmental journey toward independence. Freud's original concept emphasized that children fantasize that they are secretly adopted and have nobler parents as a mechanism for dealing with disappointments in the parent-child relationship. As children grow up and compare their parents to others, they may become disillusioned, leading to fantasies of superior, alternative parents. These serve several psychological purposes, including protection against hostile or incestuous desires, reduction of anxiety or guilt, and facilitation of independence from parental authority (Wieder, 1977). This fantasy typically dissipates as children reach adolescence, marking a successful navigation through the challenges of identity formation.

For adoptees, however, this fantasy intersects with reality in unique ways that complicate the resolution of these fantasies (Brinich, 1990; Brodzinsky et al., 1992; Siegel, 2001; D'Amato, 2007). Unlike their non-adopted counterparts, for whom the idea of having different parents is purely imaginary, adoptees live with the fact that they have a set of biological parents different from those who raised them. This reality can prolong and complicate the developmental process of resolving these fantasies.

Wieder (1977) expanded on Freud's concept by suggesting that for adoptees, this fantasy may be reversed, where they may imagine themselves as biological children of their adoptive parents. This unique variation reflects adoptees' struggle with their true origins and identity. The knowledge of having two sets of parents (biological and adoptive) further complicates the resolution of the family romance fantasy for adoptees and affects their identity development (Sorosky et al., 1978). When they feel stressed

in their adoptive families, they may intrapsychically split their perceptions of their birth and adoptive parents, potentially idealizing one set while devaluing the other (McGinn, 2007). This split complicates the achievement of object constancy and interferes with the reconciliation of these fantasy with reality.

Wieder (1977) observed that adopted children who learn of their adoption at a very young age may also experience confusion, anxiety, shame, and anger, due to the fact that the distinction between fantasy and reality is blurred. These emotions can have long-lasting effects on personality and intellectual development. Adoptees may also show excessive dependence on their adoptive mothers due to fear of abandonment, which further complicates their relationships with others and impairs their ability to trust. Wieder (1977) emphasized that the fantasy of having loving parents who never disappoint is essential to positive psychological functioning. For adoptees, this aspect is disrupted by the actual absence of birth parents, leading them either to idealize their adoptive parents or to harbor devalued perceptions of the birth parents who abandoned them. Wieder suggested that knowing about adoption, especially if it occurs before age three, can make fantasies typically associated with loss feel real. In other words, the reality of being adopted at a young age can make fantasies of loss and abandonment feel more real and tangible, leading adoptees to imagine negative scenarios about their birth parents rather than positive ones.

Rosenberg and Homer (1991) referred to the adopted child's version of this fantasy as the birth parent romance, a mixture of fact and fantasy that becomes part of the child's identity. This fantasy is more complex for adopted children because they are dealing with the reality of absent birth parents. Unlike the family romance, which helps integrate ambivalent feelings, the birth-parent romance can exacerbate and further polarize these feelings.

In summary, the family romance fantasy plays a significantly different and more complex role in the psychological development of adoptees than in non-adoptees. This complexity stems from the existence of two sets of parents and the challenges this presents in resolving fantasies and developing a stable sense of identity. Adoptees must navigate intense emotions and conflicts that arise from their unique circumstances, which affect their relationships and sense of self. Closely related to fantasies are the

concepts of self-representation and object representation, which shape how adoptees perceive themselves and others.

1.3.5. Self and object representation in adoptees' fantasies

While delving into the role of fantasies in adopted children, it is essential to understand the concepts of self-representation and object representation and how they differ from fantasy. Self-representation refers to the “unconscious, preconscious, and conscious endopsychic representations of the bodily and the mental self in the system ego” (Jacobson, 1964, p. 19). In other words, it is the subjective view of the self, which may or may not correspond with others' more objective assessments. Object representation, on the other hand, denotes the internalized presence of an object (a person or thing) in the subject's world. It is not an exact reproduction but a representation built under variable ego capacities and changing drive pressures (Akhtar, 2009). Fantasies, in contrast, are mental images or scenarios that may or may not be based on reality and they can involve both self-representations and object representations but are not limited to them (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012).

For adopted children, fantasies about adoption operate at both conscious and unconscious levels, as described by Hodges (1984). These fantasies involve self-representations and object representations of both sets of parents. For example, an adopted child may have a self-representation as an unwanted or abandoned child, while simultaneously holding object representations of their birth parents as rejecting or absent and their adoptive parents as rescuers or saviors.

In the context of adoption, the knowledge and fantasies of being abandoned can significantly influence the formation of adoptees' perceptions of themselves and others. If an adopted child's fantasies predominantly revolve around themes of rejection and abandonment, they may struggle to develop a positive and stable sense of self (self-representation) and may have difficulty forming secure attachments to others (object representations).

Paul Brinich (1980), in his article “Some Potential Effects of Adoption on Self and Object Representations,” discussed the profound impact of adoption on a child's psychological development. He suggested that the child's knowledge that his

biological parents have relinquished him profoundly influences his development at every stage. This knowledge complicates the formation of early parental identities and representations in the child's mind. Brinich highlighted the common use of object splitting as a defense mechanism among adoptees. He pointed out that the Freudian family romance, typically a fantasy, is an actual reality for adoptees, who often fantasize about abandonment rather than heroic rescue, which interferes with their ability to separate from their adoptive parents.

As suggested by Hodges (1984), the fantasy or belief of being unwanted by the birth mother can profoundly shape the adoptee's sense of self, leading to a representation of self as not only unwanted but also undesirable. This self-perception can have far-reaching implications for the adoptee's sense of identity, self-esteem, and ability to form stable, consistent relationships with others. Rosenberg and Homer (1991) emphasized the internal conflicts these children face, often feeling unwanted. Adopted children may wonder whether their inherent worth or the inadequacies of their biological parents are to blame for the adoption. This conflict often manifests itself in behavioral patterns. Brinich (1995) observed that some adopted children may engage in misbehavior to test the commitment of their adoptive parents, driven by fears of abandonment. On the other hand, some children may become overly compliant out of fear of being abandoned or rejected again (Rosenberg & Homer, 1991).

The narratives and meanings created around their adoption within the adoptive family also shape the child's self-perception. Priel et al. (2000) found that adopted children may develop polarized views of their adoptive and birth mothers, assigning negative attributes to one and positive attributes to the other. This polarization may extend to the child's view of him or herself, dividing the child's self-concept along similar lines.

In addition, the adoptive parents' own fantasies and conflicts about adoption further shape the child's evolving self-concept. For example, adoptive parents may attribute positive traits to their parenting and negative traits to biological inheritance (Brinich, 1980; Deeg, 1989; Hodges, 1984). As a result, the child may develop a split self-representation that includes both good and bad aspects. Glenn (1985) highlighted the complex interplay between the representations of biological and adoptive parents and the child's self-representation, underscoring the complexity of this dynamic.

Priel et al. (2000) conducted a study to examine the impact of adoption on children's object representations, specifically examining how adopted children in the latency stage perceived their birth and adoptive mothers compared to non-adopted children's perception of their mothers. They found that adoptees tended to have less benevolent and more punitive representations of birth mothers compared to adoptive mothers. This suggests that adoptees may either idealize or demonize their birth mothers in their fantasies, with a wide range of feelings and fantasies being possible. In addition, adoptees' representations were more concrete and at a lower conceptual level, with a marked emphasis on the physical characteristics of the birth mother, in contrast to non-adoptees. The study concluded that being relinquished for adoption may influence the development of object representations in adoptees, leading to a delay in the development of symbolic maternal representations and challenges in integrating the loss of the birth mother into their psychological framework.

Gertner's (2003) study also explored the complex dynamics between adoptees' perceptions of their adoptive and birth mothers and how these perceptions affect their self-image and fantasies. The study found that adoptees' representations of their adoptive and birth mothers develop independently. The depth of understanding of the adoptive mother, however, influences the degree of discrepancy between these representations. A more nuanced view of the adoptive mother tends to lead to more integrated feelings toward both mothers, reducing psychological splitting. While the study did not conclusively find a complementary relationship between the views of the two mothers, it did find that negative views of the adoptive mother often coincided with more elaborate fantasies about the birth mother. This suggests that fantasies about the birth mother may be a coping mechanism for negative feelings about the adoptive mother. Having laid the groundwork by exploring the theoretical underpinnings and contextual factors, we can now move directly to the focus of the present study.

1.4. The Present Study

Fantasies, both conscious and unconscious, are central to understanding the complex experiences, fears, hopes, and desires of individuals. The study of fantasies in adopted adults occupies a critical position because of its potential to illuminate the unique psychological dynamics inherent in individuals. While the existing literature robustly

covers adoption's developmental and psychosocial aspects, focused exploration of the specific domain of fantasy in adopted adults has yet to be represented.

It is well documented that individuals who have been adopted face unique psychological challenges that may include coping with loss and trauma, navigating complex attachment dynamics, and struggling with issues of identity formation. These multifaceted challenges are often intricately woven into their fantasies and significantly impact their emotional well-being and interpersonal relationships. The primary goal of this study was to delve deeply into the world of fantasy as experienced by adopted adults and to unravel the nature and content of these fantasies.

To achieve this goal, this study has adopted a qualitative research method specifically designed to explore participants' subjective experiences in depth. Through this lens, the study sought to uncover patterns, themes, and meanings within adopted adults' fantasies to provide a nuanced understanding of their inner worlds. This topic was informed by a psychoanalytic perspective to further illuminate adoptees' experiences and perspectives, adding context and depth to this exploration and providing an organizing framework. This study was interested in exploring the following questions:

- What fantasies do adult adoptees have about adoption?
- What are the similarities and differences across participants' fantasies?
- What functions do these fantasies serve for adult adoptees?

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1. Research Design

2.1.1. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

This study aimed to explore the fantasies of adult adoptees by examining their lived experiences. To align with this aim, the study utilized a qualitative research methodology. In contrast to the positivism-based, objectivist perspective of quantitative research, which strives for measurability, qualitative research adopts a subjective and idiographic approach that centers on the in-depth examination of phenomena without the intention of generalization. (Willig, 2013).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as a qualitative research methodology in the design of this study. IPA was developed by Smith (1996) and is widely used in health and clinical psychology. It is an approach used when the goal of the research is to explore in detail how people experience and make sense of this particular lived experience (Smith et al., 2009). It is based on phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiographic principles (Smith, 2011). First, as a philosophical movement, phenomenology is concerned with the lived experiences of individuals and examines how people make sense of their experiences (Willig, 2013). It aims to identify the fundamental aspects of experiences that make them unique or different from others. (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA is grounded in phenomenology as it seeks to explore the meaning of lived experience by focusing on the participant's lifeworld, which encompasses the totality of subjective experiences, feelings, and perceptions that are often taken for granted in everyday life (Frost, 2011). Second, IPA is also influenced by the hermeneutic paradigm, which is the theory of interpretation and has the central idea that understanding is always interpretive (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA emphasizes the meaning-making processes and the active role of the researcher and is often referred to as a double hermeneutic process (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). That is, while participants make sense of their experiences and convey their understanding to the researcher, the researcher simultaneously decodes these meanings and makes meanings by interpreting (Smith et al., 2009). IPA's third theoretical underpinning is idiography, which involves conducting an in-depth analysis of a single case and exploring how individuals in a particular context have interpreted a particular experiential phenomenon (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). IPA does not intend to generalize the results, instead focuses on an intensive examination of individual stories to compare and contrast them to understand that unique experience. The idiographic focus also informs the analytic process, as researchers engage in a thorough and iterative examination of each individual transcript before moving on to the next (Smith, 2011). This allows unique patterns and themes to emerge.

The IPA is a particularly well-suited methodology for studying adopted adults' fantasies. First, adopted adults' fantasies are a complex and deeply personal aspect of their adoption experience. The phenomenological perspective of IPA offers researchers the opportunity to delve into the adoption experience and gain a richer understanding of how adopted adults make sense of their fantasies and the emotions and perceptions that accompany these experiences. Second, the adoption experience consists of the interaction of personal and cultural factors, such as identity formation, attachment, and the search for biological roots, adoption circumstances, age at adoption, and cultural background. Through the process of empathic hermeneutics (Smith et al., 2009), researchers can engage in a dialogue with participants' narratives, allowing for a deeper exploration of the meanings and significance that adopted adults attribute to their fantasies. Finally, by employing purposive sampling and engaging in an iterative and in-depth analysis of each participant's narrative (Smith et al., 2009), IPA allows researchers to identify unique patterns and themes that emerge from the specific experiences of adopted adults.

There are other research designs that might have been preferred to IPA in exploring the fantasies of adopted adults, such as grounded theory, narrative analysis, or discourse analysis. However, compared to IPA, these do not directly serve the purpose of gaining an in-depth understanding of the subjective and unique experiences of the

participants. For instance, the goal of grounded theory is to generate a new theory based on the systematic analysis of data that should be gathered from a large sampling (Charmaz, 2006). Although narrative analysis can provide a valuable perspective for identifying narrative elements in adoptees’ fantasies, its primary goal is not to capture the meaning of the story told by the participants but to draw conclusions about the structure and content of that story (Riessman, 2008). Finally, although discourse analysis can provide valuable insight into the social and cultural aspects of adopted adults’ fantasies, it is primarily concerned with individuals’ use of language and its role in the construction of social identities and positions (Willig, 2013). Consequently, IPA was chosen as the best methodology for comprehending the complex meanings of adopted adults’ fantasies, which by their very nature contain affects and representations.

2.2. Participants

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants

#	Gender	Age	Age at adoption	Siblings	Loss in Adoptive Family	Contact with Birth Family	Marital information
1	F	23	1 month	Adopted brother	None	No	Single
2	F	38	10 days	None	Father	No	Married – 2 children
3	F	41	1 week	Adopted sister	Both parents	No	Married – 2 children
4	F	38	3 months	None	Father	Yes	Married – 2 children
5	F	62	1 week	None	Both parents	No	Divorced – 3 children
6	F	60	At birth	None	Both parents	Yes	Married – 2 children

The idiographic perspective influences IPA’s sampling methods and sample size. Purposive sampling is used in IPA to create a homogeneous sample, as the aim is to elicit rich data through an in-depth exploration of participants’ experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Accordingly, in this study, six adopted adult Turkish women were recruited through purposive sampling to create a homogeneous sample, focusing on participants who share similar experiences and contexts (Smith et al., 2009). Inclusion criteria for participants were being over 18 years of age, being

adopted, and never having had contact with their biological family. The biological siblings of two of the participants contacted them shortly before the dissertation interviews. However, these two participants were not excluded in order to understand the impact of this recent contact on the participants' fantasies and adoption experiences. The required demographic information describing the participants is as follows (see Table 1).

Participant 1 is 23 years old and single. She was adopted when she was about one month old. Both her adoptive parents are alive. She has an adopted brother who is nine years younger than her. She was told about her adoption by her family when she was six years old. She has never had any contact with her birth family.

Participant 2 is 38 years old, married, and the mother of two children. She has almost no information about her birth and the adoption process. Her adoptive mother is alive, and her adoptive father died when she was 17 years old. She is an only child. The information about her adoption was not given to her directly by her family. She has never had any contact with her biological family. She found out about her adoption during an argument with her mother after the loss of her father.

Participant 3 is 42 years old, married, and the mother of two children. She was adopted when she was about ten days old. Her adoptive father died when she was 21, and her adoptive mother died when she was 28. She has an older adopted sister who is 17 years older. She has never had contact with her biological family. The participant is currently married to her adopted sister's biological brother. The information that she was adopted was not revealed to her directly by her family. At the same time that she learned that her sister was adopted, she realized that she was also adopted.

Participant 4 is 38 years old, married, and the mother of two children. Participant 4 was adopted when she was 3 months old. Her adoptive mother is alive, her adoptive father died when she was 5 years old. She is an only child. The information that she was adopted was not directly communicated to her by her family. Her biological parents were not married. One month before the first interview, Participant 4 was contacted by her biological father's children. One week before the second interview, Participant 4 was contacted by her biological mother's stepdaughter.

Participant 5 is 62 years old, divorced, and the mother of 3 children. She was adopted when she was about one week old. Her parents are not alive. She lost her adoptive mother when she was 18 and her adoptive father when she was 21. She is an only child. The information that she was adopted was not given to her directly by her family. When she was six years old, a friend told her on the street that she had been adopted. She has never had any contact with her birth family.

Participant 6 is 56 years old, married, and the mother of 2 children. She was adopted the day she was born. Her parents are not alive. She lost her adoptive mother when she was 43 and her adoptive father when she was 38. She is an only child. She was not directly informed of her adoption by her family. She met her biological mother once, against her will and without her knowledge. As a result of this encounter, she had a miscarriage. Two months before the first interview, her biological siblings contacted her. She learned that she had 5 biological siblings and one of them was 2 years younger than her.

2.3. Materials

In order to elicit rich, detailed accounts of the participants' experiences and meaning-making processes, a semi-structured interview protocol was used. Semi-structured interview format was chosen because it provides a consistent structure for exploring the research questions while allowing for flexibility and responsiveness to the narratives of the subjects (Smith, 2011). Informed consent forms were provided to participants prior to the interviews. The interview questions were developed through an iterative process with feedback from the dissertation advisor and two dissertation committee members (see Appendix C). The interview questions for this study were carefully crafted through an iterative process, drawing from a broad range of potential inquiries identified in the literature and refined with the help of feedback from my dissertation advisor and committee members. Their insights helped ensure that the questions were clear, relevant, and sensitive to the adoptees' experiences, leading to an additional interview to ask a set of preliminary questions about adoptees' experiences to provide context for the subsequent exploration of their fantasies. Additional suggestions from the committee led to incorporating questions about dreams to enhance my understanding of the participants' fantasy lives. For instance,

they recommended asking about recurring dreams, emotionally charged dreams, or dreams that seemed to relate directly to the adoption experience. This rigorous refinement resulted in a focused set of questions designed to elicit rich, nuanced narratives from the participants. Questions were open-ended to facilitate the exploration of participants' subjective experiences and interpretations (Smith et al., 2009) and focused on adoption experiences and fantasies. Prompts were used to encourage participants to elaborate on their experiences. During the initial interview with each participant, we established a basic understanding of their adoption history and family experiences. After this initial session, I introduced the focus of our subsequent session: the exploration of fantasies about their biological families. I comprehensively explained what constitutes a fantasy, clarifying that fantasies are unrestricted mental constructs ranging from simple images to intricate scenarios, both conscious and unconscious. I emphasized that they can be positive, negative, or emotionally neutral and can include actual past events or imagined situations beyond the realm of current possibilities, such as extraterrestrial life or conversations with a deceased person. Participants were encouraged to introspect on their fantasies, especially those that occurred frequently or were intensely related to their biological families, until our next meeting. I suggested that they write down any significant fantasies that arose during this time, detailing them in a preferred medium. They were given the option of either documenting these fantasies and sending them electronically to a provided email address or bringing their written records to the second interview for discussion. This preparatory step was intended to help participants engage more deeply with their internal narrative landscapes, thus enriching the forthcoming dialogue about their fantasies and connections to their adoptee experiences.

After each interview, the interview protocol was carefully reviewed and refined to improve the clarity and flow of the questions. For example, participants who expressed difficulty bringing up their fantasies about their biological family were gently guided with prompts such as, "Imagine one day you meet your biological family. What do you imagine that meeting would be like?" and "What do you think might unfold during such a meeting? This facilitated a more vivid and detailed narrative and allowed participants to explore potential emotional landscapes associated with such encounters. In addition, specific questions were tailored for participants who had an adopted sibling. In order to understand the unique dynamics this may bring, we

included questions such as “How has having an adopted sibling shaped your experiences and perspectives on adoption? Such targeted questions aimed to unpack the layers of complexity that having an adopted sibling can bring to an individual’s adoption narrative. The iterative refinement of these questions, informed by participants’ responses and interactions, greatly enhanced the depth and relevance of the ensuing discussions.

2.4. Ethical Issues

This study received ethical approval from the Human Subjects Research Ethics Committee, Middle East Technical University (see Appendix A). Prior to the interview sessions, participants were provided with an informed consent form that included detailed information about the study objectives and procedures (see Appendix B). After the participants gave verbal consent, the recording of the interview was started. The researcher, who is also a clinical psychologist, conducted the interviews with a high degree of sensitivity, as the topic of adoption may trigger traumatic memories or cause emotional distress for the participants. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable. At the end of each interview, participants were informed that the researcher could make the necessary referrals if any participant needed psychological support. Lastly, participants’ names were withheld to protect confidentiality, and they were assigned numbers for analysis and reporting purposes.

2.5. Procedure

Initially, the research focused on interviewing adoptees who had not met their biological families. However, challenges in reaching this specific group necessitated a broader approach. Consequently, adopted adults willing to share their experiences were sought. Recruitment was facilitated by the researcher using a specially designed poster (see Appendix D), which was disseminated via social media platforms and through direct contact with adoption-related associations.

Participants were engaged through these channels, and upon expressing interest, they were briefed on the study’s aims and procedures. Following this, they reached out to the researcher to schedule their interviews. Despite the restrictions imposed by the

pandemic, the study proceeded smoothly using the Zoom platform for online interviews, which were executed without any technical disruptions. Additionally, a telephone interview was conducted for one participant who lacked access to a video call setup. Before each interview, participants were presented with a written consent form outlining the confidentiality measures and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage. Consent for audio recording was also obtained to facilitate accurate data collection and analysis.

Two interviews were conducted with each participant. The first interview focused on the experience of being adopted, while the second interview delved into fantasies. At the end of the first interview, participants were given descriptive information about the fantasies to be discussed in the second interview. Each interview was conducted with a range of durations, specifically the first interview ranged from 60 to 130 minutes and the second interview ranged from 66 to 136 minutes.

2.6. Data Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed according to the IPA iterative process guidelines (Smith et al., 2009): Transcripts were first read and then reread several times to familiarize oneself with the data. During these readings, initial notes were taken, including descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments. From these notes, emerging themes were identified, and then connections between these themes were sought. Once this process was completed for each case, the process was repeated for the next case. Finally, patterns were looked for across the cases and the final set of themes was decided upon. If a theme identified in one participant's account was not observed in another, all cases were re-examined after the final list of themes was compiled to ensure the thoroughness and accuracy of the analysis.

In creating the theme table, relevant quotes from the transcripts were placed under each subordinate theme. Throughout the analysis process, the dissertation committee members provided continuous feedback on the clustering and coding of the data. Finally, the dissertation advisor reviewed the list of major themes and the final form of the subordinate and superordinate themes were created by the researcher.

2.7. Validation and Quality Strategies

Jonathan Smith and his colleagues (2009) recommended Yardley's guidelines (2000) to evaluate the quality of an IPA study. According to Yardley (2000), trustworthiness for a study could be ensured with the following four principles: (1) sensitivity to context, (2) commitment and rigor, (3) impact and importance, and (4) coherence and transparency.

Sensitivity to context refers to the researcher's responsiveness to a range of factors that impact the study, including relevant theoretical and empirical literature, the perspectives of the participants, and the dynamic interaction that occurs between the researcher and participants throughout the process of data analysis and interpretation. (Yardley, 2000). I thoroughly reviewed the relevant theoretical and empirical literature on adoption, fantasies, and IPA to provide a strong foundation for the study and to ensure sensitivity to context. I was attentive to participants' perspectives and respectful of their experiences during data collection and analysis. For example, I used open-ended questions and prompts to encourage participants to share their experiences in their own words, allowing them to express their unique perspectives. In addition, I engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process to acknowledge the dynamic interaction between my own biases and the participants' accounts.

Commitment and rigor, as described by Yardley (2000), pertains to the extent to which the researcher is deeply engaged in the research and how they acquire the essential skills and knowledge needed to accomplish the study's objectives. In this study, I demonstrated commitment and rigor by taking a detailed and systematic approach to IPA data analysis. I ensured that each transcript was read and reread multiple times to familiarize myself with the data and pay close attention to the nuances of participants' accounts. I also followed relevant training videos and discussions on Internet forums to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to conduct IPA analysis. In addition, I sought feedback from my dissertation committee members on my emerging themes and interpretations to ensure the rigor of my analysis.

Yardley (2000) asserts that the usefulness of research findings in both theoretical and practical settings is determined by their impact and importance. To demonstrate the impact and importance of the study, I linked the findings to the existing literature on

adoption and fantasies, highlighting the theoretical contributions and practical implications of the research. For example, the study's findings may inform therapeutic interventions for adopted adults who struggle with fantasies related to their adoption. In addition, the study contributed to the growing body of literature on the subjective experiences of adoptees, providing valuable insights for researchers, practitioners, and adoptive families alike.

According to Yardley (2000), the coherence of a study is about how well the chosen theoretical approach, research methods, and data interpretation method align with each other. Transparency, on the other hand, is about how clearly the different stages of the research process are presented to readers. In this study, I ensured coherence by aligning the chosen theoretical approach (IPA) with the research methods and data interpretation method. I provided a clear rationale for using IPA to study adopted adults' fantasies, emphasizing the method's focus on understanding participants' lived experiences and meaning-making processes. To ensure transparency, I detailed each stage of the research process, from participant recruitment to data analysis, and provided examples from the data to support themes and interpretations. I also discussed reflexivity, acknowledging my own influences on the research process and how I attempted to mitigate potential biases through reflexive practices.

2.8. Reflexivity

Reflexivity is an essential component of qualitative research (Smith et al., 2009). It refers to the researcher's recognition of his or her own influence on the construction of meaning throughout the research process, stemming from his or her personal assumptions, experiences, and position (Willig, 2013). Before reporting the findings of this study, I will provide a transparent and reflective account of my experiences, motivations, personal factors, and biases that may have influenced the research process and data analysis. To address these potential effects and to maintain transparency in the research process, I engaged in reflexive journaling. This involved recording my thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about the research topic, the participants, and the data analysis process.

I am a 30-year-old male, non-adopted person. I am also a psychotherapist who works with adults using a psychoanalytic psychotherapy approach. In this study, my position

and personal background as a psychotherapist practicing psychoanalytic psychotherapy and as a non-adoptee shaped my interest in exploring the fantasies of adopted adults.

Initially, the idea for this research arose from my work as a psychotherapist, particularly after my therapy process with an adopted patient. During our sessions, my patient shared his fantasies about his adoption experience. I was intrigued by the vividness of her fantasies and their variability according to his needs or mood at the time. It made me curious about how adopted adults might experience similar fantasies. In addition, the therapy process with this patient was interrupted when he dropped out. I never heard from him again. As a therapist, reflecting on the sudden end of the therapy process with my patient, I found an unexpected parallel to the abandonment often felt by adoptees; just as an adoptee may struggle with the loss of contact with his or her biological family, I experienced a sense of loss when my patient stopped communicating and withdrew from therapy.

As a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, my therapeutic journey began in the fields of self-psychology and intersubjectivity. These foundational theories shaped my initial clinical practice, guided my interactions with patients, and underlay my professional training and supervision. However, as I embarked on this dissertation, particularly as I delved into the complex topic of fantasies in adult adoptees, I experienced a paradigmatic shift in my theoretical inclinations. The complex subject of fantasy sparked a burgeoning interest in object relations theory, particularly the work of Melanie Klein and Wilfred Bion. This interest was not merely academic; it resonated deeply with my therapeutic approach, enriching and expanding my understanding of the psychic world. I was particularly fascinated by Bion's conceptualizations and the broader psychoanalytic field theory that later evolved into post-Bionian theory. Their exploration of deep unconscious processes, intersubjective dynamics, and the central role of fantasy in psychic life opened new vistas of understanding and avenues for therapeutic intervention. This intellectual shift toward object relations theory brought a new perspective to my role as a therapist and researcher. It allowed me to engage more deeply with the psychic intricacies of my patients, especially those who had experienced adoption. The nuanced explanations and insights offered by object relations theory provided a deeper, more nuanced lens through which to view and

understand the complex interplay of conscious and unconscious fantasies in the psyche of adult adoptees.

My identity as a therapist undoubtedly influenced the research process, especially the data collection and analysis phases. As a psychotherapist with a psychoanalytic perspective, my curiosity about the origin, formation, content, and function of fantasies also played an influential role in my choice of this topic. Furthermore, I was trained to listen empathically and attentively to my patients' narratives, which may have facilitated my rapport with participants and their willingness to share their experiences. My background in psychoanalytic psychotherapy may also have influenced my interpretations of participants' narratives, as I may have been more inclined to focus on unconscious processes and defense mechanisms.

As a non-adopted researcher, I am not familiar with the life experiences of adopted adults. My lack of direct experience with adoption may have presented both opportunities and challenges in the research process. On the one hand, my position as an outsider may have allowed me to approach the research topic from a fresh perspective, free of some of the emotional baggage that can accompany the personal experience. On the other hand, my lack of personal experience may have hindered my ability to deeply understand and empathize with my participants' experiences, potentially limiting the depth and richness of my findings.

Given my position as a non-adoptive researcher, I may have held unconscious beliefs about what constitutes a "typical" adoption experience, which may have unintentionally biased my data collection and analysis. Additionally, my lack of personal experience with adoption may limit my ability to recognize and explore the complexities and nuances of adopted adults' fantasies, potentially leading to an oversimplified understanding of their experiences.

Lastly, I think that the prolonged writer's block I experienced while writing my thesis may also be related to my research topic. I realized that the most important reason for my difficulty in writing my thesis was the void I would feel after my thesis was completed. For the first time in my 25 years of uninterrupted education, I will no longer be a student in an educational institution. The end of my identity as a student created a sense of loss in me and created anxieties about what I should do with my life. I liken

this situation to the feelings of loss and the need for identity formation experienced by an adopted child after learning that he/she was adopted. Just like an adoptee's search for his/her origins, I, too, have been searching and questioning who I really am and what I want to do with my life, even though I tried to get away by denying or repressing it during the period when I could not write my thesis.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Upon analyzing the participants' transcripts using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), seven superordinate themes emerged: 1) abandonment fantasies, 2) threatening fantasies, 3) loss fantasies, 4) self-worth repairing fantasies, 5) ideal family fantasies, 6) connection fantasies, 7) recontact fantasies. Table 2 presents a comprehensive list of these superordinate themes along with the subordinate themes contained within them.

The creation of the superordinate and subordinate themes was based on the participants' explicitly expressed conscious fantasies and the unconscious fantasies the researcher interpreted. The determination of these fantasies considered the participants' memories, dreams, symbolic narratives, representations, metaphors within their narratives, the emotions accompanying these narratives, and the reactions evoked in the researcher's mind.

3.1. Abandonment Fantasies

In the abandonment fantasies, individuals who have experienced the primal wound of abandonment grapple with deep-seated insecurities about their place in the world. These fantasies are not mere daydreams but intricate psychological constructs that reveal the individual's struggle with the implications of the adoption experience. They typically involve themes of danger, neglect, and a profound sense of vulnerability in the face of a perceived hostile world, often located in the very places of their abandonment or about the key figures of their early lives-biological and adoptive mothers.

All participants shared their abandonment fantasies related to their adoption experiences during the interviews. These fantasies, rooted in the trauma of adoption,

conveyed their devastating effects on the participants. For the participants who had been abandoned or neglected shortly after birth or experienced parental detachment during the prenatal period, the external world was often perceived as dangerous and destructive to their survival. This perception may have spawned abandonment fantasies. The participants relayed life stories, memories, and dreams mainly linked to their experience of early abandonment or the enduring effects of adoption. These narratives, reconstructed with vivid mental imagery during the interviews, were believed to reveal the underlying abandonment fantasies.

Table 2. Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

<i>Superordinate themes</i>	<i>Subordinate themes</i>
3.1. Abandonment Fantasies	-
3.2. Threatening Fantasies	3.2.1. Fantasy of being attacked 3.2.2. Fantasy of being kidnapped
3.3. Loss Fantasies	3.3.1. Parental loss fantasy 3.3.2. Child loss fantasy
3.4. Self-worth Repairing Fantasies	3.4.1. The “chosen princess” fantasy 3.4.2. <i>They had to leave me</i> fantasy
3.5. Ideal Family Fantasies	3.5.1. Fantasy of ideal parents 3.5.2. Fantasy of having siblings 3.5.3. Fantasy of adopting a child
3.6. Connection Fantasies	3.6.1. Kinship fantasy 3.6.2. Resemblance fantasy 3.6.3. Fantasy of being in a crowd
3.7. Recontact Fantasies	3.7.1. Fantasy of being searched 3.7.2. Revenge fantasy 3.7.3. Fantasy of knowing medical history

The trauma of abandonment often manifests itself in powerful, somatic fantasies that serve both as expressions of anxiety and as mechanisms for coping with the seemingly unsafe external environment. These somatic experiences refer to the physical sensations or bodily memories that are inextricably linked to their emotional and psychological states. For adoptees, these experiences may include physical sensations reminiscent of their early life traumas, such as feelings of cold, hunger, or being in a

dirty, neglected environment. These fantasies were thought to have been created by participants as a way to manage their fears of abandonment and death. The interviews revealed these abandonment fantasies in the form of symbolic narratives about neglect.

Within the abandonment fantasies centered on neglect, participants described being in danger of dying at the hands of a malicious individual (typically the biological mother) or due to the incompetence of a person (typically the adoptive mother). The settings of these fantasies often revolved around locations where they had been abandoned or in the presence of their biological or adoptive mothers.

Participant 1 reported that her biological mother abandoned her in a schoolyard on a cold winter day when she was only 20 days old. Her abandonment fantasy was filled with images of a baby being mauled by dogs or thrown into a garbage bag in a trash can:

Çünkü bi okulun bahçesine bırakılmış olmak... Köpek parçalayabilirdi, soğuktan üşüyebilirdim. Yani bi sürü tehlike ortaya çıkabilirdi. Gerçi zaman ilerledikçe ve etrafta bi şeyler gördükçe çöp poşetine konup ağzı bağlanarak çöpe atılan bebekleri ve bulunan çocukları duydukça şey oluyorsunuz. Daha kötüler de varmış aslında. Hani bi dönem şeyi çok sorgulamıştım. En azından bi yuvaya bi polise bırakıp sağlıklı olmamı sağlayabilirdi. Hani daha güvenilir bi yere bırakabilirdi.

Being abandoned in a schoolyard... There could have been many dangers: a dog could have attacked me, or I could have suffered from the cold, among other risks. However, as time passed and I heard about other, more horrifying cases – stories of babies being discarded in garbage bags, left tied up and abandoned – I realized my situation could have been much worse. Nevertheless, my biological mother had to ensure my safety by leaving me at a childcare service or with a police officer. There were safer alternatives available.

The participants also shared their experiences in the foster care system or their initial adoption situations, highlighting the neglect and poor conditions they faced. Participant 1 recalled the overcrowded and dirty conditions of the child welfare institution she was placed in before her family adopted her:

Doğduktan sonra aileme kadarki zamanı geçirdiğim ortam, bi işte bebek yatağının üzerinde üç tane bebeğin iki tane bebeğin aynı anda yattığı, çok kalabalık olduğu. ... Annem çok pislik içindeydi bütün bebekler demişti. Hatta öyle ki kulaklarının arkasında hani affedersiniz kusmuğun akmış, kirler vardı demişti. Aşırı zayıf bi bebekmişim.

They told me that the place I stayed after I was born, before being taken in by my adoptive family, was overcrowded. They said that three babies were crammed into each crib. My adoptive mother told me that all the babies were incredibly dirty, to the point that I had residual vomit behind my ears. I was an extremely frail baby.

Participant 4 also reflected on her neglected state when her adoptive family took her in:

Biyolojik annem komşulara bırakıyormuş beni ki annem anlatıyo (kırgın bir gülüş) 3 aylık bebeğim, başımda bitler varmış yani o kadar kötü haldeymişim.

My biological mother used to leave me with the neighbors. My adoptive mother recounts that I was merely a 3-month-old baby with lice infesting my head. I was in that bad condition. (smiles sadly)

Participant 2 depicted a disturbing environment where she believes she was born and adopted. She described a clandestine operation where babies were abandoned and adopted unofficially without formal registration. She relayed narratives about her adoptive mother's treatment following her birth, which reflected her abandonment fantasy:

Bebeklerde birtakım şeyler olabilir doğumsal, kalıtsal zamanla geçen lekelenmeler. Bunlar doğum esnasında olur sonradan geçer. Tabi annemin doğum tecrübesi olmadığı için bunu bilmiyor. Bu çocukta niye morarmalar var diye kardeşlerine soruyor. Çok da böyle hani eğitimsiz bir aile. Gerçekten saçma sapan şeyler yapabiliyorlar. Bana bir tedavi yöntemi uyguluyorlar saçma sapan ve damar çatlamasına sebep oluyorlar. Bana hep anlatılır çünkü dikiş izi var yani. Dikiş atılmış. Evet hala izi var ve böyle çok o da çok travmatik bir olay mesela. Ben bunu çocukluğumdan beri anlatırlar ama ben dinlemeye dayanamazdım yani. Sülük tedavisi. Sülük damara geliyor, damarı patlatıyor. Ve ben hastanelik oluyorum, daha yani kırkı çıkmamış bebek yani.

Babies may have some congenital, hereditary spots that appear at birth and fade over time. Of course, my adoptive mother didn't know this because she had never given birth. She asked her siblings why I had bruises... They subjected me to an absurd treatment that caused my veins to burst. They always told me that was why I had a scar from a stitch. It's been stitched up. Yes, there's still a scar, and it was a very traumatic event... I ended up in the hospital. I mean, I wasn't even forty days old then.

Participant 6 recalled a deeply traumatic experience of neglect and abandonment symbolized through breastfeeding, the primary source of infant nutrition and survival:

Şunu da duydum, ben üç günlük ya da dört günlükken, ben kolit bi çocukmuşum. Çok kolit rahatsızlığı varmış. Doğar doğmaz inek sütü içince,

inek sütüne alerjim varmış, onu bilememişler mesela (kesik nefes). (Boğuk ses) Altı aylık olunca çıkmış ortaya, mesela ııı... Beni götürmüş (ses çatlayarak) biliyor musunuz annem? Hani bi kere anne sütü alsın, olmazsa her gün bize sağsın getirsin diye (kesik nefes) (ses çatlayarak) emzirmeyi bile reddetmiş. ... Götürdük dedi seni dedi, emzirmede dedi. Yani sütü vardı ama emzirmede dedi. Bunlar bakın doktor bey bu hakikaten çok büyük travmaydı benim için. Bu kadar yani, ben hiçbir şey yapmadım onlara ya. (ağlamaklı)

I learned that when I was just three or four days old, I had severe colitis. I had an allergy to cow's milk because I was fed it shortly after birth. My adoptive mother took me to my biological mother hoping that I could breastfeed at least once (gasps). However, my biological mother refused to breastfeed me (voice cracking). My mother later told me that despite having milk, my biological mother chose not to feed me. Look, doctor, this was a huge trauma for me. That's all. I didn't do anything to them. (cries)

Participant 5 shared that she had been severely ill and neglected since her abandonment:

Biyolojik annem beni öldü biliyordur bence çünkü ben 8 aylıkken çok ağır bir hastalık geçirdim. Ölümünden dönmüşüm, karnım şişmiş, aynı şempanze yavrusu gibi olmuşum. Küçük bir surat, kollar ip gibi, iğne vurmaya yer bulamıyormuş iğneci. O denli zayıflamışım, kötüleştirmişim, ölüyormuşum, canım çıkıyormuş. Ondan sonra annem beni boş mezara atmış, teneşirlerde yıkamış. Bu büyüten annem cahil ya her kim ne derse onu yapmış. Güya ben dirilmişim, hani yiyecek ekmeğim varmış.

I suspect my biological mother believes I am dead. When I was eight months old, I suffered a severe illness and was at death's door. My abdomen was swollen, and I resembled a baby chimpanzee. I was incredibly weak and near death. Following that, my adoptive mother placed me in an empty grave and cleansed me in the ghusl room. The mother who raised me was ignorant and followed others' advice indiscriminately. Despite this, I had a life to live.

To summarize the essence of abandonment fantasies, these narratives reflect the innermost fears and longings of the adoptees. The stories, fraught with the threat of death or severe neglect at the hands of malicious or incompetent caregivers, underscore the adoptees' ongoing struggle with the trauma of their earliest days. The reconstructed memories, marked by vivid imagery and intense emotion during the interviews, reveal the latent fantasies of abandonment that often involve scenarios of extreme vulnerability - a baby left to the elements, the dangers lurking in institutional care, or abandonment to a careless environment. These fantasies encapsulate the adoptees' struggle to survive and their deep need for security, continuity, and nurturance that were disrupted at the most critical time in their lives.

3.2. Threatening Fantasies

This superordinate theme encapsulates the participants' deepest fears and traumas associated with their adoption experiences. These fantasies, often manifested in dreams or thoughts, reflect a profound sense of danger and anxiety associated with their adoptive and biological identities. The "being attacked fantasy" subordinate theme reveals harrowing narratives in which participants are attacked by figures who often represent family members, highlighting a troubling conflation of fear and familial connections. Dreams of being attacked by adoptive parents or biological relatives reveal an internal struggle with their adoption stories that is fraught with conflict and pain. The "kidnapping fantasy" exacerbates this sense of danger, with participants imagining scenarios in which they are forcibly taken away. These scenarios often involve a symbolic or literal removal from the safety of their adoptive family, placing them in a state of vulnerability and fear. Such fantasies may reflect an unconscious desire for change or an expression of the unresolved trauma of being separated from their birth families. These narratives also suggest a complex layer of emotions, including the fear of loss, the desire for a different reality, and the struggle for identity and belonging in their adoptive context.

3.2.1. Fantasy of being attacked

In their threatening fantasies centered on being attacked, participants recounted incidents or dreams in which they were attacked by someone (usually a representation of an adoptive or biological family member) or felt threatened.

Fantasies of being attacked that the participants shared in response to their adoption experiences highlighted the deep-seated fear, trauma, and sense of threat they associate with their past. Clearly, these fantasies had been internalized and presented through vivid imagery, typically involving key figures in their lives.

Participant 3 described a dream in which she was attacked by her adoptive parents, who morphed into wolves. In her dream, Participant 3 experienced a profound sense of danger, symbolizing the primal fear that her adoptive parents, who are supposed to be her haven, may also represent a psychological threat. The transformation of her parents into wolves in the dream may represent an internal conflict in which the once

perceived figures of security now represent potential aggressors, reflecting deep-rooted anxieties about trust and safety within her adoptive family:

Demiřtim ya bir akrabamız bana söylemiřti evlatlık olduđumu. Akrabamızın bahçeli bir evi vardı. Rüyamda o evdeyim. Karşı tarafta da düşmanlar varmış. Böyle evin çatısındalar. Ben de bu taraftan onlara bir şeyler fırlatıyoruz. Elimde bıçaklar var, bıçak fırlatıyorum o tarafa doğru. Annemle babam var ama orda, ikisi de orda. Annemle babam. Ayyy, diyorum onlara fırlatıyorum diyorum. Ama bir taraftan da atıyorum öyle bıçakları. Sonra annemle babam o çatıdan böyle ayađa kalktılar, böyle kalktılar. Şöyle yapıp maske çıkardılar ve kurt çıktı suratları. Kurt şeklinde. Hani maskeyi çıkardılar böyle iki tane kurt çıktı. Aaaa, diyorum annem babam deđilmiş, kurtmuş bunlar, diyorum.

As I mentioned earlier, a relative informed me that I was adopted. This relative owned a house with a garden. I dreamt I was in that house. On the other side, there were enemies on the roof. I was hurling objects at them, including knives. My adoptive parents were among them. I exclaimed, 'Oh no! I'm throwing knives at them,' but I couldn't stop. Suddenly, my parents stood up, removed their masks, and their faces morphed into those of wolves. Shocked, I realized they weren't my parents; they were wolves.

Similarly, Participant 4 mentioned dreams of feeling threatened and guilty, with her biological parents appearing angry. These dreams reflect her guilt and fear associated with her adoption and her biological parents:

Ben biyolojik babamın vefat ettiđini öğrendikten sonra rüyamda gördüm. Bana çok kızgındı. Yani şöyle; bir evin içindeyiz, biz odada oturuyoruz, o odaya açılan bir kapı var ve o oradaki odada uyumak istiyormuş ama, uyuyamadığı için mi artık neyse çok öfkeliydi. Çok kızgındı yani aşırı kızgındı. Biyolojik annemi de yine bana kızgın gördüm rüyamda. Onu da gördüm. O da yine benzer bir odanın içinde beni bekliyormuş görmek için. Ben onun yanına gidiyorum. Odaya girdiđimde ağlıyor ama çok kızgındı, böyle öfke doluydu bana karşı ve ben kendimi çok suçlu hissetmişim. İkisinde de sadece şaşkındım niye bana öfkeliiler diye. Ama suçluluk hissettim, sebebini çözemediđim bir suçluluk.

After finding out that my biological father had passed away, I dreamt about him. In my dream, he was very angry with me. We were in a house, sitting in a room with a door leading into it. He wanted to sleep in this room, and perhaps because he couldn't sleep, he was extremely angry. My biological mother also appeared in my dream, angry with me. She was waiting in a similar room to see me. When I entered the room, she was crying, yet she was full of anger toward me, and I felt intense guilt. In both instances, I was left puzzled as to why they were angry with me, and I felt a guilt that I couldn't comprehend.

Participant 4's dreams of her birth parents' anger may reflect her own feelings of abandonment. The anger may reflect her unexpressed resentment toward them for

abandoning her, and her guilt in the dreams may reflect her inner conflict, possibly feeling unjustly responsible for the adoption or due to her feelings of anger toward the biological parents.

Participant 1 shared an incident where she felt attacked verbally by her grandmother's insensitive remark about the birth of her first "real" grandchild. This incident highlights the psychological and emotional harm that can come from feeling excluded or considered 'lesser' due to one's adopted status:

Ailede çocuk olarak ben ve (evlat edinilmiş) kardeşim vardı. Amcam birazcık geç evlendi ve onun çocuğu olacaktı. Bi gün babaannem evde bize bakıyordu. O sırada doğum olacağı haberi geldi. Sonra babaannem bir arkadaşını telefonla arayıp aynen şu cümleyi kurmuştu, "ilk kez torununu doğuyor". Ve bu beni çok kırmıştı. Zaten kendisiyle aramız pek muhteşem, iyi olarak nitelendirilemez. O zaten o biyolojik torununu daha farklı görür. O zamanlar mesela babaanneme karşı çok öfkelenmişimi hatırlıyorum. Nasıl böyle bi cümle kurar? Tamam ilk kez doğuyor gerçekten de ama niye bunu söyleme ihtiyacı hissetti? Benim yanımdayken söylemek zorunda mıydı? Kimse ilk torunu olup olmadığını ona sormadı.

The children in the family were my adopted brother and me. My uncle married late and wanted to have a child. One day, while my grandmother was taking care of us at home, news arrived that my uncle's baby would be born. My grandmother called one of her friends and declared, 'For the first time, my grandchild is going to be born.' This deeply hurt me. After all, my relationship with her is not good. She already differentiates between her biological grandchildren and me. I remember feeling very angry with my grandmother at that time. How could she say such a thing? Yes, the child was indeed her first biological grandchild, but why did she need to express it like that? Why did she have to say it in my presence?.

Lastly, Participant 6 experienced an extremely traumatic event that can be seen as a literal manifestation of her annihilation fantasy, as she miscarried after an unexpected and stressful meeting with her biological mother. The resulting trauma from this incident is deeply entwined with her feelings of abandonment, and loss.

Ben biyolojik annemi evlendikten üç ay sonra gördüm biliyor musunuz? Yani çok acı bi şekilde. Kayınvalidemle görümcemin bir oyununu yaşadım yani. Yani bu kadını bulup getirmişler İzmir'den. Böyle bir evde, kırk kişinin olduğu bi ortamda kayınvalidem bana dedi ki, senin annen bu kadın, biz dünür olarak onu tanıyoruz dedi. Ve ben hamileymişim, düşük yapmaya başladım orda. Yani travmalarımı anlatamam. Hani hiç uzaktan taş gelmedi, hep yakınlardan geldi. Hani bu insanların bu kadar can acıtacak bir şeyleri olduğunu düşünmüyordum ben, ben sanmıyordum. Bi insan bi insanı bilerek nasıl üzebilir ya bu kadar? Ondan sonra, ama inanın hiçbir şey hissetmedim. Çok

enteresan bir şekilde hiçbir şey hissetmedim. Sadece üzerimde sarı bir elbise vardı, kalktığımda çok affedersiniz arkasında bu kadar bir kan, orda, oturduğum yerde koltuk kırmızı oldu. Ordan direkt doktora gittim ve düşük başlamış dedi. İstirahat edersen durur dedi. Ben böyle kanepenin altında pireketler konup baş aşağı dokuz ay yattığımı hatırlıyorum. O bebeğim yaşamadı zaten, doğduktan sonra vefat etti.

I met my biological mother three months after I got married. It was very painful. My mother-in-law and sister-in-law tricked me. They found this woman and brought her here from Izmir. We were in a room with forty people when my mother-in-law told me, “This woman is your biological mother; we will only accept her as an in-law. I was pregnant at the time, but I miscarried. I can’t even begin to describe my trauma. Strangers never attacked me; it was always by people close to me. I didn’t think these people were capable of causing such pain. How could someone intentionally cause so much pain? After that incident, I was numb. I was wearing a yellow dress that day, and when I got up, it was stained with blood, as was the chair I was sitting on. I went to the doctor, who confirmed that I had begun to miscarry. He advised that it would stop if I rested. I spent nine months mostly lying on a couch. Unfortunately, my baby didn’t survive and died after birth.

The traumatic miscarriage that Participant 6 experienced shortly after a distressing confrontation with her birth mother illustrates a powerful manifestation of her inner fears of abandonment. This distressing event not only intensified her pre-existing abandonment trauma, but also physically manifested her deepest fears of loss and annihilation. The incident, which occurred in a supposedly safe family context, disrupted her sense of security, intensified as if she were being attacked, and underscored the destructive impact of her biological family’s actions on her psyche.

For some participants, the presence of biological siblings in their fantasies was perceived as a threat. For example, Participant 2 expressed that the idea of a younger biological sibling evoked a sense of discomfort. This concern suggests a deeper fear of being overshadowed or replaced by another child, potentially triggering feelings of abandonment. Such a possibility could threaten to undermine her perceived uniqueness and the special status conferred by being “chosen” by her adoptive parents.

3.2.2. Fantasy of being kidnapped

Many participants articulated fantasies in which malicious individuals attempted to kidnap them, separating them from their adoptive families. Participant 6 shared a recurring dream from her childhood. This dream may represent the participant’s fantasy of being kidnapped by her biological mother. Alternatively, it could symbolize

an unconscious fantasy wherein the participant was once kidnapped by her adoptive mother:

Valla benim bütün çocukluk rüyalarımda beni böyle yaka paça götürən bi kadın vardı. Ona yalvarıyordum. Hani böyle korkunç insanlar gelip beni götürüyolardı. Hep benim götürülmekle ve kaybetmekle ilgili korkularım vardı... Aliye Rona gibi. Ya da işte “Köprüaltı Çocukları” filmindeki gibi hani böyle beni pis yerlere, böyle örümcekler olan (kesik nefes), böyle mağaramsı yerlere götürmeye çalışan insanlar... Mesela ben örümcekten hala daha çok korkarım. Bu korkularım yüzünden doktora gittik biz. Örtülerin altından böyle bağırarak uyandığımı hatırlıyorum hep. Hep böyle “annecim yetişin, kurtarın beni” diye uyandığımı hatırlıyorum hep.

In all my childhood dreams, there was a woman who took me away. I begged her. You know, these scary people would come and take me away. I was always afraid of being taken away and losing... Like Aliye Rona, or like in the movie “Children Under the Bridge”, people trying to take me to dirty places, places with spiders (gasp), cave-like places... For example, I am still very afraid of spiders. We went to the doctor because of these fears. I always remember waking up under the covers screaming. I always remember waking up like this, ‘Mom, come quickly, save me.’

Fantasies of being kidnapped may be a shared phenomenon between the participants and their adoptive families. The participants reported that during their childhood, if they arrived home late or were not visible to their adoptive parents, their parents would have become extremely anxious and angry, assuming their child had been kidnapped. Participant 3 shared a memory in which her adoptive family had a fantasy that she had been kidnapped:

Bir gün arkadaşşımla çiçek toplamaya çıkmıştık, bir baktım hava karardı. Tabi çok da uzaklaşmışız mahalleden çiçek toplarken. Koştur koştur geldim ki bütün mahalle beni arıyor. Herkes sokakta. Annem babam deli olmuşlar yani böyle. İnanılmaz korkmuştum. Hem korktum hem yani öfke fırlıyor gözlerinden ikisinin de böyle çıldırılmış bir şekilde ikisi de. Koşturdum eve gittim yani. Babam dövecek diye korkmuştum hatta ama dövmedi. Kaçarak gitmişim eve. Mesela şimdi düşünüyorum ki, herhalde beni alıp gittiler diye düşünmüşler.

One day, I was out picking flowers with my friend, and it was getting dark. We were far from the neighborhood. I rushed back, and everyone was looking for me on the street. My parents went crazy. I was so scared. I mean, there was anger in my parents’ eyes. I ran home. I was even afraid my father would hit me, but he didn’t. I ran home. Now, I think they probably thought I had been kidnapped.

Interestingly, Participant 3 appeared to recall this memory in a positive mood, particularly when describing her adoptive parents’ anger. This observation led the

researcher to consider that the kidnapping fantasies might potentially represent the participants' unconscious desires for punishment or revenge toward their adoptive families. However, the specific reasons behind these feelings remain unclear.

Participant 2 recalled an incident when her family panicked, mistakenly believing their daughter had been kidnapped. This incident occurred when a neighbor, whom she considered as close as a "relative," took her to school. While listening to this account, the researcher got the impression that the participant might be describing a dream or fantasy of being kidnapped by a biological relative rather than recounting an actual event:

Ortalıktan kaybolduğumu düşünmüştü ailem. Servisin saatleriyle ilgili bir yanlış anlaşılma olmuş. O sırada da komşumuzun oğlu işe giderken beni ağlarken görüyor. Ama dediğim gibi zaten herkes akraba gibi olduğu için hiç aklımıza kötü bir şey gelmezdi biz küçükken. Hayırdır niye ağlıyorsun diyor. Ben servisi kaçırdım diyorum. Beni alıp okula götürüyor. Halbuki ben aslında yanlış servisi görmüşüm. Benim servisim de sonradan geldiği için ve servise binmediğim anlaşıldığı için annem babam aşırı derecede panik oluyorlar. Ben okula gittiğimde babam benden daha önce okula gitmişti. Noluyo ya falan oldum babamı görünce. Ama o kadar çok kızdılar ki... Hani ben de böyle çok sinirlendim diyebilirim. Benim ne suçum var ki falan oldum.

My parents thought that I had disappeared. There was a misunderstanding about the arrival time of the school bus. During that time, a neighbor's son saw me crying on his way to work. As I mentioned earlier, I never had negative thoughts about him because everyone around me felt like a relative. He asked me, 'Why are you crying?' I explained that I had missed the bus, and he kindly took me to school. However, it turned out that I had mistaken the bus schedule, as my actual bus was to arrive later. When my parents realized I hadn't boarded the bus, they panicked. When I arrived at school, my father had already gotten there before me. I was confused when I saw him. Their anger was intense, and it provoked anger in me too. I couldn't understand why I was being blamed for the situation.

The impression that the participant may be recounting a fantasy rather than an actual event arises from her specific choice of words—referring to the neighbor as "someone as close as a relative." This phrase evokes the notion of a biological connection and infuses the narrative with a sense of familial closeness that transcends mere neighborly affection. Furthermore, her vivid depiction of her adoptive parents' pronounced panic at the thought of her being kidnapped adds an emotional layer that suggests a deeper significance. It may reveal an unconscious desire to recognize and affirm her worth, potentially from her biological family. This fantasy could signify an imagined scenario

where her biological relatives seek her out during a moment of crisis, thus reinforcing her importance and eliciting a heightened emotional response from her adoptive parents.

Participant 2 also shared a fantasy in which her child is kidnapped. This fantasy could be interpreted as a displaced version of her own kidnapping fantasy:

Ben annemden babamdan daha çok korkarım şu an çocuğumun başına böyle bir şey gelse. Bilmiyorum, belki de öğrenilmiş bir şeydir bu. Ama gerçekten panik olurum. Bi sefer kayboldu mesela bir AVM'de. Tezgahın altına girmiş. Gerçekten çok korktum, elimdeki kahveyi fırlattım. Her şeyin üstüne kahve döküldü, çok kızdılar mağazada falan böyle ama ben çok panik oldum yani.

If something like that happened to my child now, I would be even more terrified than my parents were. I don't know; maybe it's something I learned over time. But I would truly be in a state of panic. For instance, there was an incident where she got lost in a shopping mall. She went under the counter. I was filled with fear, I accidentally dropped the cup I was holding in my panic. Coffee spilled all over, and the store staff became very upset with me, but my primary concern was my child's safety.

The two subordinate themes under the threatening fantasies represent more than fear; they are a poignant commentary on the participants' ongoing exploration of their past and present identities. These fantasies, dark and ominous as they are, offer a window into the participants' efforts to understand and integrate their adoption experiences into their personal narratives.

3.3. Loss Fantasies

In the loss fantasies, adopted adults grapple with imagined scenarios of absence and disappearance. This superordinate theme encapsulates the profound fear of losing significant relationships and the emotional turmoil that accompanies it. Participants' narratives reveal that these loss fantasies often function as a psychological echo of the original trauma of adoption—a reverberation of the primal fear of abandonment and the potential for further loss that haunts their lived experience.

3.3.1. Parental loss fantasy

The parental loss fantasy deals with the adoptees' fear of losing their adoptive parents or their love, which is paradoxically intertwined with their origins. This subordinate theme may reflect a defense mechanism that protects against the unbearable pain of

re-experiencing primordial abandonment. The primary scenario in the participants' parental loss fantasies unfolded as follows: Participants would reveal to their adoptive parents that they were aware of their adoption. This revelation would deeply distress their adoptive parents, leading them to extreme sadness and, ultimately, in these fantasies, to death.

Participant 3 learned of her adoption simultaneously with her older sister's adoption. The participant recalled two instances from her childhood when she was informed about her adoption. However, she realized she had forgotten these events until she discovered her older sister was also adopted. The act of forgetting can thus be seen as a protective measure, a mental barrier against the re-emergence of painful emotions associated with the sense of loss. This defense mechanism probably helped her maintain emotional equilibrium in the face of the potential disruption of her family ties. Participant 3 shared that she and her parents never discussed her adoption. She harbored a fantasy that questioning them about it might distress them to the point of death:

Annem 2007'de vefat etti, o zamana kadar o üzülecek diye hiçbir şey sormadım. Üzülürler diye. Hastaydılar, babam şeker hastasıydı zaten. Hani onlar çok kıymetliydi benim için. Onların üzülmemeleri lazımdı yani.

My mom passed away in 2007. Until then, I didn't ask anything because I thought it would make her sad and upset them. My father was already dealing with diabetes. You know, they were very precious to me. I didn't want them to be sad.

Participant 4 discovered her adoption from documents she found as a child while rummaging through drawers at home after her adoptive father's death. The participant stated that she never shared this information with her mother until her birth family contacted her a few months before the interview:

Anne ve kız yalnız yaşıyorduk o dönem. Üzmek istemedim onu. Zaman zaman merak ettiğim oluyordu tabi ki. Sebebini, kim olduklarını, kardeşlerim var mı yok mu... Ama annemin bazı rahatsızlıkları, sağlık problemleri olmuştu. Onun kaldıramayacağını düşündüğüm için çok üstüne eğilmedim. Ben de şey korkusu oldu, babamı kaybettim annemi de mi kaybedicem?

At that time, we lived alone as mother and daughter. I didn't want to upset her. Of course, I was curious from time to time: why, who they were, whether I had siblings or not... However, my mother had some illnesses, and health problems.

I thought she couldn't handle it, so I didn't push her too much. I had this fear – I lost my father; would I lose my mother too?

Participant 5 discovered her adoption status from a friend while playing in the street. However, she expressed that she could not confront her parents about it, fearing she might lose them. The fantasy of loss seemed to be a shared experience between the participant and her parents:

Hiçbir şey de sormadım, sormadım yani üzülürler diye. Ben üzüldüm ya, onlar daha çok üzülür diye sormadım. Beni çok seviyorlardı çünkü, hani benden vazgeçmesinler istedim. Nankörlük gibi değerlendirirlerdi çünkü. Rahmetlik annem hep gidermiş karşı komşuya, anlatmış: Ya bizi bırakıp giderse, ya öğrenirse, ne yaparım ben dermiş. Çok korkuyorlarmış. Bir gün gidersem diye hep korkmuşlar. Halbuki nereye gidecem, mümkünü yok. Bir şey olur diye onlara korktum ben. Hani yaşlıydılar ya ikisi de. Annemin de tansiyonu vardı, bir şey olur da ben sorumlu olurum diye düşündüm.

I didn't question them because I was afraid it would upset them. I was already upset and didn't want to add to their feelings. Given their deep love for me, I didn't want them to feel that I was ungrateful. My late mother used to confide in our neighbor, expressing concerns such as, "What if he leaves us? What if he discovers the truth? What will I do? They were terrified. They were always afraid that one day I would leave. But where could I go? I had no other place to go. If something terrible happened to them because of this stress, I was afraid I would be responsible. They were both elderly, and my mother had high blood pressure, which made me worry even more.

3.3.2. Child loss fantasy

Under the child loss fantasy, the focus shifts to the participants' own child, where fear of loss manifests itself as anxiety about the well-being of their children. This theme often mirrors the adoptees' personal fears and insecurities, suggesting that the trauma of adoption extends to concerns for the next generation. Participants' heightened alertness and protective impulses underscore an enduring sense of vulnerability that adoption has imprinted on their psyches.

Participant 3 shared that she had experienced fantasies involving harm coming to her children, and she speculated these might be related to her adoption:

HER ŞEYİ kontrol etmeye çalışıyorum. Hani onlara zarar gelecek, ne bileyim bir şey olacak diye sürekli bir şeyleri kontrol etmeye çalışıyorum. Evlat edinilmeye bağlantılı mı bilmiyorum ama, öyle yani. Sürekli bir heyecanlanmam var kötü bir şey yaşayacaklar diye. Yani işte geç kaldılar, ne oldu acaba? Neden geç kaldılar? Yani, böyle sürekli bir kurgulamam var. ...

Böyle kolumun kanadımın altına sürekli almak istiyorum. Sanki sevgisiz kalacaklarmış gibi. Başlarına bir şey gelecekmiş gibi.

I ALWAYS try to control EVERYTHING. I'm not sure if it has anything to do with being adopted, but that's how it is. I'm constantly worried that something bad will happen to my kids. For example, I wonder what could have happened if they were late coming home. I'm always trying to protect my children, as if they might feel unloved or something bad might happen to them.

Participant 6 revealed that following the demise of her first two children, she frequently experienced fantasies involving the loss of her remaining children:

Şimdilerde panik atak bir şekilde kaybetmekten korkuyorum. Özellikle çocuklarımla ilgili acayip takıntılarım var yani. Acayip senaryo yazarım, kurarım kafamda ve oynarım onu. Yani Allah korusun! Telefonları kapalı olmasın yani... İşte iki tane evlat kaybı filan herhalde onlar da neden oldu buna diye düşünüyorum. Hani onları kaybedince insan daha çok korkuyor. ... O kaybetme korkusu hala var biliyor musunuz? Çocuklarımı kaybetmekten korkuyorum. (Ağlamaklı) Eşimi kaybetmekten korkuyorum. Yani benim bağlantım olan tek insanlar onlar çünkü.

I am currently experiencing an overwhelming fear of losing my children. This fear has become an obsession. I even express this fear by creating scenarios in my mind and mentally acting them out. The thought of their cell phones being turned off fills me with dread. I believe losing my first two children contributed greatly to this fear. After their loss, my fear escalated significantly. Even now, this fear of loss continues. Not only am I afraid of losing my children, but I'm also afraid of losing my husband, who, along with my children, is the only person with whom I have a deep connection (weeps).

Participant 2 indicated that following the birth of her first child, she developed an unexpected fear of flying. She shared that every time she boarded an aircraft, she was plagued by the fantasy that the plane might crash, leaving her child orphaned. This fantasy, typically emerging as the plane lifted off the ground, can be interpreted as symbolically representing the child's separation from the maternal figure (equated to earth mother), subsequently resulting in a loss of connection:

Oğlum doğduktan sonra ilk uçağa bindiğimde aşırı derece korkmuştum. Bana bir şey olursa ne yapar diye. Yaa çok panik olmuşum hani sanki uçak sallanıyor ve şimdi düşeceğiz diye. Halbuki ben uçaktan hiç korkmam bu arada. Çok sık da uçağa binerim. Ama doğumdan sonra ilk bindiğimde çok kötü olmuşum. Ama oğlumun kardeşi olduktan sonra dün mesela uçakla gidip geldikten sonra hiç tedirginlik yaşamadım, hiç stres yaşamadım. Niye böyle oldu acaba diye düşündüm. Çünkü oğlumun yalnız kalmayacağını düşündüm artık. Yani artık ikisi de yalnız değil. Birbirleri varlar.

The first time I boarded an airplane after my son was born, I feared what he would do if something happened to me. I panicked as if the plane was shaking and we would crash. Interestingly, I had never been afraid of airplanes before. I travel a lot. But the first time I traveled after giving birth, I was in a terrible state. However, when my son had a sibling, my fear disappeared. For example, I felt no anxiety or stress after a recent flight. I wondered why that was. I think it's because my son would no longer be alone. They have each other now, so they are not alone.

The superordinate theme of the loss fantasies captures a core emotional experience shared by the participants, reflecting a deeply rooted anxiety about the potential for significant personal loss. This theme intricately weaves together the adoptees' fears of separation from adoptive parents with the imagined distress of losing one's own children. Such fantasies not only signify the lingering impact of adoption on their emotional landscape but also reveal a protective instinct to preserve the integrity of familial bonds. Throughout the narratives, the fear of loss serves as both a tie to their adoptive families and a barrier to exploring their origins, underlining the complex interplay between past traumas and present attachments.

3.4. Self-worth Repairing Fantasies

Self-worth repairing fantasies represents the mental constructions that adoptees use to repair the perceived damage to their self-esteem caused by adoption. This theme includes narratives that adoptees create to reframe their past and to portray themselves as valued and esteemed individuals in the eyes of adoptive families. Through these fantasies, adoptees reconcile with the abandonment and reaffirm their worth by rewriting the story of their adoption as one of choice and desire rather than rejection. The study found that the participants had two types of self-worth reparative fantasies to counter the harm to their self-worth inflicted by abandonment: 'chosen princess' fantasies and 'they had to leave me' fantasies.

3.4.1. The "chosen princess" fantasy

The chosen princess fantasy is a narrative that adoptees embrace to feel valued and special within their adoptive families. This fantasy is characterized by the belief that they were not just adopted but specifically chosen, often out of many, which is a powerful antidote to feelings of being unwanted. It transforms the adoptee's perception from being left behind to being chosen, restoring their sense of specialness and self-

worth. All participants seemed to harbor fantasies of being a chosen and highly valued child, derived both from their past narratives and through the representations in these narratives. Participants utilized the ‘princess’ metaphor to describe their childhoods, portraying themselves as children who were deeply cared for and loved by those around them. Moreover, participants narrated stories about being ‘chosen’ by their adoptive families, expressing emotions like enthusiasm and pride. These fantasies were considered a defense against the participants’ feelings of worthlessness.

Participant 1 stressed the importance of luck and miracles in her life. She perceived her adoption by her adoptive family as a stroke of good fortune. Specifically, she expressed excitement about being chosen over another baby during the adoption process, underlining that her hair played a part in the selection:

Bana anlatılan şu: İki tane yan yana bebek getirmişler ve hangisini seçmek istiyorsanız onu seçin demişler. Duyan herkes böyle çok şaşıyor. Bebek seçmek nedir ya falan diyorlar. Annem de donmuş kalmış. Birlikte gittikleri çok yakın bi aile dostumuz “bunun saçı var bu olsun” deyip beni seçmişler. Ama annemlerin seçmesi konusunda yani çok şanslıyım. O da benim için ikinci bi mucize. İyi ki beni seçmişler. Diğer çocuk kim bilir şu an hangi ailenin yanında. Büyük ihtimalle o da bi ailenin yanındadır. Ama tabi ailemin yanında olmak benim için çok büyük şans.

I was told that two babies were presented side by side, and my adoptive parents were asked to choose one. This story often surprises people, as they find selecting a baby unusual. This situation took aback my mother. However, a close family friend who accompanied them suggested choosing me because I had hair, and that’s how I was selected. I am incredibly grateful that my parents chose me; I consider it a second miracle in my life. I feel fortunate to be a part of my family. While I wonder about the other child and the family they ended up with, I recognize that being with my own family is a wonderful opportunity.

Participant 5 shared that she had a nurturing upbringing in a small house with relatives of her adoptive family. She expressed feeling deeply loved within that household. In a notable incident, a new child was brought into the house for adoption. However, when it became apparent that this arrival was causing distress and sadness for the Participant 5, her family took immediate action. They made the compassionate decision to send the child back, prioritizing Participant 5’s emotional well-being and ensuring she would not be upset. This demonstrated her adoptive family’s strong bond and care for her, going to great lengths to protect her happiness.

Participant 6 proudly shared that her adoptive family had been offered the opportunity to adopt his younger biological brother, but they chose not to proceed with the adoption:

Ve daha da kötüsü ne biliyor musunuz? Bakın yani ben bunu eşimle bile konuşmadım şimdiye kadar. Benden sonra doğan oğlan, o iki yaş küçük benden. Onu da getirmişler babama. Hani bunu da alın, iki kardeş bi arada büyüsünler demişler. Babam reddetmiş. Olmaz demiş, bizim kızımız bize yeter demiş.

Moreover, do you know what's worse? Look, I have yet to talk to my husband about it. The boy who was born after me is two years younger than me. They offered him to my father, saying, 'Take him as well, so the two siblings can grow up together.' Nevertheless, my father refused. He said no, our daughter is enough for us.

All participants shared that their adoptive families loved them, especially their adoptive fathers. It is worth noting that participants expressed this affection when referring to their deceased fathers, which can be understood in the context of both ongoing grief and the unique dynamics of the father-daughter relationship. For instance, Participant 3 described being raised like a princess, emphasizing that she was cherished by her parents and extended family members, such as her aunt and uncle.

Participant 5 said that her adoptive family dressed her like Ayşecik, who was a popular children's movie star at the time:

Sürekli sinemaya giderdik, düğünlere çok giderdik. Bana çok güzel elbiseler alırlardı. Mesela sinemaya giderdik o zaman Ayşecik meşhurdu. Zeynep Değirmencioğlu. Onun giydiği kıyafetlerin aynısından olsun diye gidip kumaş alırdık. Özel terzi vardı, terzi dikerdi bana tüllü, işlemeli, pullu, çok güzel şeyler, incili, hep öyle kıyafetlerim vardı. Ayakkabılarım lameler, gümüş zincirler, çok güzel bakıldım. Ben çok güzel bakıldım. Babam mesela bir pastaneye anlaşmıştı. Kıza ne istiyorsa sen ver ben gelince parasını ödeyecem derdi.

We often went to movies and weddings together. My parents bought me elaborate and stylish clothes. I remember when we went to the movies with the famous actress Ayşecik, Zeynep Değirmencioğlu. To match her outfits, we would buy fabrics, and my tailor would make special clothes for me, decorated with tulle, embroidery, sequins, and even pearls. I always had such beautiful clothes. My shoes were also special, with silver chains and a shiny lamé material. My parents took great care of me. I remember that my father made arrangements with a bakery so that I could have anything I wanted, promising to pay for it later.

Participant 6 fondly described her adoptive family, with her adoptive mother symbolized as a protective panther and her adoptive father as Santa Claus. She expressed gratitude for growing up in a loving family and acknowledged the tremendous love and care she received. Participant 6 felt fortunate to have her adoptive mother as a strong and vigilant protector, always there to shield her from potential harm. Similarly, her adoptive father was seen as a figure who made her dreams come true, akin to the joyful spirit of Santa Claus. The participant highlighted the deep affection and support she experienced within her adoptive family.

3.4.2. They had to leave me fantasy

They had to leave me fantasy is a narrative that adoptees use to cope with the harsh reality of abandonment. It involves an image of the biological parents' reasons for abandonment, such as impossible circumstances or societal pressures, rather than a lack of love for the child. This fantasy allows adoptees to maintain a sense of worth by believing that their biological parents' decision was a painful but necessary sacrifice rather than a rejection of them as individuals.

Some participants shared their fantasies of reuniting with their biological families, envisioning scenarios where they were informed that their initial separation was unintentional or a mistake. Participant 2 dreamed of a narrative where their biological families expressed a change of heart, acknowledging that circumstances had changed, and they now wished to reclaim them:

“Biz istemeden seni bıraktık” veya “işte oldu bi hata ama şimdi işte farklı düşünüyoruz” falan. Yani hep böyle “o zaman şartlar onu gerektiriyordu şimdi ama her şey değişti ve biz tekrar seni istiyoruz” gibi bir şey düşlerdim.

“We left you unintentionally,” or “it was a mistake, but now we feel differently,” or something similar. So, I have always dreamed of something like, “At that time, circumstances required it, but now everything has changed, and we want you back.

Participants also held mental representations of their biological mothers, perceiving them as victims of rape, illiteracy, youth, or singlehood. For example, Participant 1 imagined it would be “inconceivable” for her wealthy biological family to abandon her. She believed that there must have been difficult financial circumstances in which these individuals could not care for their children. She referred to unwanted babies due

to rape, extreme poverty, or lack of education. Participant 1 speculated that her biological mother might not have been highly educated or sophisticated, leading her to make the tough decision to give up her child.

In Participant 3's fantasies and mental representations, she imagined that her biological family had to give her up due to her biological parents' death or distressing circumstances such as rape or incest. These scenarios reflected her attempt to make sense of her adoption and its reasons. Similarly, Participant 5 had various fantasies about her birth and biological family, including scenarios in which she was abandoned following a tragic event:

Ben evlilik dışı bir çocuğumdur, tahminim benim bu. Bazı tanıdıklar diyor işte genelevde çalışıyormuş annem işte orada doğum yapmış. Bir tanesi diyor pavyonda çalışıyordu annem, doğum yaptı, verdi. Bir tanesi diyor, köydeydi, kocası askere gitmiş başka bir adamla ilişkiye girince ben doğmuşum, vermek zorunda kalmış kocası askerden gelmeden. Bir tanesi diyor ki baban trenciydi, tren ezdi babanı. Annem hamileydi o zaman. Böyle bir varsayım var. Trencinin bir tanesi tecavüz ettiği bir kızmış, doğum yapmış, çocuğunu verdi, diyor.

I suspect that I may be an illegitimate child. Some people claim that my mother worked in a brothel and gave birth to me there. Others suggest that she worked in a night club when she gave birth. There is another story: She was living in a village while her husband was away in the army, and she had relations with another man resulting in my birth. Allegedly, she had to give me up before her husband returned from the army... Additionally, one account states that my father was a train conductor who tragically died in a train accident while my mother was pregnant with me. As you can see, there are various assumptions surrounding my birth. Another narrative suggests that a train conductor assaulted a girl, who later gave birth, and he then gave the child to her.

Participant 6's fantasies about her abandonment seemed to undergo a shift influenced by her contact with her biological family. Two months before the interview, she met her biological siblings and learned that she had a sibling who was born after her. This encounter changed her thinking. Learning about the existence of a biological sibling born after her and hearing positive memories from her biological siblings seemed to lead her to believe that her abandonment was a deliberate choice rather than a necessity. As a result, her fantasies of abandonment transformed into feelings of anger directed toward her biological family.

The superordinate theme of self-worth repairing fantasies is crucial for adoptees because it weaves a narrative that heals abandonment wounds and affirms self-worth.

Through the “chosen princess” fantasy, adoptees imagine their adoption as a conscious and desired choice and see themselves as uniquely valuable in the eyes of their adoptive families. In *they had to leave me* fantasy, adoptees create scenarios that absolve their biological parents of abandonment, suggesting that it was a difficult but necessary decision, thereby preserving their sense of self-worth. These reparative fantasies serve as a psychological salve, allowing adoptees to reframe their experiences in ways that reaffirm their significance and belonging.

3.5. Ideal Family Fantasies

Ideal family fantasies encompass adoptees’ innermost desires for familial perfection that may have been absent or lacking in their lives. This theme reveals a psychological canvas on which adoptees paint their version of an ideal family dynamic that provides unconditional love, acceptance, and commitment. It is a space where adoptees reimagine their family stories, creating narratives that satisfy their emotional needs and make up for the shortcomings of their experiences with their adoptive families. These fantasies include fantasy of ideal parents, fantasy of having siblings, and fantasy of adopting a child.

3.5.1. Fantasy of ideal parents

The subordinate theme, fantasy of ideal parents, captures adoptees’ longing for parents who embody all the qualities and characteristics they longed for as children. In these fantasies, biological and adoptive parents are not only physically present but also emotionally available, actively participating in the lives of adoptees and providing a nurturing environment that supports their growth and well-being.

Participants spoke about fantasies where their adoptive parents were not deceased but rather young, energetic, healthy, and free of flaws. Participant 1 fantasized about a younger mother who would have had the energy and willingness to engage in various activities with her during her childhood. She compared her mother to her friend’s mother, noting that her friend’s mother could participate in activities for which her mother no longer had the energy. This suggested a longing for a more dynamic and active maternal figure. Furthermore, Participant 1 wanted her father to spend more time with the family and display empathy when not under the influence of alcohol.

These desires reflected a longing for a different family dynamic characterized by more involved and emotionally present parents.

Participant 2 expressed anger and resentment towards both her birth family and adoptive mother. She felt frustrated with her adoptive mother due to their age difference, which inhibited their ability to connect and understand one another. Participant 2 also expressed anger at her biological family for leaving her with someone who did not understand her and for not maintaining contact or showing interest in her life. This suggested a yearning for deeper connection and support from her biological family. Moreover, Participant 2 fantasized about her mother deciding to adopt at a time when she was more emotionally prepared to provide love and care. This suggested a desire for a more nurturing and attentive maternal figure who would have been more capable of providing the love and support she needed.

Participant 3 described her childhood loneliness due to her parents' advanced age and her adoptive mother's inability to accompany her because of her disability:

Annemle babam yaş itibariyle yaşlılardı yani, sanırım beni aldıklarında işte 47-48 yaşında annem, babam gene öyle. Dolayısıyla, benim çocukluk zamanımda hep yaşlılardı ve ben hep tektim, ablam evlenmişti. Ondan sonra, hep ağlardım, arkadaş istiyorum, arkadaş istiyorum, şuna gidelim, buna gidelim, şöyle yapalım, böyle yapalım, diye. Annem işte, körebeler oynardı benimle, oyunlar oynardı evin içinde. Kadının da ayağından da sakatlığı vardı annemin yani çok hareket edemezdi, öyle bir engeli de vardı bir ameliyat sonrasında kalmış ben çocukken.

My parents were old; my mother was 47-48 years old when they took me; my father was the same. So in my childhood, they were always old, and I was always alone; my sister was married. I used to cry because I wanted friends, to go somewhere, and do something. My mother used to play tag with me; she used to play games in the house. She also had a disability in her foot; she couldn't move much because she had such a disability after an operation she had when I was a child.

Participant 4 felt she had to become more resilient after her adoptive father's death, effectively assuming his role in the family:

Yani mecbur kaldığım için belki de yani hep şey diyorum ya babam yaşasaydı eminim çok farklı olurdu hayatım. Yani karakterim bile daha farklı gelişirdi yani. Çünkü koruyucu bi baba olacaktı. Arkada şimdi koruyucu bir baba yok abi yok dayı yok amca yok çünkü onlar da hep miras yüzünden bi küslük falan

hep oldu. Annem tek başına kaldı. Anneye bakıyorum anne zaten çekingen, içe kapanık, birçok şeyi bilmiyor da.

I mean, maybe because I had to; I always say that if my father had lived, I'm sure my life would have been very different. I mean, even my character would have developed differently because he would have been a protective father. Now there is no protective father, brother, or uncle because they always harbored resentment over the inheritance. My mother was left alone. I look at my mother; she's already shy, introverted, and lacks knowledge.

Participant 6, who lost her adoptive parents at an early age, dreamt that they were still alive:

Mesela eleştirse bile yanımda olsunlar isterdim anladınız mı? Ha illaki böyle aman dünya çok güzel toz pembe falan diye değil yani. Hayır sen burda yanlış yapıyorsun, bu böyle değil diyecek (ağlamaklı) kimsem de yok benim. İyi de olsa, kötü de olsa bütün kararlar (ağlamaklı) bende, bütün sorumluluk bende. Ço-bu çok büyük bi ağır yük, bunu tek başınıza taşıyorsunuz, sırtlıyorsunuz.

For example, I want them to be with me even if they criticize me, you know? I mean, not necessarily because the world is so beautiful and rosy. I don't have anybody to say, "No, you're doing it wrong; it's not like that. Whether it's good or bad, all the decisions were mine. All the responsibility was mine. It was a hefty burden, and I carried it all by myself.

In the participants' idealized fantasies about their biological families, the families were wealthy, loving, and full of warmth - in sharp contrast to their adoptive parents. The participants envisioned their birth parents as saviors. For example, Participant 2 stated:

İlk zamanlar hep şey vardı hani. Bu sevgisizlikten bi şekilde kurtulcam yani. Biri gelip beni alacak beklentisi vardı. ...Ben böyle çok zengin bi ailenin gayrimeşru çocuğuymuşum da birden bire zengin babam ortaya çıkıp ben yıllarca seni aradım kızım falan diyecekmiş gibi düşünürdüm. ... (Biyolojik) annemi de düşünürdüm. Yani dediğim gibi herhalde annemden dolayı bir eksiklik yaşadığım için hani o sevgi eksikliği. Annemin beni bulduğunu, anneme çok benzediğimi, güzel bir kadın olduğunu düşünürdüm. Annemle bu tarz paylaşımlar içinde bulunamadığımız için o bulunduğum olumsuz durumdan beni kurtaracak kişi gibi gelirdi biyolojik ailem. Özellikle de biyolojik annem.

Initially, I always nursed hope, a yearning to escape this perceived lack of love somehow. I envisioned someone coming to rescue me. I used to imagine that I was the illegitimate child of a wealthy family and that my affluent father would suddenly appear, saying, 'I've been searching for you for years.' I also pondered about my biological mother. Likely because I felt a void due to my adoptive mother, I fantasized that my biological mother had discovered me, that I resembled her significantly, and that she was a beautiful woman. Since my adoptive mother and I couldn't share these characteristics, my biological

family seemed to be the saviors of my challenging circumstances, particularly my biological mother.

Participant 3 revealed that she dreamed of a biological mother who would solve all her problems, as opposed to her adoptive mother, whom she felt was not sufficient for her needs:

O zaman o kadar kötüydüm ki, hani, bir anne istiyordum. Neden istiyordum bilmiyorum ama bir anne istiyordum. Bana benzeyen birilerini istiyordum. Ondan sonra, niye farklıyım ben, diyordum. Niye annem yok, annem olsa işte ben ağlamazdım. İşte bana sarılırdı, bilmem ne. Halbuki annem var ama o zaman ama öyle düşünüyordum. Yani ilginç, sanki anne çıksa ortaya böyle puf diye her şey bitecek, üzüntülerim geçecek gibi hissediyordum.

I was in such a bad mood at that time, you know, I desired a mother. I can't explain why I wanted a mother, but I did. I yearned for someone who looked like me. I then started questioning, why am I different? Why don't I have a mother? If I had a mother, I wouldn't cry; she would embrace me, I'm not sure. Interestingly, if a mother showed up, everything would be resolved, and my sorrow would disappear.

Participant 4 shared that the winged angel she often dreamed of in childhood could represent her biological mother. She also said she dreamed of a father who would shoulder her burdens during her youth.

Participant 6 mentioned that her biological mother, who came to her rescue in her childhood dreams, was calm and kind, unlike her adoptive mother:

Ya hani böyle hep mazlum masum güzel bi kadındı, sessiz bi kadındı, sakın bi kadındı çünkü annem çok agres-sinirliydi çok bağırır bi insandı (kesik nefes) hani böyle beni almaya gelen de böyle çok daha muhlis, yumuşak birisiydi.

In my dreams, the one who came to pick me up was always a compliant or modest?, innocent, beautiful, quiet woman. She was quiet because my mother was a very aggressive, angry person who shouted a lot. But you know, she (biological mother) was a much kinder, gentler person.

Participant 1 dreamed of being with her biological family, who would accept her as she was, even when her adoptive parents criticized her for her weight:

Hani böyle kızdığımızda birbirimize, böyle kavga ettiğimizde, annem bana kızdığında. hani böyle zaman zaman aklıma geldiği olurdu. Özellikle şeyi hatırlıyorum. Kilo problemi olan bi çocuktum, çünkü kortizon tedavisi görmüştüm. Çok zayıf bebektim ama sonra kortizon tedavisinden sonra sürekli böyle kilo almaya başladım. Annem hani bazen kilo ile ilgili yorum yaptığında, sürekli zayıfla dediğinde acaba işte biyolojik annem babam olsa belki de beni

böyle kabul ederlerdi, sürekli zayıfla demezlerdi dediğim oldu çok küçükken ama çok kısa bi evreydi.

You know, whenever my mom and I had a fight or when she was mad at me, I would think back to those moments from time to time. I recall one thing in particular. I had a weight problem as a child because I was on cortisone. I was a skinny baby, but after the cortisone treatment, I started to gain weight. Whenever my mother commented on my weight and repeatedly told me to lose weight, I would ponder whether my biological parents would have accepted me as I was. I wondered if they wouldn't have constantly told me to lose weight.

Participant 5 stated that although she felt very well cared for, the need to understand her origins was very salient:

Kendi öz evlatları olsa bana öyle bakamazlardı. Ama yine de ben diyorum, keşke ahırda büyüyeydim, kuru ekmekle büyüyeydim, ama ailemi bileydim kardeşlerimi bileydim.

I believe my adoptive family wouldn't have cared for me as much if I were their biological child. Despite this, I wish I had grown up knowing my biological family, even if it meant growing up in a barn or living off dry bread.

3.5.2. Fantasy of having siblings

The fantasy of having siblings explores the adoptees' desire for sibling relationships that provide companionship, solidarity, and shared identity. This subtheme reflects the desire to navigate life's milestones and challenges with the support of siblings, to share in the unique bond that comes from growing up together, and to experience the companionship and connection that can only come from having brothers or sisters. While all participants expressed considerable discomfort at the thought of having a biological sibling in reality, almost all mentioned having siblings in their ideal family fantasies. Participant 4 revealed that she had always fantasized about having an older sister to confide in, as she had grown up as an only child and often found it difficult:

Yani ablam olsaydı diyorum. Anneme anlatamıyordum dertlerimi ama ablama anlatırdım. Yani sadece tek çocuk olarak yetiştiğim için onun zorluğunu birçok yerde yaşamıştım, yani tek çocuk olmanın verdiği zorluğu. Avantajları da oluyo illa ki ama benim için zorlukları da olmuştu. O açıdan hep böyle hani dertleşebileceğim bir ablam olsun çok isterdim. Çevremde çok vardı, arkadaşlarımın hep ya ablası ya kız kardeşi vardı. Onların bağını çok isterdim ben, o şeyi yaşayabilmeyi. O yüzden hep hayalini kurardım.

Having an older sister would have been fantastic. I couldn't discuss my problems with my mother, but I could have shared them with a sister. I

experienced the hardship of being an only child in many aspects. While there are certainly advantages to being an only child, I also faced many difficulties. So, I always yearned for an older sister to confide in. Many of my friends had older sisters, and I constantly desired to experience that kind of bond. Consequently, I often found myself dreaming about it.

Participant 5 said that she had always felt the absence of siblings. Participant 5 believed that she could never find her biological family, thus the fantasy of having siblings appeared to be even more important in establishing a link with her roots. She stated:

Ay kardeşlerim olsaydı ne kadar iyi olurdu. Ben hala onların eksikliğini hissediyorum biliyor musunuz? Hiç değilse bir ailem olur diye düşünüyorum. Varlar gibi geliyor. İşte ben onlara çok üzülüyorum biliyor musunuz? En çok üzüldüğüm şey o. Belki benden bir iki yaş büyüktürler itiraz edemediler verilmeme.

It would be wonderful if I had siblings. I still feel their absence, you know? I think that, at least then, I would have a family. I feel like they exist somewhere. Perhaps they were a year or two older than me and could not protest to my adoption.

Participant 1 strongly desired an adoptive sibling after learning about her own adoption story. For her, having a sibling presented a chance to revisit the story of her entry into the family:

Bir kardeşim olmasını çok istiyordum. Biz tekrar bi çocuk sahibi olabilmek için kuruma başvurduk. Asıl o zaman annemle babamın benim için hangi yollardan geçtiğini tecrübe etme şansım oldu. Çünkü neredeyse hepsine şahit oluyordum. Benim için aslında bi yandan da çok güzel bi tecrübeydi de diyebilirim. Çünkü benim de aynı şekilde hayatımıza dahil olmuştum.

I fervently wanted a sibling. We made a second application to the institution for child adoption. That was when I had the opportunity to experience what my parents had undergone for me. I witnessed nearly everything. It was a very enriching experience for me, as I was a part of our family in the same way.

However, Participant 1 admitted that she found it very challenging to discuss the shared experience of adoption with her brother:

Bence ilginç olarak şöyle bir olay oluyor. İşte çıkıp instagramda, konferansta, bi zoom toplantısında hiç tanımadığım insanlara anlatabildiğim bu evlat edinilme konusunu söz konusu kardeşim olduğunda konuşamıyorum. Kilitleniyorum. Kendi içimden onun en çok senden destek almaya ihtiyacı var desem de sürekli böyle konuşmak için dilimin ucuna geliyor bu cümleler. Ama hiçbir zaman ağzımdan çıkmıyor. Söz konusu o olduğunda kilitleniyorum.

Interestingly, I can talk openly about adoption with strangers at work, on Instagram, at conferences, or in Zoom meetings, but I can't talk about it when it comes to my brother. I shut down. Even though I keep reminding myself that he is the one who needs my support the most, I find it difficult to voice those feelings. The words are always on my tongue, but they never come out. I freeze up when it's about him.

3.5.3. Fantasy of adopting a child

The fantasy of adopting a child represents adoptees' aspirations to expand their family through adoption, mirroring the journey their adoptive parents took. This subordinate theme represents a full circle moment where adoptees empathize with the act of adoption and wish to provide a child with what they believe was ideal in their upbringing or what they felt was missing, thus creating their version of an ideal family narrative. Participant 1 discussed her desire to adopt a child and her vision of a family where she would raise both her biological and adopted child together:

Hem evlat edinmiş olmayı hem de kendi çocuğumun olmasını çok istiyorum. Eğer başarabilirsem ikisini aynı anda büyütmeyi çok istiyorum. 2 çocuğu da eşit sevebileceğimi biliyorum. Hem de bence durumu olan herkes çocuk sahibi olmalı çünkü orda bir sürü çocuğumuz var bize ihtiyacı olan. Bir çocuğun daha hayatını neden kurtarmıyım gibi düşünüyorum.

I genuinely wish to adopt a child and also have one of my own biologically. If possible, I'd like to raise both simultaneously. I am confident in my ability to love them both equally. Furthermore, I believe anyone with the means should consider adopting a child because many children are in need. The question that resonates with me is: Why not improve another child's life if one can do so?

Participant 2 stated that she also had a dream to adopt a child. The only reason she did not do so was because she felt it would be unfair to put her biological children ahead of her adopted child:

Çok ciddi ve çok da güzel bir şey (evlat edinmek). Yani mesela benim kendi hayatımda da düşündüğüm bir şey. Şu anda aslında ben mesela böyle şeye kalkışsam evlat edindiğim çocuğu daha çok kayırıyorum büyük bi ihtimalle kendi çocuklarımdan. Şu anda bunu yapmıyorsam eğer tek bir sebebi var, kendi çocuklarımdan daha ön planda tutacak olmam, kendi çocuklarıma haksızlık yapacak olmam. Çok da istediğim bir şey bu. Mesela hani birinin hayatına dokunabilmek... Hani biliyorum çünkü yurtlarda yaşayan çocukları bir süre sonra devlet sahiplenmeyi bırakıyor. Hayatlarında üç beş sene böyle boş duruma düştükleri ve başlarına kötü şeyler geldikleri dönemler var. Dolayısıyla istiyorum birinin hayatına dokunmak ama şöyle bir durum var hani şu anda ben daha çok seveceğimi düşünüyorum kendi çocuklarımdan.

It's a profoundly serious yet beautiful matter. For instance, it's something I contemplate in my own life. If I adopt a child now, I'd probably favor them over my children. If I'm not pursuing adoption now, there's only one reason: I'd likely prefer my adopted child more than my biological one, resulting in unfairness. This desire to adopt is strong in me. For example, being able to touch someone's life... I know that after a while, the state stops caring for children in dormitories. There are periods in their lives, perhaps three or five years when they're left adrift, and they often encounter adversity. So, I yearn to impact someone's life, but if such a situation arises, I believe I would love them more than my children.

The superordinate theme of ideal family fantasies reflects adoptees' longing for an idealized family experience. It captures their aspirations to rewrite their family narratives with adoptive parents who fulfill their unmet needs for nurturance and commitment, siblings who provide a sense of belonging and shared identity, and the altruistic expansion of their families through the adoption of a child. These fantasies underscore a deep need for emotional fulfillment and a desire to recreate a family dynamic that will fill the gaps left by their adoption histories and provide a sense of wholeness and completion within their family units.

3.6. Connection Fantasies

Connection fantasies encapsulate adoptees' deep longing for belonging and recognition within their family circles. This superordinate theme highlights the complex psychological and emotional worlds of adoptees, in which the desire for acceptance and family integration is central. The fantasies expressed by participants serve as a poignant reflection of their need to bridge the gap left by adoption, seeking solace in imagined closeness with both adoptive and biological kin. Connection fantasies include kinship fantasies, resemblance fantasies, and fantasies of being in crowd. These fantasies were thought to be related to their drive to seek connections and similarities with others, especially those they consider their kin, and to help alleviate adoptees' feelings of otherness or disconnection.

3.6.1. Kinship fantasy

The kinship fantasy represents the participants' yearning to solidify their place within the adoptive family structure by being biologically related to their adoptive families; to rewrite their narratives as biological members. These fantasies often reveal a desire to erase the distinction of being "adopted" and to fully immerse oneself in the identity

of being a “natural” family member. They reflect the complexity of adoptee identity and the deep-seated need for an unquestioned sense of belonging.

It was revealed that the participants had conscious and unconscious fantasies about establishing kinship ties with their adoptive families, siblings, distant relatives, or in-laws. Participant 4 and Participant 2 stated that they wanted to be the biological daughters of their adoptive families. Participant 4 said that although she never wanted to be adopted, if she had to choose, she would rather be the biological child of her adoptive family than her biological family:

Yani kesinlikle tabii ki istemezdim evlat edinilmiş olmayı. Şu an iyi ki annemle babamla, bu ailede yetişmişim diyorum. İyi ki orada (biyolojik ailemle) kalmamışım diyorum, onları tanıdıktan sonra ya da olayları öğrendikten sonra. Şu anki yetiştiğim ailenin kızı olarak doğmayı yani onların biyolojik olarak da kızları olmayı isterdim.

Indeed, I wouldn't have wished to be adopted. I'm grateful that my parents raised me in the family where I grew up with. After meeting my biological family and discovering what transpired, I'm glad I didn't stay with them. I would have preferred to be the biological daughter of the family that raised me.

Participant 2 thought that her adoptive mother would have loved her more if she had been her biological child:

Yani aslında şu anda da baktığımda (evlat edinen) annemi de anlayabiliyorum. Yani yabancı bir çocuk... Bunlar kolay katlanılabilir şey değil. Yani kendi çocuğu değilim sonuçta. Hani belki kendi çocuğu olsam böyle davranmazdı. Bilemiyorum ki. Belki daha çok sarılıp öperdi, belki daha hani benimserdi.

Reflecting on it now, I can understand my adoptive mother's perspective. I was a child from outside her biological lineage. These are not easy circumstances to navigate. I mean, I was not her biological child. Perhaps if I were, she would have behaved differently. I can't say for sure. Maybe she would have hugged and kissed me more; maybe she would have shown me more affection.

Participant 2's kinship fantasies were very diverse. She believed that she could be the child of a relative, especially one of her mother's siblings. Participant 2 also mentioned that she wished to be like her mother-in-law's daughter and that she and her husband used to joke about discovering that they were each other's siblings:

Eşimin memleketine ait hissediyorum kendimi. Böyle köklerim hep eşime dayanıyormuş gibi geliyor. Başka bir yere ait olduğumu düşünemiyorum. Düğünde de eşimle böyle şaka yapıyorduk tabii alkolün de etkisiyle. Birisi

kapıdan içeri girip durun siz kardeşsiniz derse naparız diye gülüşüyorduk. Eşim, öyle bir şey olsa annem bilirdi herhalde diyodu.

I feel as though I belong in my husband's hometown. It seems like my roots always trace back to my husband. I can't imagine belonging anywhere else. At our wedding, my husband and I were joking around, slightly influenced by alcohol. We laughed about what to do if someone burst through the door and exclaimed, 'Stop, you two are siblings!' My husband said his mother would probably be aware if such a circumstance were true.

Participant 1's relationship with her adoptive sibling was like a mother-child relationship. She decided the gender of her adoptive sibling and gave him a name.

Participant 1 was able to realize her kinship fantasies through her adoptive brother:

Erkek istediğimi de söylüyorum. Yani bi kızımız var, bir de oğlumuz olsun gibi. Evet, evet, çok çok mutluydum. Hatta annem hep şey der sanki annesi gibi davranıyordun ve bunu çok sık söyler. Böyle bi yere gideceğimizde çantasını bile benden önce sen hazırlıyordun diyor annem. Niye bu kadar annesi gibi davrandım, niye bu kadar ilgilendim bilmiyorum?

I said I wanted a boy. I mean, we have a girl, and we need a boy. Yes, I was very, very happy. My mother often remarks that I behave like his mother, and she says this frequently. She recalls instances when we were about to go somewhere, and I would prepare his bag before she did. I'm not sure why I acted so much like his mother or why I showed such an intense level of interest.

Participant 3 went through a period of depression after learning that she and her sister were adopted. She married her sister's biological brother at the end of this process. In some ways, this marriage can be seen as an attempt by the unattached participant to come to terms with this loss. The emotional turmoil of learning about her adoption may have led her to seek a reconnection with her roots, culminating in her marriage to her sister's biological brother. This decision may symbolically represent her attempt to reestablish a sense of attachment, perhaps to fill the void created when the discovery of her adoption weakened her ties to her adoptive family. The instinctual need for attachment is often heightened when one's basic family ties are challenged or disrupted. In addition, Participant 3 recounted a dream in which she saw her biological father as her oldest son:

Bir gün rüyamda bir baba gördüm. O babaya kapıyı açıyorum, içeri girecek. Gel içeri baba diyorum. Bir bakıyorum ki benim büyük oğlum. Aynı. Sadece bıyıklı ve saçları daha uzun. Öyle birini görmüştüm rüyamda. Şu an hani gözümde canlandırdığım baba deyince o gözüme geliyor.

For example, one day, I had a dream. I saw a man who appeared to be a father figure. I opened the door for this man, inviting him in, saying, ‘Come in, father.’ Looking at him, I realized he resembled my eldest son, except this man had a mustache and longer hair. I’ve seen someone similar before, so when I visualize a father figure now, this man from my dream comes to mind.

This dream can be interpreted as a kinship fantasy because, although she has never met her biological father, the dream constructs a tangible link to him. It serves as a psychological bridge between her known reality and the unknown aspects of her origins. The fatherly figure in her dream is instinctively linked to her child, emphasizing the inherent need for continuity and connection across generations. The appearance of this man in her dream is significant; it suggests a profound desire not only to visualize but to emotionally understand and connect with the biological father she has never seen.

3.6.2. Resemblance fantasy

In the resemblance fantasy, participants express a deep need to identify physical or behavioral traits that align them with their adoptive or biological families. These fantasies can be crucial to constructing a cohesive identity, providing comfort in visual or character traits that suggest a genetic connection. This theme underscores the importance of resemblance as a validating force that affirms adoptees’ place within their family lineage.

In the interviews, the participants emphasized their physical differences from the families that raised them. Particularly, they noted differences such as height, skin color, and hair color, which had caught their attention since childhood. In their fantasies about their biological families, they often depicted them as attractive people who resemble themselves. For instance, Participant 2 stated:

Bilmem ben hep anneme benzerim gibi hissettim. Merak ettim yani nasıl bi kadındı acaba. Herkes böyle annesini çok güzel anlatır ya hani. Benim annem şöyle güzeldi, böyle güzeldi. Herkesin annesi güzeldir. Herkesin annesi gençken çok güzeldir. Mesela ben de annemi çok merak ederdim. Ona benzediğimi düşünürdüm.

I don’t know; I’ve always believed I resembled my biological mother. I’ve often wondered about her characteristics. You know, how everyone talks so highly about their mother’s beauty? ‘My mother was so beautiful, so very beautiful.’ Every mother is beautiful to their child, especially during their

younger years. For instance, I was intrigued by my biological mother, thinking I looked like her.

Participant 3 believed that she not only physically resembled her biological mother but also shared certain personality traits with her:

İşte (biyolojik) annem de benim gibi güzeldir, uzundur. Benim annem kısa, yaşlı. O (biyolojik anne) daha gençtir. ... İşte ben eskiden böyle herkesin her dediğine inanan bir tiptim. Şimdi o kadar değilim. Onların da öyle olduğunu düşünüyorum. Biyolojik annemin özellikle. Ondan sonra, mesela onun da dürüst olduğunu düşünüyorum.

My (adoptive) mother is short and old. In contrast, I imagine my biological mother to be beautiful and tall, much like myself. I believe she must be younger, too. There was a time when I was the kind of person who would believe anything anyone said, but I've changed. I now perceive my biological parents, especially my birth mother, to be similar. I presume she is honest, much like myself now.

Participant 5's resemblance fantasies revolved around having a twin sister. She recounted rumours about potentially having a twin:

Mesela ikizim varmış. Birisi de ikizin var dedi bana bir komşumuz. Siz ikiz bebeklermişsiniz dedi, sütçü getirmiş sizi dedi. Bazen diyorlar bana mesela, şu fırından sen biraz önce şey aldın, niye geldin yine diyorlar. Allah allah diyorum ben hiç gitmedim o fırına. Dürümcüye gidiyorum sen biraz önce 5 tane dürüm aldın niye geldin yine. Allah allah diyorum ben hiç gelmedim ilk defa geliyorum. Ha bir benzerim de var bence, ama kim onu da bulamıyorum. O kadar benziyor demek. Ama kim?

For example, a neighbor told me I had a twin, and someone else told me the same thing. She said we were twin babies brought by the milkman. Sometimes people tell me, 'You just bought something at this bakery; why are you back here again?' I respond, 'Oh my God, I've never been to that bakery.' At a wrap place, they ask, 'You just bought five wraps; why are you back here?' Again, I respond, 'Oh my God, I've never been here; this is the first time I've been here.' I think I have a double, but I can't figure out who it is. This person looks so much like me. But who is she?

Contrary to the other participants, Participant 1 appeared to be uncomfortable when discussing her biological family and held a fantasy of "not looking alike." She argued that the only inheritable characteristics could be physical traits, and even those could potentially be diseases:

Fiziksel olmayan özelliklerin zaten bi kalıtımla aktarılmadığı düşünüyorum ... Fiziksel özelliklere geçtiğimizde de belki kalıtımsal bi rahatsızlık geçmiş

olabilir yani işte alerjik astım hastalığı işte insülin direncim var belki şeker hastası olabilir. Bunlar olmuş olabilir.

I believe that non-physical traits aren't necessarily inherited. As for physical characteristics, I might have inherited a genetic disease like allergic asthma. I have insulin resistance, which could potentially lead to diabetes. These are all possibilities.

When some participants became mothers, their resemblance fantasies seemed to become a reality. Participant 3 said that when she had her first child, it was the first time she saw someone who looked like her:

Benim çocuklarım oluncaya kadar, hiç benimle aynı kanı taşıyan hiç kimseye dokunmadım. Hiç kimseyi görmedim. Kimse bana benzemiyordu. Mesela hala çocuklarıma dokunduğum zaman böyle onları, içine sokarcasına hissediyorsun, o şekilde seviyorsun.

Until I had my children, I had never come into physical contact with anyone who shared my blood. I hadn't seen anyone who resembled me. But when I touch my children, I feel a deep connection—as if I put them inside myself, and my love for them stems from that bond.

Participant 4 shared that the birth of her first child gave her a sense of connection that she had never experienced before:

Kesinlikle hiçbir şeye ait hissedemiyorsunuz kendinizi. En özeli şu benim için: Ben anne olduğumda, ilk kızımı kucağıma aldığımda o duyguyu orada tattım. Ya benim kanımdan benim canımdan işte yani bana ait gerçek ailem. Yani gerçekten benim kanımdan birisi var. Hani akrabalık duygusu. O bağı ilk onda yaşadım, ilk kızımda yaşadım. Çünkü o zamana kadar hani kendi kanımdan kimse yok. Yani o duyguyu hiç hissedememiştim o zamana kadar.

I've never truly felt a sense of belonging, of being connected to something, until a particular moment. The most profound experience for me was when I became a mother. When I held my first daughter in my arms, I first tasted the feeling of kinship. That's my real family, my flesh and blood. The bond I experienced for the first time with her was unique because until then, there had been no one with whom I shared a blood connection. I had never felt that before.

3.6.3. Fantasy of being in a crowd

The subtheme fantasy of being in a crowd departs from the individual focus on kinship and similarity and instead offers participants a sense of anonymity and belonging within larger groups. Here, the fantasies involve being part of communal joys and family traditions that provide an inclusive sense of identity and connection. These

fantasies underscore adoptees' desire to experience unconditional acceptance and the warmth of collective celebrations and rituals. All participants mentioned that being amidst a crowd always brought them joy, particularly during holidays or traditional ceremonies. Most participants spoke about fantasies in which they were amidst a large extended family. These fantasies typically unfolded in a home garden, within a pleasant atmosphere, sharing a communal meal.

Participant 1 recounted that during her younger years, she would be hospitalized on every birthday. Each time she was discharged from the hospital, her family would celebrate her birthday with a large gathering. In this narrative, the participant alluded to an unconscious fantasy wherein she was welcomed by a big family instead of being left alone following her birth. Participant 1 associated her happiest memories with being surrounded by a large, caring family, especially during her birthdays, which were celebrated multiple times due to her hospitalizations for allergic asthma. This repetition of celebrations, welcomed by relatives and loved ones, seemed to counteract any feelings of solitude she might have felt due to her adoption and medical condition:

Yani en mutlu hissettiğim anılar dediğimde böyle kalabalık olduğum zamanlar aklıma geliyor. İlk doğum günümde köydeki akrabalarımız bile gelmişti eve. Hani tamam, şimdi birinci yaş doğum günleri çok moda ve çok şaşalı kutlanıyor ama eskiden o kadar moda değildi. Bütün yaş günlerim böyle üçer üçer falan kutlanırdı. Çünkü her sene doğum günümün olduğu gün Amerikan hastanesinde yatarım. Alerjik astım hastasıydım ve bi kere İstanbul'da hastane çıkışı, bi kere istanbul'daki akrabalarla, bi kere de memleketimize gelince tekrar böyle 3 kere 4 kere falan kutlanırdı. (gülüyor)

When I think about the memories that bring me the most joy, I'm reminded of when our house was filled with people. On my first birthday, our relatives, even those from the village, visited our house. You know, first birthdays are grandly celebrated these days, but that wasn't the trend in the past. My birthdays were always celebrated in multiple parts. Every year on my birthday, I would be in the American Hospital because I had allergic asthma. We used to celebrate my birthday three or four times: once in Istanbul after I got out of the hospital, once with relatives in Istanbul, and once in our hometown. (laughs)

Participant 6 revealed that her most profound fantasy was participating in large family gatherings. After establishing contact with her biological siblings, she felt a sense of exclusion, as though they had already realized this fantasy without her:

Valla benim işte en büyük düşümdü böyle yeşilliklerin (sesi çatallaşıyor) altında ailecek yenilen- yemekler. İçilen çaylar, yapılan sohbetler, atılan

kahkahalar. Ya da üzüldüğün zaman başını dayayacağın (ağlamaklı) eşinin omzundan başka bir omuz. Benim en büyük hayalim olan onların yaptıkları toplantılarda, akraba günlerinde, kardeş toplantılarında hiç olmadım ben. Çok büyük eksiklik o biliyor musunuz? Hani o kardeşler sofrası, kardeş toplantıları, aile. Çünkü mesela benim kızımı istemeye geldiklerinde dört kişi çıktık biz karşılına. Ben de isterdim benim yanımda benim canımdan birileri olsun çünkü damadımın ailesi, kardeşleri, onların eşleri, yeğenleri hep birlikte geldiler.

My most cherished dream was to have family meals under such lush greenery, with tea, conversations, and laughter. Alternatively, when I'm sad, to have a shoulder to lean on other than my husband's. I've always yearned to be part of their gatherings, the assemblies of relatives, of siblings. That's a significant void, you know? The meetings of siblings, of the family. For instance, when they came to ask for my daughter's hand in marriage, there were only four of us. I would have loved to have someone from my own family with me because my son-in-law's family, his siblings, their spouses, and their children all came together.

Participant 3 shared that, during her childhood, she often dreamt of being part of a large, bustling family. Currently, her fantasies are shaped by her children and their families:

Yani hep mesela çocuklarım büyüsün, evlensin. Ondan sonra güzel bahçeli içinde üç tane farklı ev olan ama bir bahçenin içinde olan birer evimiz olsun. Çocuklar aileleriyle bir evde yaşasın, biz bir evde yaşayalım ama hep beraber bir araya gelip, toplanıp yiyelim, içelim. Herkesin bahçenin farklı taraflarından giriş çıkışı olsun. Hani komşuculuk gibi.

I mean, when my children are grown up and married, I dream of having a property with a beautiful garden where three separate houses stand. Each family would live in their own house, but we would all share the same garden. We could all gather there to share meals and spend time together. Each house would have access from different sides of the garden. It's like a child's game of house.

The superordinate theme of connection fantasies reflects the participants' intrinsic desire for kinship, similarity, and communal participation that transcends biological ties. Within these fantasies, the participants navigate the complex emotions of adoption, expressing a desire to be indistinguishable from their adoptive families, to see themselves reflected in their relatives, and to be immersed in the larger familial and social collectives. These connection fantasies provide a psychological remedy for the sense of otherness often felt by adoptees and represent a powerful drive to form lasting emotional bonds and construct a coherent sense of self within the adoptee narrative.

3.7. Recontact Fantasies

Recontact fantasies refers to adoptees' complex web of emotions and scenarios that involve reconnection with their biological families. This theme encompasses a spectrum of outcomes from such reunions, ranging from resolving identity crises and affirming self-worth to sometimes navigating unexpected interpersonal conflicts. These fantasies represent the adoptees' multifaceted desires for resolution, acceptance, and a deeper understanding of their histories. Recontact fantasies included fantasy of being searched, revenge fantasy and fantasy of knowing medical history.

3.7.1. Fantasy of being searched

Participants shared fantasies of being tracked and searched by their biological family. These fantasies are thought to reflect a deep-seated desire to feel wanted, remembered, or significant to their biological parents. These fantasies might involve scenarios where the biological parents or siblings are making efforts to find them or are keeping an eye on their lives from afar.

Participant 1 imagined that her biological mother was watching her as a way of making sense of the traumatic reality of her abandonment in the schoolyard:

Hani böyle bi dizi film sahnelerinde olur ya kadın çocuğunu bırakır uzaktan izler, sonra biri aldıktan sonra da gider. Nedense hep böyle uzaktan beni izlemiştir gibi geliyor. Böyle bir his geliyor bazen. Hani bırakmıştır ama işte bana bir şey olmasına izin vermemiştir. Uzaktan izlemiştir. Çünkü çok fazla ihtimal var işte köpek parçalayabilir, bi sürü şey sayabiliriz. O yüzden böyle çok emin değilim ama işte izlediğini hissediyorum.

You know how in a TV show or movie, a woman leaves her child and watches from a distance, and then someone picks the child up and departs? I always felt like she was watching me from a distance. Sometimes, I felt she left me, but I ensured nothing happened to me. Considering the many possibilities, like a dog attacking me, I feel like she must have been watching. I'm not entirely sure, but that's the feeling I get.

Participant 2 mentioned that since she first learned about her adoption, she had constructed scenarios in which her biological family would contact her one day:

Beni arayacaklar, bulacaklar öyle bi beklentim vardı ilk zamanlarda ... işte on sekiz yaşına girince beni arayacaklar çünkü o zaman ben reşit oluyorum, beni bulabilecekler alabilecekler. Ondan önce annemden babamdan alamazlardı

zaten. Ya da ben evlenince beni arayacaklar, ya da ne biliyim hani bi şekilde bi gün arayacaklar diye düşünüyorum.

Initially, I had this expectation that they would look for me. I thought they would find me when I turned eighteen, as I would be of age, and they could legally reconnect with me. I also thought they might look for me when I got married. Somehow, I always believed they would look for me one day.

Participant 4 shared that, throughout her childhood, she often fantasized about her deceased adoptive father returning to her life. Even though she was aware that the deceased did not return, she created scenarios akin to those often seen in movies. In these fantasies, she imagined that her father had not died but had merely lost his memory and wandered away. In her daydreams, he would miraculously reappear at family gatherings like weddings. She would embrace him in these moments, and all would witness their reunion. As she matured, however, she had to confront the harsh reality that this dream was implausible - the dead cannot return. After learning about her adoption, she often fantasized that her biological father would reach out to her and that he would appear before her one day.

Participant 5 also narrated a mysterious tale of being followed. At the end of the interview, this participant asked the researcher, "Will they be able to find me after this paper is published?". Like her question to the researcher, the participant's mysterious story, told with joy, seemed to include her hope of being sought and found by her biological family.

O zaman taşındık, ama niye yaptık bilmiyorum. Çocuktum işte hatırlamıyorum. Herhalde beni aramaya mı geldiler, bilmiyorum ki. Hatta ben büyüyünce karşımızdaki bakkala sordum, o bakkal çok eski bir bakkaldı. Dedim ki beni hiç arayan oldu mu gelen oldu mu diye o da bana anlattı: Bir kadın geldi dedi. Çok güzel bir kadındı, uzun boylu çok hoş bir kadındı dedi. Şuradaki evde kız çocuğu var mı diye sorup sizin evi gösterdi. Ben de hee dedim. Çöktü çuvalların dibine fenalaştı kadın, dedi. Su istedi benden dedi ben suyu almaya gittim geldim kadın yok dedi. Herhalde beni istedi, beni aramaya geldiler bilmiyorum ki.

We suddenly moved our home without any apparent reason, at least none that I could understand as a little child. Could they have been looking for me? I do not know. As I grew older, I asked the elderly grocer across the street if anyone had come looking for me. He told me about a very beautiful woman who asked if a little girl lived in our house. This woman suddenly fell ill and asked for water. But when the elderly grocer went to fetch it, this woman had vanished. I believe that she was asking about me.

Participant 6 described her recurring dreams of her biological mother locating her and coming to fetch her:

Hep bana ben senin annenim diyordu, çok güzel bi kadındı ama uzun saçları vardı böyle buralarına kadar. Ondan sonra ben ona sarılıyordum, ondan sonra ama diyorum ben annemi çok seviyorum. Biz seni almaya geldik diyorlardı. Nolursunuz giderken annemle babamı da alalım yanımıza diyordum. Benim en güzel rüyalarım buydu biliyor musunuz?

I often dreamed of a charming woman who claimed to be my biological mother. In my dreams, she would tell me she was there to take me with her. I remember asking her to take my adoptive parents along as well.

3.7.2. Revenge fantasy

The revenge fantasy captures the complex interplay of anger, hurt, and need for revenge that some adoptees feel toward their biological parents. It stems from the pain of abandonment and the myriad unresolved emotions associated with their adoption experience. These fantasies provide a psychological space in which adoptees can confront their birth parents, allowing them to voice their pain and seek answers or even an apology for their perceived rejection. The participants fantasized about a day when they would recontact with their biological parents. In these fantasies, they would express intense anger, demanding an explanation for their abandonment. All participants envisioned scenarios in which they express their resentment towards their biological parents upon confrontation. Participant 1 stated that if she ever faced her biological family one day, she would not believe it without proof, and she would never want to meet them:

Bi kere ispat olmadan inanmam. Bunun ciddi bir ispatı olmadan inanmam. İkincisi beni ilgilendirmiyor. Büyük ihtimal onlarla görüşmek istemem. Hayatımın bu kısmına kadar hiç ortada yoklardı, şimdiden sonra da olmasınlar diye düşünürüm. Ne gerek var derim. Gerçekten hiç görüşmek istemem, dahası belki öfkeli olabilirim. Hani bırakmıştın, şimdi de niye geliyorsun diyebilirim ama iki türlü de iki ihtimalle evet görüşmek istemem yani hani bi bağ kurmak istemem.

First of all, I will not believe without proof. I would not believe it without serious evidence. Secondly, it is not my business. I probably wouldn't want to meet them. They have been absent from my life so far, and they should be absent from now on. I don't see the point. I really don't want to see them at all; I might get angry. You know, you went away, I can say why you are coming now, but anyway, yes, I don't want to see them, you know, I don't want to make a connection.

Both Participant 2 and Participant 3 had high expectations of being found by their biological families. These expectations influenced their fantasies of revenge toward their biological families. Despite stating they would express significant anger and hold them accountable; they also saw themselves as maintaining belief in their biological families. For example, Participant 2 stated:

Biyolojik aileme de çok kızardım. Hani beni anlamayan biriyle niye bırakıyorsunuz, nasıl terk edip gidersiniz ya da niye nasıl aramazsınız, nasıl peşime düşmezsiniz? Ve hep şey düşünürdüm karşılaştığımızda heralde hesap sorarım hani. Ya hesap sorarım diyorum ama dediğim gibi onlar da bana kesin çok geçerli bi sebep söylerler.

I would be very angry with my biological family. You know, I'd ask them why they left me with someone who couldn't understand me, why they never contacted me, and why they didn't keep track of me. If we ever met, I would demand an explanation. I say I would demand it, but as I said, they would definitely give me a very good reason.

Similarly, Participant 3 stated that she would demand an explanation from her biological family if they reached out to her:

Ben (biyolojik) babanın hiçbir şey hissetmediğini düşünüyorum. Annenin de vicdan azabı çektiğini düşünüyorum. Eğer karşılaşırsak ben herhalde bir ağlama krizi geçirirdim. Sınırlarım mutlaka bozulurdu yani. Vallaha onlar da ağlardı. Suçlu olan taraf onlar olduğu için çok ağlardı. (gülüyor). Hani böyle bana yaranılmaya çalışılmasını hiç sevmem. Öyle bir şey olursa iyice böyle sınırlarım zıplardı benim. Dürüst olunmasını isterim. Sonra da sorardım, ne oldu, nasıl karar verdiniz böyle bir şeyi yapmaya. Hani dünyanın en en en en en zor şeyi. Hele ki benim gibi birisi için imkansız bir şey çocuğunu vermek. Yani inanılmaz bir şey. Millet köpeğinin yavrusunu veremiyor, sen nasıl çocuğu veriyorsun? derdim. Hani mutlaka bir geçerli sebebi vardır, bilmem nesi vardır ama, yine de dehşet içinde kalırdım yani.

I don't think my biological father feels anything, whereas I believe my biological mother harbors some remorse. If we were to meet, I would probably break down crying. My biological family might cry too. I presume they would be particularly emotional, given that they are the ones at fault. I admit; I don't appreciate it when people try to curry favor with me. If that were to happen, I would become extremely angry. Honesty is what I value. I would then ask them, what happened? How did you decide to give me away? In my opinion, that's one of the most challenging decisions anyone could make. As a parent myself, I can't even fathom the thought of giving away my child. It's an unbelievable concept to me. I mean, people find it difficult to give away their pet's puppies; how then can they give away their own child? I'm sure there must have been a good reason, though I don't know what it could be. Regardless, the mere thought horrifies me.

Participant 4 envisioned her biological family as people who had never had children other than her. She mentioned that she would confront them with this reality if she ever met them:

Bir de şunu hayal ederdim. Biyolojik ailenin benden başka çocuğu olmadığını. Yani ben verilmişim ama benden sonra da bir daha hiç çocukları olmamış. Belki de kendimce cezalandırıyordum hayalimde. Hani “Beni verdin ama bak bir daha hiç çocuğun olmadı.” diyerek.

I often used to imagine that my biological parents had no other children aside from me. They had given me away, and in my mind, they never managed to have any more children. Perhaps, in my imagination, I was exacting a form of punishment on them. I would think, “You gave me away, and look, you could not have any more children.”

3.7.3. Fantasy of knowing medical history

The fantasy of knowing medical history involves adoptees’ imagined scenarios of obtaining critical medical histories from their biological families. This subtheme highlights the practical and emotional importance of understanding one’s genetic heritage, both for personal health and for the well-being of one’s offspring. These fantasies underscore adoptees’ need for a tangible connection to their biological roots, which can often feel like a missing piece in their identity puzzle.

Participant 1 and Participant 3 mentioned that every time they went to the doctor’s office, they were exasperated by whether there was any disease in their family history. They expressed a wish to learn this from their biological families. Participant 3 stated:

Hani her gittiğim doktor bana soruyor, ailende, genetiğinde var mı böyle bir şey diyor. Ben de ona aile geçmişini bilmiyorum diyorum, her seferinde. Mesela çok canım sıkılıyor yani buna. Her seferinde aynı soruların sorulması. Hani mesela o yüzden de (biyolojik ailemin) gelmelerini isterim, öğrenmek için.

You know, every time I go to the doctor, I’m asked about my family’s medical history, but I always have to respond that I don’t know. I find it frustrating to be asked the same questions repeatedly. That’s why I want them (my biological family) to come and tell me.

Participant 2 expressed a desire to know her genetic background from her biological family in order to safeguard her children. Participant 2, who was ignorant of her roots, directed her anger regarding this issue at those who were privy to her genetic background:

Bu genetik meselesi işte hani ne aktarıldı bana hani bunları bilmek öğrenmek isterdim çocuklarıma ne aktardığımı bilmek açısından. Kanseri geçmişim var mı mesela, ne durumda falan hani. Bunlar beni tedirgin ediyor. İnsanların karşısına geçip “ya kardeşim sen bütün genetik rahatsızlıklarını biliyorsun, ben bilmiyorum. Niye? Öğrenmek benim hakkım değil mi?” demek istiyorum.

This genetic issue also bothers me. I want to know what has been passed down to me and what I may have passed to my children. I want to stand up and ask people why they know their genetic history but I don't. After all, isn't it my right to know?

The superordinate theme of recontact fantasies encompasses a spectrum of emotional scenarios that adoptees construct around the possibility of reconnecting with their biological families. These fantasies, which range from being actively sought out by biological relatives to confronting them with accumulated resentments, underscore a deep longing for resolution and understanding. They reveal a complex interplay between the desire for acceptance, the right to know one's origins and the release of expressing long-held emotions. Whether it is the hope of filling in the blanks of medical history or the imagined dialogues of reconciliation or revenge, these recontact fantasies serve as a psychological venue for adoptees to rehearse potential outcomes and exert control over a narrative that began with their adoption.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

4.1. Overview

This chapter discussed the current study's findings within the broader context of adoption and fantasy literature. This research aimed to deepen the understanding of adult adoptees' fantasies, providing a contemporary contribution to a field where existing studies are notably dated and regionally scarce, particularly within Turkish literature. The research questions explored the nature of these adoption-related fantasies and their similarities, differences, and purposes. In doing so, it sought to uncover the psychological functions these fantasies serve and provide insight into their role in the inner lives of adoptees.

Utilizing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, seven superordinate themes were identified from the narratives of six adult adoptees through in-depth, semi-structured interviews. These superordinate themes were identified as Abandonment Fantasies, Threatening Fantasies, Loss Fantasies, Self-worth Repairing Fantasies, Ideal Family Fantasies, Connection Fantasies, and Recontact Fantasies. Each theme represented the complexity of the adoptee experience, reflecting a web of emotions and psychological responses.

These superordinate themes were synthesized and discussed in relation to the existing literature. The analysis not only echoed previous findings but also brought forth new psychological dimensions of adoption-related fantasies. Finally, the clinical and research implications of the study were outlined, acknowledging the study's limitations and suggesting future directions for research. In doing so, it was aimed to pave the way for more nuanced clinical approaches and to promote a more comprehensive understanding of adoption in research and practice.

4.2. Abandonment Fantasies

The abandonment fantasies articulated by the participants in this study underscored the profound and enduring psychological impact of the primal wound of abandonment on adoptees' well-being. These fantasies, deeply rooted in the foundational trauma associated with adoption and abandonment, recurrently depicted themes of danger, neglect, and pervasive vulnerability. As Verrier (1993) suggested, the act of separation from the biological mother and surrendering to strangers created a psychic trauma that could have far-reaching consequences, becoming an immutable part of an adoptee's self-identity (Hodges, 1990). The vivid and often distressing imagery presented in the participants' fantasies, such as being attacked by animals or thrown away as garbage, was evident in Participant 1's narrative. She described her abandonment fantasy as being filled with images of a baby being mauled by dogs or thrown into a garbage bag in a trash can. Other participants shared their experiences of neglect and poor conditions in foster care or their initial adoption situations. For example, Participant 1 recalled the overcrowded and dirty conditions of the child welfare institution she was placed in before her family adopted her. At the same time Participant 4 reflected on her neglected state when her adoptive family took her in, mentioning that she was a 3-month-old baby with lice infesting her head. These accounts reflected the tactile and sensory nature of trauma, aligning with Jackson's (2004) assertion that trauma transcended cognitive recollection and impacted all sensory modalities, ingraining itself in the adoptee's whole existential reality.

The concept of somatic fantasies, which involved powerful physical sensations and bodily memories linked to the trauma of abandonment, highlighted the pervasive nature of this experience. As Green et al. (2010) noted, traumatic memories were often encoded in sensations and images, remaining unprocessed and embedded in the psyche. This was evident in the participants' descriptions of feelings of cold, hunger, and being in neglected environments, which served as visceral reminders of their early experiences of abandonment. Similarly, Brodzinsky et al. (1984) stated that if children were informed of their adoptive status at an early age, they might lack the cognitive skills to comprehend the revelation fully, leading to alarming fears of abandonment. Their perspective provided a valuable developmental context for understanding the origins of these fantasies.

The role of the biological and adoptive mothers in these abandonment fantasies was particularly striking. The biological mother was often portrayed as malicious or neglectful and the adoptive mother was seen as incompetent or unable to provide adequate care. This splitting of parental figures, as described by Brinich (1980), was a common defense mechanism among adoptees, reflecting the complex and often conflicting feelings that they held towards their birth and adoptive parents. This dynamic illustrates the adoptees' struggle to reconcile their feelings of abandonment with the reality of their adoptive situations. They often fantasized about these parental figures in ways that validate their feelings of rejection or neglect, without having to confront the pain directly.

The impact of early trauma on the adoptees' sense of self and relationships could not be overstated. As Schore (2001) and Palacios and Brodzinsky (2010) suggested, early trauma could lead to difficulties in interpersonal relationships, stress management, and emotional regulation. The participants' accounts of neglect and the poor conditions in which they found themselves after abandonment underscored the profound impact of these early experiences on their psychological development. Lifton's (2009) concept of the *Ghost Kingdom* provided a powerful metaphor for the unresolved grief and loss that permeates the adoption triad. This realm was filled with the ghosts of the adoptee's past, including the birth parents, the possible self that was never realized, and the life that could have been. These ghosts haunted the adoptee, influencing their sense of identity and relationships. Furthermore, Gatti (2011) introduced the notion of *undigested ghosts of a traumatic memory* referring to the challenges adoptees faced in processing and integrating their early traumatic experiences. These undigested ghosts manifested as fragmented memories, unexplained fears, or a pervasive sense of unease. They could impact the adoptee's ability to form secure attachments and develop a coherent sense of self. The haunting presence of early traumas necessitated a therapeutic approach that acknowledged and addressed these profound psychological scars. Therapists had to create a safe space for adoptees to explore their experiences, validate their emotions, and construct a narrative that gave voice to their unique journey. By processing these early traumas and integrating them into their life story, adoptees could begin to heal and develop a more secure sense of self and healthier relationships.

In conclusion, the abandonment fantasies of adoptees served as powerful evidence of the enduring impact of the primal wound of abandonment on their psychological well-being. These fantasies, which were often characterized by themes of danger, neglect, and vulnerability, reflected the deeply rooted insecurities and emotional challenges adoptees faced as a result of their early experiences. The role of somatic fantasies, the splitting of parental figures, and the impact of early trauma on the adoptees' sense of self and relationships underscored the complex and multifaceted nature of the adoption experience. By acknowledging and addressing these profound psychological scars, therapists can help adoptees navigate their unique emotional landscape and work towards healing and integration.

4.3. Threatening Fantasies

The threatening fantasies articulated by the participants in this study provided a profound insight into the deep-seated fears and traumas associated with their adoption experiences. As Herman (2009) suggested, the trauma of abandonment could transform helplessness into hopelessness, resulting in a cognitive schema that the world is not a safe place. This sense of helplessness and vulnerability was vividly reflected in the participants' fantasies of being attacked or kidnapped, often by figures representing their adoptive or biological family members. For instance, Participant 3 described a dream in which she was attacked by her adoptive parents, who morphed into wolves, symbolizing the primal fear that her adoptive parents, who were supposed to be her haven, might also represent a psychological threat. Similarly, Participant 4 mentioned dreams of feeling threatened and guilty, with her biological parents appearing angry, reflecting her guilt and fear associated with her adoption and her biological parents. These fantasies, imbued with symbols of dread and unresolved trauma, were vivid representations of the intense fears and traumas intertwined with the participants' adoption narratives.

The recurring theme of being attacked in the participants' narratives revealed a deep psychological distress that mirrored the trauma of abandonment as a profound threat to the self's integrity. It was akin to an assault on the most fundamental aspects of their identity, suggesting a complex interplay between their experiences of adoption and their inner sense of self. Kohut's (1984) exploration of disintegration anxiety

illuminated these findings. According to Kohut's theory of self psychology, the self is a central organizing structure that develops through empathic interactions with primary caregivers. When these interactions were disrupted or inadequate, as in the case of abandonment, the self's cohesion and stability were threatened, leading to disintegration anxiety. Kohut stated that the fear of disintegration was not merely an existential threat but an attack on one's core—where the individual faced the terror of a complete disintegration of the self. In other words, disintegration anxiety was the fear of losing one's sense of self, of falling apart, or of being engulfed by overwhelming emotions. It was a primal fear that could be triggered by experiences of loss, rejection, or abandonment, such as those faced by adoptees. In the adoption context, the trauma of abandonment may resonate on a psychic level akin to an internalized assault, one that was repeatedly experienced and revisited in the psyche of the adopted individual.

The themes of anger and resentment were prominent in participants' fantasies of being attacked. For example, Participant 4 shared dreams in which her biological parents had appeared angry and full of rage towards her, leaving her feeling guilty and confused. Similarly, Participant 6 experienced a traumatic event that could be seen as a literal manifestation of her annihilation fantasy when she had a miscarriage after an unexpected and stressful encounter with her biological mother. These observations were consistent with D'amato's (2008) analysis and suggested a possible link to the concept of narcissistic defenses, as introduced by Spitz (1976). Narcissistic defense mechanisms involve redirecting aggression toward oneself or an internal object to protect the external object from harm. In the case of adoption, participants might have been angry at their birth mother for abandoning them, but they might have redirected this anger towards themselves in the form of dreams involving threat directed at them, to protect their birth mother from their own hostile feelings. The threats encountered in dreams might have symbolized the dreamer's internalization of their own hostility. From the perspective of Spitz and Meadow (1976), adopted individuals might have had a heightened sense of helplessness, passivity, and predestined abandonment when confronted with threats in dreams, which could be seen as an internalization of their own aggression toward a birth mother. This interpretation aligned with the participants' experiences, as they often expressed feelings of helplessness and vulnerability in their threatening fantasies, which could be understood as a reflection

of their internalized anger and resentment towards their birth mothers for abandoning them.

The study also revealed that adoptees' "fantasy of being kidnapped" represented a struggle with self-worth and a reimagining of their adoption story. By fantasizing about their adoption as a kidnapping, adoptees might have tried to protect their intrinsic value and sense of self-worth. If they had been kidnapped rather than abandoned, it would suggest that they were wanted and desired by their adoptive parents, which may have helped to alleviate the pain of being abandoned by their birth parents. The findings of the present study also aligned with the notion that adoptees have fantasies of being kidnapped rather than adopted, in order to compensate for their feelings of low self-worth. Hodges (1990) claimed that fantasies of being a stolen baby, or adoptive parents unconsciously feeling that they had stolen a baby from its mother, were common for adopted people. In the present study, the participants also reported fantasies of being kidnapped, such as Participant 6's recurring childhood dream of a woman taking her away to dirty places, which could have symbolized her unconscious fantasy of being kidnapped by her biological mother or adoptive mother. This could have been seen as a coping mechanism to negate the painful reality of being given up. It transformed the "unwanted" child into one who was desired so intensely that a kidnapping occurs to claim them, a narrative also presented by Hodges (1990). This fantasy could symbolize a rewriting of the adoptee's story, suggesting a deep longing to be wanted and protected from the original trauma of abandonment.

Threatening fantasies reported by the participants were also consistent with the framework proposed by Herman (2009). Herman suggested that experiences of abandonment could crystallize into an enduring cognitive schema that portrayed the world as a place bereft of safety. Valli et al. (2007) also provided a pertinent perspective on this, noting that threats in dreams tended to emerge from memories of profound negative salience, essentially those considered the most threatening ever faced by an individual. In the case of adoptees, most threatening memories usually involved the experience of abandonment. The prevalence of threatening fantasies among the participants in this study underscored the profound and enduring impact of abandonment on adoptees' psychological well-being and their perception of the world as a dangerous and unpredictable place.

The disruption of biological ties in adoption could profoundly impact an individual's sense of bodily integrity and their capacity to trust (Landerholm, 2001). This disruption, coupled with the trauma of abandonment, created a fertile ground for fear, shame, and difficulty in understanding one's own bodily self. The threatening fantasies shared by the participants, such as being attacked by adoptive parents who morphed into wolves or being kidnapped and taken to dirty, dangerous places, underscored the pervasive sense of bodily vulnerability and the erosion of trust that could result from the adoption experience. These findings highlighted the importance of addressing bodily experiences and trust issues in therapeutic work with adoptees to facilitate healing and the development of a more secure sense of self.

In conclusion, the threatening fantasies shared by the participants in this study provided a striking window into the enduring impact of adoption-related trauma on the psyche. These fantasies, characterized by themes of vulnerability, helplessness, and the splitting of maternal representations, underscored the profound sense of insecurity and the erosion of trust that can result from the disruption of biological ties and the experience of abandonment. They also reflected the adoptees' struggle for mastery and control over their narrative, as they attempted to rewrite their adoption story and mitigate internalized feelings of rejection. By acknowledging and exploring these fantasies, therapists could help adoptees navigate the complex emotional landscape of adoption and work towards healing and integration.

4.4. Loss Fantasies

The superordinate theme of loss fantasies resonated profoundly with the existing literature, which emphasized that loss was the central issue faced by those involved in adoption (Roszia & Maxon, 2019). Adoptees experienced a multitude of losses – loss of their birth families, cultural connections, familiar surroundings, and even a sense of self. This adoption-related loss was described as a pervasive, socially unrecognized, and profound experience (Brodzinsky et al., 1993), encapsulated by Smit's (2002) assertion that “Without loss, there would be no adoption” (p. 144).

The primal loss inherent in adoption was the severing of the mother-child bond, a rupture that could distort the formation of the adoptee's intrapsychic object relations and interpersonal relationships (Brinich, 1995; Johnson & Whiffen, 2003; Verrier,

1993). Verrier's (1993) concept of the *primal wound* posited that this initial psychic injury stemming from separation might be re-experienced as a later representational loss, meaning that the early trauma of separation from the birth mother can manifest as a psychological loss later in life, when adoptees attained the cognitive maturity to process their relinquishment (Paperny, 2003). This conscious recognition of the loss challenged the adoptee's attachment security and could manifest in behaviors or fantasies to recover the lost birthparent (Bertocci & Schechter, 1990). The complexity of adoption-related loss was further compounded by the ambiguous nature of the loss itself (Doka, 1989, 2002). Unlike experiences of grief associated with death or divorce, the birth parents were often lost but not necessarily deceased, creating a sense of distress and confusion about individuals who were physically absent but psychologically present. This ambiguity could contribute to unresolved grief, attachment issues, and a fluctuating desire to reduce uncertainty or fear of finding answers (Powell & Afifi, 2005).

The subordinate theme of parental loss fantasy, wherein participants feared discussion of their adoption status with their adoptive parents due to the perceived risk of losing their love or causing their distress, aligned with the defense mechanisms proposed by Brodzinsky (1990). This avoidance of discussing adoption-related topics might have served as a protective barrier against re-experiencing the primordial pain of abandonment (Pivnick, 2013), echoing the profound impact of loss on the adoptee's psyche. For example, Participant 3 and Participant 4 both expressed their reluctance to discuss their adoption with their adoptive parents, fearing that it would upset them and potentially lead to their death. Stated differently, the participants did not want to talk about their adoption with their adoptive families in order to shield themselves from reexperiencing the pain of loss, not to protect their adoptive families as they stated. Thus, the parental loss fantasy could be understood as a defense mechanism used by adoptees to avoid confronting the painful reality of their abandonment and to maintain a sense of security in their relationships with their adoptive parents.

The child loss fantasy, where participants' fears and insecurities extended to concerns about the well-being of their offspring, found resonance in the concept of intergenerational transmission of attachment patterns (Feeney & Woodhouse, 2016). As suggested by the participants' narratives, such as Participant 3's constant worry

about her children's safety and Participant 2's fear of her child being kidnapped, the trauma of adoption might have reverberated across generations, influencing the adoptees' relationships with their children and their heightened protective instincts (Hesse & Main, 2006). This phenomenon aligned with the assertion that loss was a central, recurrent theme throughout an adoptee's lifespan, often resurfacing during significant life transitions, such as parenthood (Smit, 2002).

Indeed, parenthood itself could resurrect latent themes of loss and identity for adoptees (Trad, 1990; Brodzinsky et al., 1993). As Brodzinsky et al. (1993) posited, parenthood offered adoptees an opportunity to confront and potentially reconcile their complex histories with their present familial roles while providing a chance for further growth and development (Parens, 1975). This introspective process evoked fantasies and reflections (Trad, 1990) that might have complicated the adoptee's ability to successfully navigate developmental tasks (Brodzinsky et al., 1993).

In essence, the loss fantasies observed in this study illuminated the profound and pervasive impact of adoption-related loss on adoptees' emotional landscapes. These fantasies served as both a bond to their adoptive families and a barrier to exploring their origins, reflecting the complex negotiations required to maintain a delicate balance between competing desires for connection and self-discovery.

4.5. Self-worth Repairing Fantasies

The findings of the present study revealed that adoptees in this study employed two main types of fantasies to repair their sense of self-worth - the "chosen princess" fantasy and the "they had to leave me" fantasy. These fantasies allowed them to reframe their adoption narrative in a more positive light and cope with feelings of abandonment.

The "chosen princess" fantasy depicted the adoptees as specially selected and deeply cherished by their adoptive families. Although adoptive parents were often advised to tell their children that they were specially selected and cherished, Drensky (1997) criticized the "chosen child story." While meant to make the child feel wanted, Drensky argued that it reinforced an idealization of the adoptive parents as wholly good versus the birth parents as bad. It denied the reality that the child was relinquished

by their birth parents. As Brinich (1980) stated, despite being told the adoptive parents are now their “real” parents, children could never fully ignore their birth origins and the fact that they were abandoned.

The “they had to leave me” fantasy involved imagining that the birth parents had to give them up due to difficult circumstances like rape, poverty, or being too young; rather than not wanting them. This mirrored what Hodges (1990) termed fantasies that *mask the pain of abandonment* by replacing *she didn't want me* with reasons why the birth parent could not keep the child. Both fantasy types seemed to serve a defensive function to preserve the adoptees' self-esteem and sense of worth that could be threatened by feeling unwanted, as argued by Hodges (1984) and others (Brinich, 1995; Greenberg, 1997; Nickman, 1985). These fantasies allowed adoptees to reconcile abandonment by rewriting their adoption story as one of being chosen and desired rather than rejected. On the other hand, Drensky (1997) contended that an adoptee's core wish was to not have been adopted at all, contrasting with the idealized “chosen” narrative. She stated that some adoptees believed they were kidnapped from their birth parents, fearing being “stolen back,” which seemed to point to an underlying desire to have remained with the birth family.

In summary, the self-worth repairing fantasies illuminated by this study highlighted the psychological complexities and defenses adoptees might employ to process their adoption and maintain a positive self-concept in the face of abandonment. Recognizing these inner representations was important for understanding adoptees' experiences.

4.6. Ideal Family Fantasies

The findings of this study highlighted the complex and multifaceted nature of adoptees' ideal family fantasies. The three subordinate themes identified—fantasy of ideal parents, fantasy of having siblings, and fantasy of adopting a child—reflected the adoptees' aspirations to rewrite their family narratives and create a sense of wholeness and completion within their family units.

The fantasy of ideal parents aligned with the *family romance* concept developed by Sigmund Freud (1909). In this fantasy, children coped with ambivalent feelings and anger towards their parents by imagining their “real parents” were much better. For

adoptees, this fantasy is rooted in their adoption history, as they have a different set of biological parents (Brodzinsky et al., 1992). Some adoptees might have idealized their birth parents and have compared their adoptive parents to this fantasized ideal. In contrast, others might project negative qualities onto their birth parents to avoid expressing anger or disappointment towards their adoptive parents (Brodzinsky et al., 1992). This splitting of parental figures into “good” and “bad” could be a way for adoptees to cope with the pain of abandonment and the shock of adoption (Flemming, 2013).

As Siegel and Siegel (2001) noted, the adoptee’s need for an idealizable object was thwarted by the disruption in the idealizability of the adoptive parents. In other words, adopted children may struggle to idealize their adoptive parents due to the inherent complexities and challenges of the adoption process, such as the knowledge of being relinquished by their birth parents and the potential for unresolved grief and loss. Furthermore, Zuckerman and Buchsbaum (2000) elucidated that an intense pursuit of identity through the creation of idealized birth parents was a psychological coping strategy aimed at distinguishing oneself from adoptive parents. This mechanism of fantasy served as a profound counterbalance to the sometimes-unmet emotional needs experienced within adoptive family structures, and it was reflective of the narratives described by participants in this study.

The participants’ narratives in the present study echoed these theoretical perspectives. For example, Participant 3 revealed that she dreamed of a biological mother who would solve all her problems, as opposed to her adoptive mother, whom she felt was not sufficient for her needs. This fantasy of an idealized biological mother served as a coping mechanism to address the perceived shortcomings in her relationship with her adoptive mother. Similarly, Participant 6 described her biological mother, who came to her rescue in her childhood dreams, as calm and kind, in contrast to her adoptive mother, whom she described as aggressive and prone to shouting. This idealization of the biological mother can be seen as a way to distinguish herself from her adoptive mother and to find solace in an imagined, more nurturing maternal figure. Participant 1 also shared a fantasy of being with her biological family, who would accept her as she was, even when her adoptive parents criticized her for her weight. This fantasy of unconditional acceptance from her biological family served as a counterbalance to the

emotional needs that were unmet in her adoptive family. These examples illustrate how the participants' fantasies of idealized birth parents and families functioned as a means to cope with their unique emotional challenges and to differentiate themselves from their adoptive families, reflecting the theoretical frameworks discussed by Siegel and Siegel (2001) and Zuckerman and Buchsbaum (2000).

The work of Straughn (2022) and Affleck & Steed (2001) also touched upon this theme, with adoptees seeking a *fairy godmother* figure or a missing element that they hoped to find within their birth parents to complete their sense of self and identity. This yearning was echoed in the present study participants' desires for a family dynamic that embodied youth, energy, and a nurturing environment—qualities they might have found lacking in their adoptive relationships. For instance, Participant 1 fantasized about a younger mother who would have had the energy and willingness to engage in various activities with her during her childhood, comparing her adoptive mother to her friend's mother who could participate in activities for which her own mother no longer had the energy. Similarly, Participant 2 expressed frustration with her adoptive mother due to their age difference, which inhibited their ability to connect and understand one another. These examples highlight the participants' longing for a more dynamic, active, and emotionally attuned parental figure, which they hoped to find in their fantasies of their biological parents.

Another fantasy reported by the participants in the present study was the fantasy of having siblings. The fantasy of having siblings reflected adoptees' desire for companionship, solidarity, and shared identity. This finding was consistent with previous research suggesting that adoptees often found developing relationships with birth siblings more comfortable than with birth parents, as these connections were built on compatibility rather than loss (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1989; Sachdev, 1992). Finding the lost siblings has been emphasized in some studies, as these relationships may have been more meaningful and enduring than reunions with birth mothers (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1989; Sachdev, 1992; Pacheco & Eme, 1993). Similarly, the adoptees' fantasies of siblings, as also found in the present study, provided the desired companionship and a shared identity that might have alleviated the feelings of isolation and difference often felt by adoptees.

The fantasy of adopting a child represented adoptees' aspirations to expand their families through adoption, mirroring their own adoption journey. This fantasy allowed adoptees to empathize with the act of adoption and provide a child with what they believed was ideal in their upbringing or what they felt was missing. The concept of *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986) can be applied to adoptees' ideation of parenthood. A possible self is a manifestation of a self-concept that includes current self-characteristics and future ideas about oneself, developed based on one's history and future ambitions. Adoptees' possible parenthood selves may have begun to develop as early as childhood and continue through adolescence and adulthood. The participants' fantasies of having an adopted child might have been shaped by their unique experiences and the emotional challenges they faced.

On the other hand, as McGinn (2007) noted, adopting a child was often not part of the fantasies or expectations of young adults embarking on marriage and parenthood. Young adults, including adoptees, who desire to have children might usually prefer to have their biological children. Thus, adoptees might have experienced a sense of loss and mourning when they could not conceive biological children as expected, and the decision to adopt could be both somber and celebratory.

In conclusion, the ideal family fantasies of adoptees reflected their underlying emotional needs and desires for a sense of belonging, acceptance, and wholeness within their family units. These fantasies served as a psychological coping mechanism, allowing adoptees to navigate the complexities of their adoption experiences and reconcile their feelings of ambivalence, loss, and identity. Understanding these fantasies could provide valuable insights into the emotional landscape of adoptees and inform support strategies to help them navigate their adoption journey and parenthood ideation.

4.7. Connection Fantasies

The Connection Fantasies, which encompass kinship fantasies, resemblance fantasies, and fantasies of being in a crowd, reflected the innate human desire for belonging and recognition within one's family, magnified in the adoptees' experiences due to their unique circumstances. These fantasies were emotional fulcrums, balancing their reality with an inherent longing for biological and adoptive kin connectedness.

The emergence of kinship fantasies, where adoptees desired to be biologically related to their adoptive families, aligned with sociocultural norms that privileged biological ties over adoptive relationships (Müller & Perry, 2001; as cited in Sammis, 2023). As Müller and Perry cautioned, these norms could undermine adoption and exacerbate adoptees' feelings of being different from their adoptive families, fueling their desire to connect with birth relations. This resonated with the comments from adoptees in the present study, expressing a "longing" for biological roots despite positive adoptive family bonds. For example, Participant 4 stated that she would have preferred to be the biological daughter of her adoptive family, while Participant 2 believed that her adoptive mother would have loved her more if she had been her biological child. Such fantasies underscored the complexity of adoptee identity and the intrinsic yearning for a definitive place within the family tapestry. This was evident in Participant 4's preference to be a biological member of the adoptive family and Participant 2's belief that she would have been more cherished if she were biologically related, reflecting the internal conflict adoptees often faced regarding their place in the adoptive family.

The resemblance fantasies, which involved adoptees' desires to identify physical or behavioral traits that align them with their adoptive or biological families, were observed in the findings and were consistent with existing literature on adoptees' concerns about physical dissimilarities from their adoptive families (Vaccaro, 2012; Brodzinsky et al., 1993) and the substantial body of research asserting that adoptees with physical or ethnic differences from their adoptive parents often experience more pronounced identity concerns. As Brodzinsky's adoption search theory posited, body image problems and feeling isolated due to a lack of physical resemblance to the adoptive family could be a focal point for many adoptees (cited in Vaccaro, 2012). The findings that adoptees of different ethnic backgrounds were more likely to search for birth parents aligned with this theory and previous research (Aumend & Barrett, 1984; cited in Sammis, 2023).

In the present study, participants frequently emphasized their physical differences from their adoptive families, such as height, skin color, and hair color, which had caught their attention since childhood. In their fantasies about their biological families, they often depicted them as attractive people who resemble themselves. For instance, Participant 2 stated that she had always believed she resembled her biological mother

and was curious about her characteristics. The resemblance fantasies in the present study might have served as a coping mechanism to validate adoptees' place within their adoptive family lineage. The intense curiosity about birth parents' appearance and personality traits, as reported by Participant 3, was evidence of the adoptee's search for a tangible connection, a validation of self through likeness. Furthermore, Rosenberg (1992) highlighted how the lack of resemblance could impact the quality of attachment between adoptive parents and children, reinforcing the importance of perceived similarities in forming secure attachments. In addition to seeking physical similarities, adoptees might also have sought behavioral and temperamental alignments that validated their integration into the adoptive family, as postulated by Benson et al. (1994).

"The fantasy of being in a crowd" theme in the present study revealed that participants found joy in being amidst a crowd, particularly during holidays or traditional ceremonies. Most participants spoke about fantasies in which they were amidst a large extended family, typically unfolding in a home garden, within a pleasant atmosphere, sharing a communal meal. This theme aligned with research suggesting that adoptees had profound motivations for searching and discovering their unique history and making sense of their past (Pugh, 1999, as cited in Vaccaro, 2012). The desire to be part of communal joys and family traditions, as expressed in the participants' fantasies, may have stemmed from a deep-seated need to establish a sense of belonging and connection to their origins. The findings on this theme captured adoptees' yearning for communal acceptance and participation in family traditions, which might have stemmed from a desire to establish a sense of belonging and connection to their origins. Furthermore, the findings resonated with studies indicating that developmental milestones and key life events often triggered adoptees' search for family origins (Vaccaro, 2012). The fantasies expressed by the participants might have represented intrapsychic processes to cope with these transitional periods and construct a cohesive sense of identity and family narrative.

In summary, the connection fantasies revealed in this study offered valuable insights into adoptees' psychological needs for kinship, resemblance, and communal integration. It became clear that the connection fantasies of adoptees were multifaceted, often influenced by the adoptee's own life experiences and shaped by

broader societal and cultural narratives. These fantasies appeared to be coping mechanisms to bridge the gaps left by adoption, aligning with existing literature on the unique challenges faced by adoptees in consolidating their identities within the context of their dual family connections.

4.8. Recontact Fantasies

The superordinate theme of “Recontact Fantasies” captured the complex web of emotions, desires, and imagined scenarios that adoptees constructed around the possibility of reconnecting with their biological families. Studies such as those by Benson et al. (1994) highlighted the common desire among adopted people to meet their birth parents, driven by a need to see who they resembled, understand the reasons behind their adoption, and inform birth parents of their well-being. These fantasies served as a psychological space for adoptees to rehearse potential outcomes, process unresolved feelings, and exert control over their origin narratives.

The three subordinate themes of “fantasy of being searched,” “revenge fantasy,” and “fantasy of knowing medical history” illuminated the diverse motivations underlying these recontact fantasies. The “fantasy of being searched” reflected adoptees’ deep-seated longing to feel wanted and significant to their birth parents, even if abandoned (Hylton, 2007). These fantasies of birth relatives actively seeking them out provided a psychological buffer against the pain of rejection (Sorosky et al., 1976).

Anderson (1989) interpreted the search as a path to healing the trauma of separation, enabling adoptees to live more authentically. Similarly, the participants’ fantasies of recontact with biological parents suggested a desire for an integrated and authentic sense of self, which was supported by the literature emphasizing the normalcy and therapeutic value of such searches (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009; McGinnis et al., 2009). Yet, for many adoptees, there was a delay in initiating the search due to loyalty to adoptive parents, fearing it might cause them distress (Hylton, 2007; Greenberg, 1997). This loyalty might have resulted in adoptees clinging to fantasies rather than confronting potential disillusionment (Sorosky et al., 1976). The fantasy of being sought out by the birth family might be a less conflicted issue than the adoptee searching for the biological family, which might be why it was expressed by the adoptees in the present study.

The revenge fantasies, which involved adoptees imagining confronting their birth parents with anger and demanding an explanation for their abandonment, expressed by the adoptees in this study served as a powerful psychological coping mechanism, allowing them to confront their feelings of abandonment, anger, and the need for answers in a safe, imaginary space. As previous research suggested, the desire for revenge was a universal response to experiences of humiliation and unjust hurt (Haen & Weber, 2009; Morrissette, 2012). The severity of the perceived transgression by the biological parents appeared to be a significant factor in the intensity of the adoptees' revenge fantasies (van Denderen et al., 2014). These fantasies provided a sense of empowerment and control in a situation where adoptees had often felt powerless and rejected, helping them to calm negative emotions by virtually punishing the perpetrator (Haen & Weber, 2009). For example, Participant 1 stated that if she ever faced her biological family, she would not believe them without proof and would likely express anger, saying, "You went away, why are you coming now?" Similarly, Participant 3 mentioned that she would demand an explanation from her biological family if they reached out to her, expressing her disbelief at how they could give her away.

However, the emotional attachment to the biological parents added complexity to these revenge fantasies. This complexity was evident in the narratives of Participant 2 and Participant 3, who, despite stating they would express significant anger and hold their biological families accountable, also saw themselves as maintaining belief in their biological families. Participant 2 mentioned that while she would demand an explanation, she believed her biological family would provide a valid reason for their actions. Similarly, Participant 3 expressed that her biological family would likely cry and feel remorseful, given that they were the ones at fault.

The fantasy of knowing one's medical history was a crucial aspect of the adoptee's experience, highlighting the practical and emotional significance of having access to genetic information. As McGinn (2007) noted, adoptees lost not only their birth parents but also critical existential information that non-adoptees took for granted, including their medical history. This lack of knowledge could lead to frustration and a sense of incompleteness, as evidenced by the participants' accounts of repeatedly being asked about their family medical history during doctor's visits.

Moreover, the absence of a genetic history took on a greater magnitude when adoptees became parents themselves (Brodzinsky et al., 1993). The unknown genetic history became a personal problem and a potential legacy for their children, adding complexity to the decision to become a parent. Researchers have found that seeking medical information was one of the primary reasons adoptees search for their birth parents or relatives (Feast & Howe, 2001; Gladstone & Westhues, 1998; Grotevant & McRoy, 2009). Access to family medical records can provide crucial information on current health status and risks for adoptees (Campbell et al., 1991), and the lack of this information can contribute to identity-related concerns, particularly during major life transitions such as having a child (Brodzinsky et al., 1992; McAdams et al., 1998). Therefore, the fantasy of knowing one's medical history served as a powerful catalyst for adoptees to seek out their biological roots and establish a sense of biographical continuity, which was essential for healthy psychological functioning (Ball & Chandler, as cited in Muller & Perry, 2001).

In summary, recontact fantasies allowed adoptees to explore reunion symbolically, facilitate the normative search for background information and self-knowledge, and process unresolved emotions surrounding their adoptions - be it the need for acceptance, revenge, or medical histories. As such, these fantasies served an integral psychic function for many adoptees in making sense of their fragmented origin stories.

4.9. Clinical Implications

The findings of this study had significant implications for clinical practice, particularly in psychotherapy with adult adoptees. The seven superordinate themes identified - abandonment fantasies, threatening fantasies, loss fantasies, self-worth repairing fantasies, ideal family fantasies, connection fantasies, and recontact fantasies - provided a framework for understanding the complex inner world of adoptees and the psychological functions these fantasies served.

Firstly, therapists working with adult adoptees should have been aware of the pervasive impact of the primal wound of abandonment (Verrier, 1993) and the resulting fantasies that might have emerged. Recognizing and validating the adoptee's experiences of loss, trauma, and identity challenges was crucial in establishing a strong therapeutic alliance. Therapists should have created a safe space for adoptees to

explore and process these fantasies without judgment, acknowledging their role as coping mechanisms and potential barriers to psychological growth (Nydam, 1994).

The present study highlighted the importance of addressing the somatic aspects of trauma in adoptees' fantasies. Therapists should have been attuned to the physical sensations and bodily memories that might arise during therapy, as these could have been powerful indicators of unresolved trauma (Green et al., 2010). From a psychoanalytic perspective, the body can be seen as a container for unconscious memories and emotions related to early traumatic experiences (McDougall, 1989). When these experiences are not fully processed and integrated, they can manifest as somatic symptoms or bodily sensations that are disconnected from conscious awareness (Levine, 2010). Psychoanalytic techniques such as focusing on bodily sensations, exploring somatic metaphors, and using body-oriented interventions can help adoptees to access and process these early traumatic experiences (Ogden & Fisher, 2015). By bringing awareness to the connection between bodily sensations and emotional experiences, therapists can help adoptees to develop a greater sense of integration between their physical and psychological selves (Stern, 1985).

The presence of threatening fantasies indicated a need for interventions that enhanced emotional regulation and fostered secure attachments. As Hughes (2006) suggested, attachment-focused therapies could be particularly beneficial for adoptees, helping them develop secure, healthy relationships through a better understanding of their attachment styles and coping mechanisms. These therapies emphasize the importance of the therapeutic relationship as a corrective emotional experience, where the therapist provides a secure base for the adoptee to explore their internal world (Bowlby, 1988). By providing a consistent, attuned, and responsive therapeutic presence, therapists can help adoptees to develop a more secure attachment style and improve their capacity for emotional regulation (Schorer, 2001).

The concept of splitting parental figures, as evident in the threatening and ideal family fantasies, underscored the need for therapists to help adoptees develop a more integrated and realistic view of their adoptive and biological parents. This could be achieved through psychoanalytic approaches such as object relations therapy, which focuses on understanding and resolving the adoptee's internalized representations of

self and others (Brinich, 1980). By examining the defensive function of splitting and the underlying emotional needs it serves, therapists can help adoptees to develop a more nuanced and integrated understanding of their parental figures (Klein, 1946). This process involves mourning the loss of the idealized parental figures and coming to terms with the more complex reality of human relationships (Kernberg, 1976). Through this work, adoptees can begin to form more realistic and stable representations of self and others, leading to improved relationships and a more coherent sense of identity (Brinich, 1990).

The fantasies related to self-worth and ideal family scenarios highlighted adoptees' struggles with identity and self-esteem. Clinicians should have prioritized identity exploration within the therapeutic setting, aiding adoptees in navigating their complex feelings regarding their adoption stories. Psychoanalytic therapy techniques allow adoptees to explore their fantasies, desires, and fears related to their adoption in a non-judgmental and open-ended way. By bringing unconscious material into conscious awareness, adoptees can gain insight into the underlying emotional themes and conflicts that shape their sense of self. Through this process, adoptees can begin to integrate their adoption experience into a more coherent sense of self (Kohut, 1977). Psychoanalytic therapy can also help adoptees to work through the mourning process related to the loss of their birth parents and the fantasy of an ideal family (Brodzinsky, 1990). By providing a space to grieve these losses and to explore the complex emotions surrounding their adoption, therapists can help adoptees to develop a more realistic and accepting view of themselves and their family relationships (Klass et al., 1996).

The connection and recontact fantasies highlighted the adoptee's deep-seated need for belonging and reconnection with their biological roots. Therapists should have supported adoptees in exploring these desires while also helping them navigate the potential challenges and emotional risks associated with the search and reunion processes. Providing psychoeducation on the normative nature of these fantasies and the search process (Baden & Wiley, 2007) could help adoptees feel less alone and more validated in their experiences.

Beyond individual therapy with adoptees, there was a crucial need for educating and supporting adoptive families. Family therapy could address relational dynamics and

promote an environment where open discussions about adoption were encouraged, enhancing attachment and understanding within the family unit (Brodzinsky, 1990). This may involve examining the adoptive parents' own experiences of loss and infertility, and how these experiences may impact their relationship with their adopted child (Brinich, 1990). Family therapy can also help adoptive families to create a safe and supportive space for open communication about adoption-related issues, such as the child's curiosity about their birth family or the complex emotions surrounding the adoption story (Brodzinsky, 2011). By facilitating a deeper understanding and empathy between family members, family therapy can strengthen the attachment bonds and promote a more cohesive family identity (Kirk, 1964).

Lastly, therapists should have been aware of the potential transference and countertransference dynamics that might have arisen in working with adult adoptees. The fantasy of the therapist as a returning biological parent (Brinich, 1980) or the desire for an idealized therapeutic relationship might require careful management and interpretation. Engaging in regular supervision and self-reflection could help therapists maintain appropriate boundaries and provide the most effective care.

In summary, this study's findings underscored the need for therapists to adopt a psychoanalytic, trauma-informed and attachment-based approach when working with adult adoptees. By understanding and addressing the unique psychological challenges and fantasies experienced by this population, therapists could help adoptees achieve greater self-understanding, emotional healing, and relational well-being.

4.10. Research Implications

This present study was the first known study to explore the intersection of adoption and fantasy in a Turkish context. It represented a significant addition to both national and international discussions. The present study's findings had several implications for future research in the field of adoption and fantasy. Firstly, the study highlighted the need for more contemporary research on the fantasies of adult adoptees. As noted in the literature review, most studies in this area dated back to before the 2000s, indicating a gap in recent research. The current study provided a foundation for further exploration of this topic, considering the evolving social, cultural, and psychological landscapes of adoption.

This study focused on a homogeneous sample of Turkish female adoptees, which limited the generalizability of the findings. Future research could explore adoption fantasies across different age groups, cultural backgrounds, and adoption types (e.g., international, foster care, open vs. closed adoptions). Comparative studies could elucidate how these variables influenced fantasies' content, frequency, and psychological functions, as emphasized by the foundational work of Brodzinsky et al. (1992) and Grotevant (2009), who have highlighted the importance of considering diverse adoptee experiences.

The present study also underscored the importance of longitudinal research in understanding the development and evolution of adoptees' fantasies over time. The participants in this study were adult adoptees reflecting on their experiences. However, it would be valuable to examine how these fantasies emerged and changed throughout the lifespan, from childhood through adolescence and adulthood. Such studies could provide invaluable insights into how adoptees' perceptions of their adoption and biological families changed, potentially influenced by life events, developmental stages, and changes in familial and societal contexts. This would extend the work of researchers like Juffer and Van Ijzendoorn (2005), who have examined attachment and identity in adoptees across different life phases.

Investigating the impact of reunion experiences with biological families on adoptees' fantasies offered another fruitful avenue for research. Studies could explore how fantasies changed post-reunion, the role of fantasies in adoptees' motivations for seeking reunion, and the psychological outcomes of fulfilled vs. unfulfilled fantasies. The work of Howe and Feast (2000) provided a foundation for understanding the complex outcomes of adoption reunions.

While IPA offered deep insights into adoptees' lived experiences, integrating quantitative methodologies could enhance the generalizability of findings and allow for identifying patterns across larger samples. Future research might employ mixed-methods approaches, combining qualitative explorations with quantitative measures of psychological well-being, attachment styles, and identity development among adoptees, drawing on Palacios and Brodzinsky's (2010) theoretical frameworks.

Further research might focus on understanding how societal and cultural narratives about adoption influenced adoptees' fantasies. This includes exploring the impact of media representations, societal attitudes towards adoption, and cultural norms around family and belonging. Studies in this area could build on March's (2015) work, which examined the representation of adoption in the media and its impact on adoptees.

The clinical implications discussed in the previous section highlighted the need for research on the effectiveness of different therapeutic approaches in working with adult adoptees and their fantasies. Future studies could evaluate the outcomes of interventions such as object relations therapy, somatic experiencing, narrative therapy, and cognitive-behavioral therapy in addressing the specific challenges and fantasies identified in this study. Such research would contribute to developing evidence-based practices for supporting adult adoptees' mental health and well-being.

Finally, research should also consider the implications of findings for adoption policies and practices, including pre-adoption counseling, post-adoption support, and the facilitation of search and reunion processes. As advocated by Neil (2009), the goal would be to inform policy and practice that were sensitive to the psychological complexities of adoption.

In conclusion, this study contributed to a more contemporary and comprehensive exploration of adult adoptees' fantasies. By expanding on these findings through diverse samples, longitudinal designs, multi-method approaches, and clinical intervention studies, researchers could continue to deepen our understanding of this complex and meaningful aspect of the adoptee experience.

4.11. Limitations and Strengths of the Study

The present study offered valuable insights into the fantasies of adult adoptees in Turkey, contributing to a deeper understanding of their inner worlds and their psychological functions. However, acknowledging the study's limitations and strengths provided context for the findings and guided future research.

The homogeneity of the sample, with all participants being Turkish adult adoptees, was a deliberate choice in line with the present study's methodology and aims. The purpose of the study was not to generate generalizable findings but rather to conduct

an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of a specific group of individuals. This idiographic focus allowed for a rich and nuanced understanding of the participants' fantasies and their psychological significance.

The study's design limited the ability to examine how adoptees' fantasies evolve or change over time, especially in response to significant life events or developmental milestones. Conducting longitudinal research that follows adoptees across various life stages could provide valuable insights into the dynamic nature of these fantasies, including potential shifts in their content, frequency, and psychological functions throughout the lifespan.

Another limitation of the present study was the lack of male participants. While the inclusion of only female adoptees allowed for a homogeneous sample, the absence of male perspectives may have restricted the understanding of adoptees' fantasies. Male adoptees might have different experiences and fantasy constructs that could provide additional insights into the adoption narrative. Future research could aim to include both male and female participants to capture a more comprehensive and gender-diverse understanding of adoptees' fantasies, exploring potential differences and similarities across genders.

The study's qualitative design, while allowing for a rich and in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, also presented some limitations. The findings were based on the researcher's interpretations of the data, which might be influenced by their biases and assumptions. However, using reflexivity and validation strategies, such as member checking and peer debriefing, helped mitigate these concerns and ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

A significant limitation of the study was the limited number of meetings with participants. Exploring fantasies and their psychological significance was a complex and deeply personal process that might require extended engagement, such as in a therapeutic context. The results of the present study were based on two sessions with each participant, which may not have been sufficient to fully capture the depth and nuances of their experiences. Future research could consider using a more extensive data collection process, such as multiple interviews over time or a case study approach, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of adoptees' fantasies.

Despite these limitations, the study had several notable strengths. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) allowed for a detailed and nuanced exploration of participants' lived experiences and meaning-making processes. The semi-structured interview format allowed participants to share their stories in their own words while also allowing the researcher to probe for deeper insights and clarify understanding.

The study's focus on the fantasies of adult adoptees in Turkey addressed a significant gap in the literature, as previous research had primarily been conducted in Western contexts and focused on younger adoptees. By exploring the fantasies of adult adoptees, the study captured the long-term impact of adoption and the ongoing psychological processes that shaped adoptees' inner worlds.

Another strength of the study was the comprehensive and systematic data analysis, which identified seven superordinate and several subordinate themes. These themes provided a rich and detailed understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of adoptees' fantasies, highlighting the various psychological functions they served and how they related to critical aspects of the adoption experience, such as loss, trauma, identity, and relationships.

Finally, the study's findings had important implications for clinical practice and future research, as discussed in the previous sections. By identifying common themes and psychological processes in adoptees' fantasies, the study provided a foundation for developing targeted interventions and support services for this population. The findings also generated new questions and directions for future research, contributing to the ongoing development of knowledge in the field of adoption and fantasy.

In conclusion, while the present study had some limitations, its strengths lay in its qualitative design, focus on adult adoptees in Turkey, and important implications for practice and research. By acknowledging both the limitations and strengths of the study, readers could better contextualize the findings and use them to inform future efforts to understand and support the experiences of adult adoptees.

4.12. Conclusion

This study explored the fantasies of adult adoptees in Turkey, focusing on their nature, similarities, differences, and psychological functions. Using Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), seven superordinate themes were identified, reflecting the complex inner worlds of adoptees and the impact of adoption on their psychological well-being, identity development, and relationships.

The most striking aspect of this study lies in its illumination of the pervasive and enduring impact of the primal wound of abandonment on adoptees' lives. The abandonment, threatening, and loss fantasies served as poignant reminders of the trauma that lies at the heart of the adoption experience, shaping adoptees' sense of self, relationships, and place in the world. These fantasies, often characterized by vivid imagery and intense emotions, underscored the ongoing challenges adoptees face in navigating their unique emotional terrain. However, amidst the darkness of trauma and loss, the study also unveiled the resilience and creativity of the adoptee psyche. The self-worth repairing and ideal family fantasies emerged as powerful psychological mechanisms, allowing adoptees to rewrite their narratives, reclaim their sense of worth, and imagine a more nurturing and accepting familial environment. These fantasies served as a testament to the human capacity for healing and growth, even in the face of profound adversity. The connection and recontact fantasies added another layer of depth to the adoptee experience, highlighting the fundamental human need for belonging, validation, and understanding of one's origins. These fantasies reflected the ongoing negotiation of identity and relationships that adoptees engage in throughout their lives, seeking to integrate their adoptive and biological selves and find their place in the world.

Adoption is a complex, lifelong journey that profoundly shapes the lives of those who experience it. By illuminating the inner worlds of adult adoptees in Turkey, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that adoption presents, and the crucial role that fantasies play in shaping adoptees' inner worlds. It is my hope that this study will inspire further research, inform clinical practice, and contribute to a more nuanced and compassionate understanding of the adoptee experience, both in Turkey and beyond.

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APPENDICES

A. INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ Psikoloji Bölümü Doktora öğrencisi Mustafa Çevrim tarafından, Doç. Dr. Deniz Canel Çınarbaş danışmanlığındaki doktora tezi kapsamında yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?

Araştırmanın amacı, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin biyolojik ailelerine yönelik deneyimlerini ve düşlemlerini kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamaktır. Bu bağlamda, daha önce biyolojik ailesiyle hiç tanışmamış evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlere, bu deneyimin hayatlarını ne şekilde etkilediği ve onlara yönelik ne tür düşlemleri olduğunu anlamaya yönelik görüşmeler yürütülecektir.

Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, evlat edinilmeye yönelik deneyimlerinizi ve düşlemlerinizi paylaşmak istediğiniz boyutlarıyla aktaracağınız ve araştırmacının sorularını yönelteceği iki görüşmeye katılmanız istenecektir. Görüşme süresi değişken olmakla birlikte yaklaşık olarak 1- 1,5 saat sürmesi beklenmektedir. Görüşmeler çevrim içi olarak gerçekleştirilecektir. Cevaplarınızın daha sonra yazıya dökülüp analizinin yapılabilmesi için görüşmeler sırasında ses kaydı alınacaktır.

Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Cevaplarınız ve araştırmada sizden toplanacak bilgiler, kimlik bilgileriniz tamamıyla gizli tutularak bilimsel yayınlarda kullanılabilir.

Katılımla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:

Görüşmeler duygusal olarak yoğun geçebilir. Böyle zamanlarda durmak, size iyi geleceğini hissettiğiniz farklı bir konudan konuşmak, herhangi bir soruyu yanıtlamamak, görüşmeyi ertelemek veya çalışmaya katılmaktan vazgeçmekte serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda belirtmeniz yeterli olacaktır.

Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında bilgi almak için Psikoloji Bölümü doktora öğrencisi Mustafa Çevrim ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.

B. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

İlk Oturum

1. Doğum öykünüzü size anlatıldığı şekliyle paylaşır mısınız?
 - a. Nerede doğmuşsunuz?
 - b. Doğduğunuz ortamda şartlar nasılmış?
 - c. Doğum sırasında ya da sonrasında yaşadığınız herhangi önemli bir durum var mıymış? Varsa bu sizi nasıl etkilemiş?
2. Nasıl bir çocukluk geçirdiniz?
 - a. Genel olarak kendinizi nasıl bir çocuk olarak tanımladınız?
 - b. Çocukluğunuzda sizi çok etkilediğinizi düşündüğünüz olaylar nedir?
 - c. Çocukluğunuzu düşününce aklınıza gelen en mutlu ve mutsuz anı(lar) nelerdir?
 - d. Çocukluğunuzda eksikliğini hissettiğiniz şeyler oldu mu? (Çocukluğunuzda neler olsaydı daha mutlu/güzel bir çocukluk yaşayabileceğinizi söylersiniz?)
3. Ailenizden bahseder misiniz?
 - a. Ailedeki hangi üye(ler)e kendinizi daha yakın hissedersiniz?
 - b. Ailedeki hangi üye(ler)e kendinizi daha uzak hissedersiniz?
 - c. Hissettiğiniz yakınlık ve uzaklığın nedenleri olarak neleri düşünürdünüz?
4. Ailenizle ilişkiniz nasıldır?
 - a. Onların yanında kendinizi nasıl hissedersiniz?
 - b. Ailenizin size hangi konularda iyi/kötü hissettirdiğini söyleyebilirsiniz?
 - c. Ailenizle ne tür sorunlar yaşarsınız?
 - d. Ailenizde eksik olduğunu/daha iyi olabilirdi dediğiniz şeyler nelerdir?
 - e. Ailenizde olmamasını dileyebileceğiniz şeyler nelerdir?
 - f. Ailenizde olmasından minnet duyduğunuz/memnun olduğunuz şeyler?
5. Çekirdek aileniz dışındaki aile üyeleriyle ilişkiniz nasıldır?
 - a. Onların yanında kendinizi nasıl hissedersiniz?
 - b. Yanında olmaktan iyi hissettiğiniz kişiler var mıdır? Bunu nasıl yaparlar?
 - c. Hangi durumlarda kendinizi daha iyi hissedersiniz? Nasıl?
 - d. Hangi durumlarda kendinizi rahatsız/kötü hissedersiniz?
6. Aileden olmayan, sizin üzerinizde önemli etkisi olduğunu düşündüğünüz insanlar var mı?
 - a. Aileden olmayan, sizi olumlu yönde etkilediğini düşündüğünüz insan(lardan) bahseder misiniz? Size nasıl etkileri oldu?
 - b. Aileden olmayan, sizi olumsuz yönde etkilediğini düşündüğünüz insan(lardan) bahseder misiniz? Size nasıl etkileri oldu?
7. Evlat edinilme öykünüzü size anlatıldığı şekliyle paylaşır mısınız?
 - a. Evlat edinildiğinizi nasıl öğrendiniz?

- b. Kaç yaşındaydınız?
- c. Sizinle bu nasıl paylaşıldı? (Kim, nasıl bir ortamda paylaştı, paylaşıldığında neler hissettiniz?)
8. Evlat edinilmenizle ilgili düşünce ve duygularınız nelerdir?
 - a. Öğrendiğinizde neler hissettiniz?
 - b. Öğrendiğinizde neler düşündünüz?
 - c. Öğrendiğiniz an biyolojik ailenize yönelik neler hissettiniz ve neler düşündünüz?
 - d. Öğrendiğiniz an ailenize yönelik neler hissettiniz ve neler düşündünüz?
 - e. Öğrendiğiniz gün biyolojik ailenizle ilgili bir düşünce kurduunuz mu?
 - f. Öğrendiğiniz günün gecesi uyumadan önce neler yaşadınız? (duygular, düşünceler, düşler, bedensel duyular vs.)
 - g. Öğrendiğiniz gün gördüğünüz bir rüya var mı? Varsa nasıl bir rüyaydı?
 - h. Öğrendiğiniz günü izleyen günlerde ne tür düşler kurduunuz ya da rüyalar gördünüz?
9. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek sizi genel olarak nasıl etkiledi?
 - a. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek sizi kişisel anlamda nasıl etkiledi?
 - b. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek ailenizle ilişkinizi nasıl etkiledi?
 - c. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek kendiniz hakkındaki düşüncelerinizi nasıl etkiledi?
 - d. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek sizce hayatınızı nasıl etkiledi?
 - e. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrenmek diğerleri ile kurduğunuz ilişkileri nasıl etkiledi?
10. Benim bu görüşmede sormadığım ancak sizin eklemek istediğiniz şeyler var mı?

1. Görüşmenin Sonunda Verilecek Yönerge

Bu görüşmede size ve ailenize yönelik bilgi aldım ve evlat edinilme deneyimlerinizi öğrendim. İkinci görüşmemiz, biyolojik ailenize yönelik deneyimlerinize ve onlara dair düşlemlerinize odaklanacak. Düşlem, diğer bir adıyla fantezi, farkında olarak ya da olmadan tasarladığımız, kuralları ve sınırları olmayan zihinsel görüntüler ve kurgulardır. Düşlemler çok kapsamlı ve karmaşık olaylar içerebilecekleri gibi, kimi zaman tek bir görüntü ya da durumu da içerebilirler. Aynı şekilde, düşlemler kimi zaman olumlu (örn. Piyango kazandığını kurgulamak) kimi zaman olumsuz (örn. Kendi ölümünü, cenazeni hayal etmek) tonlarda olacağı gibi belli bir duygu içermeyebilir (örn. düz bir yolda yürümek). Düşlemler, hem daha önce gerçekte yaşanmış olayları hem de hiç yaşanmamış, şu an yaşanma ihtimali olmayan olay ve durumları da (örn. Mars'ta yaşamak, kuş olup uçmak, ölmüş biriyle konuşmak) içerebilir.

İkinci görüşmede, size bu tür düşlemlerinize dair sorular soracağım. Sizden isteğim, bir sonraki görüşmeye kadar, düşlemlerinize odaklanmanız ve çok sık kurduğunuzu fark ettiğiniz ya da biyolojik ailenizi içeren, onlarla ilgili olduğunuzu düşündüğünüz bu tür düşlemlerinizi kaydetmeniz olacak. Bunları ses kaydı olarak paylaşacağım e-posta adresi yoluyla bana gönderebilirsiniz veya not edip görüşmemizde benimle paylaşabilirsiniz.

İkinci Oturum

1. İlk görüşmemiz sonrasında neler hissettiniz? Neler düşündünüz?
 2. İlk görüşmemiz sonrasında biyolojik ailenizle ilgili neler düşündünüz? Neler hissettiniz?
 3. Biyolojik ailenizle ilgili neler biliyorsunuz?
 4. Biyolojik ailenize dair duygu ve düşünceleriniz nelerdir?
 - a. Biyolojik ailenizle ilgili neler düşünüyorsunuz?
 - b. Biyolojik ailenize karşı neler hissediyorsunuz?
 - c. Biyolojik ailenizi ne sıklıkla düşünürsünüz?
 - d. Biyolojik ailenizi hangi durumlarda düşünürsünüz?
 - e. Onları aklınıza getirmek size nasıl hissettirir?
 5. Biyolojik ailenizle ilgili olan düşlemlerinizi bahseder misiniz? (Bu kısımda görüşmecinin anlattığı her bir düşlem, kurgusu ve içeriği bağlamında olabildiğince detaylandırılacak ve canlandırılmaya çalışılacak. Ek olarak, buradaki alt sorular her bir düşlem için tekrarlanacak)
 - a. Bu düşlemi ne zaman kurdunuz?
 - b. Bu sırada nasıl hissediyordunuz?
 - c. Düşlemi kurduğunuz anda nasıl hissediyordunuz?
 - d. Düşlemi kurduktan sonra nasıl hissettiniz?
 - e. Bu düşlemi kurduktan sonra neler düşündünüz?
 - f. Bu düşlemi kurduktan sonra neler yaptınız?
 - g. Sizce bu düşlemin nasıl bir anlamı var?
 - h. Sizce bu düşlemi neden kurmuş olabilirsiniz?
 6. Düşlemlerinizdeki duygu ve içerik zaman zaman değişiklik gösterir mi?
 - a. Mutsuz olduğunuz zamanlarda nasıl düşler kurarsınız? Bir örnek verebilir misiniz?
 - b. Mutlu olduğunuz zamanlarda nasıl düşler kurarsınız? Bir örnek verebilir misiniz?
 - c. Aynı düşlemi farklı şekillerde kurduğunuz olur mu? Bir örnek verebilir misiniz?
 7. Biyolojik ailenizi rüyalarınızda nasıl görürsünüz?
 - a. Onlarla ilgili olduğunu düşündüğünüz rüyalarınızı paylaşır mısınız?
 - b. Size göre bu rüyalar neyle ilgili olabilir/ne ifade ediyor olabilir?
 - c. Onları rüyanızda görmek sizi nasıl hissettirir?
 8. Evlat edinildiğinizi öğrendikten sonraya dair hatırladığınız/sizi etkileyen bir düşleminiz veya rüyanız var mı? Anlatabilir misiniz?
 9. Tekrar eden bir düşleminiz veya rüyanız var mı? Anlatabilir misiniz?
 10. Evlat edinilme deneyiminizi temsil ettiğini düşündüğünüz ve size çok etkileyen bir rüya veya düşleminiz var mı? Anlatabilir misiniz?
- Benim bu görüşmede sormadığım ancak sizin eklemek istediğiniz şeyler var mı?

C. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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29 OCAK 2021

Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç.Dr. Deniz Canel ÇINARBAŞ

Danışmanlığımı yaptığınız Mustafa ÇEVİRİM'in "Ben Kimim?: Evlat Edinilmiş Yetişkinlerin Biyolojik Ailelerine Yönelik Fantezileri" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülmüş ve **027-ODTU-2021** protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla bilgilerinize sunarız.


Prof. Dr. Mine MISIRLISOY
İAEK Başkanı

D. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Çevrim, Mustafa
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
Ph.D.	METU, Clinical Psychology	2024
MS	METU, Psychology	2017
BS	METU, Psychology	2015

INTERNSHIP AND WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2018-Present	Private Practice	Clinical Psychologist
2023 Fall	TEDU Psychology Department	Part-time Lecturer
2016-2020	Ufuk University Psychology Department	Research Assistant
2016-2020	AYNA Clinical Psychology Unit	Clinical Psychologist
2019- 2020	Dr. Abdurrahman Yurtaslan Ankara Oncology Training and Research Hospital (Psychiatry Unit & Psycho-oncology Unit)	Intern Clinical Psychology Student
2016 Spring	METU Medical Center: Psychological Counselling and Guidance Center	Intern Clinical Psychology Student

2015 Spring Association for Solidarity with Intern Psychology Student
Schizophrenic Patients and Their
Families

2014 July Erciyes University, Faculty of Intern Psychology Student
Medicine, Psychiatry Service

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Basic German

PUBLICATIONS

1. Okay, D. Türkarşlan, K. K., Çevrim, M., & Bozo, Ö. (2022). Sleep go away, I don't have much time left to live: Is bedtime procrastination related to perceived time left in life? *Journal of Turkish Sleep Medicine*, 9(1), 57-63. <https://doi.org/10.4274/jtasm.galenos.2021.24119>
2. Türkarşlan, K. K., Okay, D., Çevrim, M., & Bozo, Ö. (2020). Life is short, stay awake: Death anxiety and bedtime procrastination. *The Journal of General Psychology*, 147(1), 43–61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221309.2019.1633994>

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. Çevrim M. (2023, 21 May). *The Vulture in the room*. [Oral Presentation] IAPSP International Spring Conference. Online.
2. Okay, D., Türkarşlan, K. K., Çevrim, M., & Bozo, Ö. (2019, 2-5 July). *Does future time perspective affect bedtime procrastination?: The mediator role of meaning in life* [Paper presentation]. XVI. European Congress of Psychology, Moscow, Russia.
3. Türkarşlan, K. K., Okay, D., Çevrim, M., & Bozo, Ö. (2018, 15-17 November). *Life is short: Stay awake!* [Hayat Kısa: Uyanık Kal!] [Paper presentation]. 20th National Congress of Psychology, Ankara, Turkey

E. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

GİRİŞ

Evlat Edinme

Evlat edinme, "terk edilmiş, bırakılmış veya yetim kalmış çocukların evlat edinen bir aileye yasal olarak yerleştirilmesi" olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Juffer & van Ijzendoorn, 2007, s. 1067). Birleşmiş Milletler'e (2009) göre, dünya genelinde her yıl yaklaşık 260.000 çocuk evlat edinilmektedir. Bunların %60'ı evlat edinildikleri sırada 5 yaşın altındadır. UNICEF, dünya genelinde en az 153 milyon çocuğun yetim ya da terk edilmiş olduğunu tahmin etmektedir (2018).

Türkiye'de Evlat Edinme

Evlat edinme, Türk Medeni Kanunu'nun 305 ila 320. maddeleri kapsamında düzenlenmektedir. Tüm evlat edinme işlemleri Bakanlar Kurulu tarafından yetkilendirilmiş kurumlar aracılığıyla gerçekleştirilmelidir. Sosyal Hizmetler ve Çocuk Koruma Genel Müdürlüğü evlat edinme prosedürlerinin uygulanmasını denetleme konusunda yasal yetkiye sahiptir. Türkiye'de yasal olarak basit evlat edinme sistemi uygulanmaktadır. Bu sistem, çocuk ile biyolojik ebeveynleri arasındaki ebeveyn-çocuk ilişkisini sona erdirmeden, çocuk ile evlat edinen ebeveynleri arasında yeni bir yasal ebeveyn-çocuk ilişkisi kurmaktadır (Aygül, 2012). Aile ve Sosyal İşler Bakanlığı'nın yıllık raporlarına göre (2023), 2022 yılında Türkiye'de 556 çocuk evlat edinilmiş ve evlat edinen ebeveynler (evlat edinen aile) çocuğun tam yasal velayetini almıştır. Bakanlık, 2003-2022 yılları arasında 18947 çocuğun evlat edinilmesini kolaylaştırmıştır.

Evlat Edinmenin Evlat Edinilenler Üzerindeki Yaşam Boyu Etkisi

Evlat edinme deneyimi, evlat edinilenlerin iç dünyasını derinden şekillendirmektedir. Psikanalitik çalışmalar, evlat edinilenlerin çok sayıda zorlukla karşılaştığını ve evlat edinilmemiş bireylere kıyasla psikolojik sorunlara karşı daha savunmasız olduklarını

göstermiştir (Blum, 1983; Palacios & Brodzinsky, 2010). Roszia ve Maxon (2019) evlat edinmede yedi temel sorun tanımlamıştır: kayıp, reddedilme, utanç ve suçluluk, yas, kimlik, yakınlık ve hakimiyet ve kontrol.

Kayıp

Evlat edinmede merkezi bir tema olan kayıp, evlat edinilenler, biyolojik aileler ve evlat edinen aileler olmak üzere ilgili tüm tarafları derinden etkilemektedir (Roszia ve Maxon, 2019). Evlat edinmenin doğasında, ölüm veya boşanma gibi diğer yaşam deneyimlerinden farklı olarak, yaygın, köklü ve sınırlı sosyal kabul gören bir kayıp vardır (Brodzinsky ve ark., 1993). Brodzinsky ve diğerleri (1993) evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik ebeveynlerinin kaybı, kendi kimliklerinin parçaları, birleşik bir benliğin kaybı ve genetik devamlılıkla nasıl mücadele ettiklerini tartışmıştır. Kayıp süreci genellikle öfke, mutsuzluk, kırılabilirlik ve anlamsızlık duyguları gibi çeşitli şekillerde kendini gösteren karmaşık bir yas sürecine yol açar (Brodzinsky ve ark., 1993). Özetle, evlat edinmede kayıp deneyimi, evlat edinme sürecine dahil olanların duygusal ve psikolojik dünyasını derinden şekillendiren köklü ve çok yönlü bir unsurdur.

Travma

Evlat edinme alanında travma, evlat edinilen çocuğun psikolojisini derinden şekillendiren temel bir unsur olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Verrier (1993), bir bebek, biyolojik annesinden ayrıldığında ortaya çıkan psikik bir travma olan "ilkel yara" kavramını ortaya atmıştır. Lifton (1994) evlat edinmeyi "görünmez bir travma" olarak tanımlamış ve bunun yaşamda ve ilişkilerde güvensizlik yaratmadaki rolünü vurgulamıştır. Schore (2001) ve Palacios ve Brodzinsky (2010) erken travmanın kalıcı etkileri olduğunu ve kişilerarası ilişkilerde, stres yönetiminde ve duygusal düzenlemede zorluklara yol açtığını belirtmiştir. Kalsched'e (2013) göre, erken travma, bireyin ruhunu düzenlemek ve korumaktan sorumlu olan öz bakım sistemini derinden etkileyebilir. Bir çocuk ciddi bir travma yaşadığında, ruh iki parçaya bölünebilir: travmanın acısını taşıyan savunmasız, yaralı bir parça ve yaralı parçayı daha fazla zarardan korumaya çalışan koruyucu, savunmacı bir parça. Bununla birlikte, bu koruyucu kısım katı ve uyumsuz hale gelebilir ve olumsuz içselleştirilmiş nesnelere veya iç seslere oluşturabilir. Bu içselleştirilmiş nesnelere genellikle çocuğun geçmişindeki istismarcı veya ihmalkâr bakıcıları model alır ve cezalandırıcı, eleştirel

ve hatta zulmedici bir yapıya bürünebilir. Sonuç olarak, birey kendini bilinçsizce erken travmatik deneyimlerinin dinamiklerini yansıtan ilişkiler veya durumlar aradığı bir yeniden canlandırma döngüsüne yakalanmış bulabilir.

Bağlanma

Evlat edinmede kayıp ve travma, bağlanma deneyimi üzerinde önemli bir etkiye sahiptir ve bu konu evlat edinme arařtırmalarında yaygın olarak incelenmiştir. Arařtırmacılar, evlat edinen ebeveynlerle güvenli bağlanma ilişkilerinin evlat edinilen kişinin sosyal gelişimiyle olumlu yönde ilişkili olduğunu belirtmiştir (Juffer & Van IJzendoorn, 2007). Ancak evlat edinilenler, biyolojik bağlarının kopması ve evlat edinen aile üyeleriyle yeni bağlar kurma ihtiyacı nedeniyle bu güvenli bağları oluşturmada benzersiz zorluklarla karşılaşır. Evlat edinmenin gerçekleştiği yaş önemlidir; altı aydan önce evlat edinilen bebeklerin uzun vadeli bağlanma sorunlarıyla karşılaşma olasılığı daha düşükken, daha yaşlı evlat edinilenler akran bağlantılarıyla ilgili sorunlarla karşılaşabilir (Howe & Fearnley, 2003). Van Londen, Juffer ve van IJzendoorn (2007) tarafından yapılan çalışmalar, bir yaşından önce evlat edinilen bebeklerin genellikle güvensiz bağlanma riski taşımadığını göstermiştir. Ancak, daha büyük yaşlarda evlat edinilenler gelişimsel gecikmeler yaşayabilir. Evlat edinilenlerde güvensiz ve dezorganize bağlanma, geç evlat edinme ve biyolojik geçmiş hakkında bilgi eksikliği de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli faktörlerle ilişkilendirilmiştir (Feeney ve ark., 2007).

Kimlik oluşumu

Evlat edinilmiş bireylerin kimlik oluşumu, evlat edinilme bağlamında kendini anlamaya yönelik benzersiz bir süreci kapsar. Kimlik gelişimi karmaşık, çok faktörlü bir süreç olarak kabul edilmekte ve evlat edinilenler için evlat edinilmeyenlere kıyasla özellikle zorlayıcı olmaktadır (Brodzinsky, Schechter, vd., 1992). Evlat edinilen çocuklar, genetik ve doğum geçmişleri hakkında eksik bilgi, evlat edinen aileye kısmi aidiyet duygusu ve biyolojik aileleri tarafından terk edilmiş olmanın getirdiği duygusal yük nedeniyle kimlik oluşumunda zorluklarla karşılaşabilmektedir. McGinn (2007), evlat edinilenlerin yalnızca biyolojik ebeveynlerini kaybetmekle kalmayıp, aynı zamanda tıbbi geçmiş, ırksal kimlik ve evlat edinilmeyenlerin genellikle kanıksadıkları diğer varoluşsal ayrıntılar gibi hayati bilgilerden de yoksun olduklarını

açıklayarak bunu genişletmiştir. Kişisel tarihteki bu boşluk, soykütüksel şaşkınlık hissine yol açabilir.

Arama

Biyolojik ailelerini aramak, evlat edinenlerin kendi kimliklerini oluştururken yaşadıkları yaygın bir deneyimdir. Bilgi arama motivasyonları, arayışın yoğunluğu ve adanmışlığı gibi büyük ölçüde değişebilir. Bununla birlikte, çoğu kişi en az bir kez biyolojik aileleri hakkında daha fazla bilgi edinmek ister ve bu merak özellikle ergenlik ve genç yetişkinlik dönemlerinde ortaya çıkar (Wrobel vd., 2013). Brodzinsky'nin evlat edinme arama teorisi, evlat edinme arama sürecine altı evrensel tema atıfta bulunmaktadır: kayıp ve yas, kıskançlık, cinsel kimlik, kimlik konsolidasyonu, bilişsel uyumsuzluk ve beden imajı (Brodzinsky ve ark., 1993). Arama yapanların sayısına ilişkin tahminler sunan çalışmalar, çoğunlukla evlat edinilenlerden oluşan gönüllü örneklemelere dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışmalara göre, evlat edinilenlerin %30 ila %65'i biyolojik ebeveynlerini aramak için güçlü bir istek duyduklarını veya aktif olarak aradıklarını ifade etmiştir (Curtis & Pearson, 2010). Araştırmacılar, evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik ebeveynlerini veya akrabalarını arama nedenlerini şu şekilde sıralamışlardır: merak, aidiyet duygusu, tıbbi bilgi arayışı, kişisel kimlik duygusu geliştirme ve soybilim (Feast & Howe, 2001). Evlat edinilenlerin arama yapmamaya karar vermelerinin, hangi kapıların açılacağı korkusu, sürecin bir kez daha reddedilmeye yol açacağı korkusu, kendi hayatlarının nasıl değişeceği korkusu ve birçoğunun elde etmek için çok çalıştığı kimliklerini kaybetme korkusu gibi birçok nedeni vardır (Benson, 2019).

Fantezi

Psikanalitik teoride fantezi kavramı çok önemlidir ve insan zihnini ve patolojilerini anlamada önemli bir rol oynar (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012). Fantezi, zihinde çeşitli psikolojik ihtiyaçlara ve işlevlere hizmet eden kişisel senaryolar yaratmayı içerir (Akhtar, 2009). Esasen fantezi, düşlenen bir olaylar dizisi veya genellikle duygusal yoğunluktaki durumlarda düşleyen bireyin merkezi bir rol oynadığı bir hikâyeye benzer bir anlatı olarak tanımlanır (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012). Hem bilinçli hem de bilinçdışı olabilen fanteziler, bireylerin en içteki arzularını, korkularını ve çatışmalarını işledikleri ve ifade ettikleri kritik bir araç olarak hizmet eder. Bilinçli

fanteziler genellikle bireylerin zevkli ve tatmin edici olandan korkutucu ve cezalandırıcı olana kadar değişen hayali senaryolarla meşgul oldukları gündüz düşleri olarak ortaya çıkar (Auchincloss & Samberg, 2012). Bilinçdışı fanteziler, algılarımızı ve davranışlarımızı yönlendiren en eski, en temel duygusal deneyimlerimizle bağlantılı oldukları düşünüldüğünden, ruhsal olarak daha yapılandırılmış kabul edilirler. Bu bilinçdışı fanteziler, biz farkında bile olmadan düşüncelerimizi ve duygularımızı organize ederek bilinçli zihnimizi ve eylemlerimizi etkiler (Akhtar, 2009). Birçok kuramcı (Arlow, 1969; Freud, 1905; Knafo & Feiner, 2005; Loewald, 1978), bilinçli ve bilinçdışı fantezi arasında net bir sınır olmadığı konusunda hemfikirdir. Sınırların bu şekilde bulanıklaşması, fantezi yaratımının zihnin bilinçli ve bilinçdışı unsurlarının sürekli etkileşim halinde olduğu dinamik ve akışkan bir süreç olduğu anlamına gelir. Bohleber ve diğerleri (2015) tarafından detaylandırıldığı üzere, fantezi kavramı psikanalitik teoride önemli bir gelişim göstermiştir. Başlangıçta Freud, fantezileri içgüdüsel hayal kırıklıkları ve bastırılmış arzulardan kaynaklanan gündüz düşleri ve dileklerin gerçekleşmesi ile ilişkilendirmiştir. Isaacs (1948) tarafından geliştirilen bilinçdışı fanteziye Kleinci yaklaşım, bu kavramı büyük ölçüde genişletmiştir. Klein ve takipçileri, bilinçdışı fantezilerin doğumdan itibaren mevcut olduğunu ve tüm zihinsel işleyişin altında yattığını, dolayısıyla bastırılmış düşüncelerden daha fazlası olduğunu ileri sürmüştür. Bu erken psişik faaliyetler bebeğin dış dünyayla bağlantısını kurar ve duygular, hisler ve bedensel durumlar aracılığıyla ifade edilir. Isaacs (1952), Klein'in bilinçdışı fanteziyi temelde bilinçdışı düşünce ve hislerle aynı olarak algıladığını açıklamıştır. Isaacs (1948), ilk fantezilerin bireyin nesnel dünyaya ilişkin sınırlı ama gerçek deneyimleriyle derinden iç içe olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Arlow (1969) bilinçdışı fantezileri organize, tutarlı ve sözel içerikten oluşan fanteziler olarak görmüştür. Sandler ve Sandler (1994) ise geçmiş ve şimdiki bilinçdışı fanteziler arasında ayırım yapmış, geçmiş fantezilerin erken çocukluk döneminde oluştuğunu ve yalnızca psikanalitik yorumlama yoluyla erişilebilir olduğunu belirtmiştir. Ornstein ve Ornstein'in (2008) kendilik psikolojisi kavramsallaştırması, çevresel ve bireysel çocukluk deneyimlerinin bilinçdışı fantezileri önemli ölçüde şekillendirdiğini öne sürerek odağı içgüdüsel dürtülerden çevresel tepkilere kaydırmıştır. Bilinçdışı fantezileri ya travmatik deneyimler tarafından şekillendirilen ya da arzulanan değişim arayışını temsil eden fanteziler olarak tanımlamışlardır. Ek olarak, Bromberg (2008), benliğin parçalarının, genellikle

acı verici veya çelişkili deneyimler içerdikleri için bilince tam olarak entegre edilemeyebileceğini açıklamıştır.

Person (1995) fantezilerin psikolojik işlevlerinin kapsamlı bir listesini sunmuştur. Fanteziler arzuları ifade edebilir, hayatın eksikliklerini telafi edebilir, geçmiş yaraları iyileştirebilir ve gelecek için umut yaratabilir. Fanteziler ayrıca duygusal düzenlemeyi, uyarılmayı ve nevroz oluşumunu kolaylaştırır. Fantezinin anlatı içeriğini tercüme ederek veya sembolik olarak ifade ederek gelecekteki eylemlerin veya yaşam seçimlerinin provası olarak hizmet edebilirler. Knafo ve Feiner (2005) fantezileri çocukların ayrılık, kimlik oluşumu ve özsaygı düzenlemesi gibi karmaşık gelişimsel zorluklarla başa çıkmak için kullandıkları evrensel yapılar olarak tanımlamıştır. Fantezileri, kimlik, aidiyet ve aile rolleri gibi temel konuları içeren ebeveynlerle karmaşık duygusal ilişkilerin temsilleri ve çözümleri olarak görmüşlerdir. Ancak bu fanteziler, kökenlerine benzer belirli koşullar altında yeniden ortaya çıkabilir. Bazen bu fanteziler uyumsuz hale gelebilir ve güvenlik sağlamak, duygulanımı düzenlemek ve travmayla başa çıkmak için tasarlanmış tekrarlayıcı, zorlayıcı düşünce ve davranışlara dönüşebilir (Person, 1995).

Evlat Edinmede Fantezi

Evlat edinme bağlamında, fantezi kavramı evlat edinilenlerin iç dünyasını anlamada derin bir önem kazanmaktadır. Knafo ve Feiner (2005) fantezinin özünün yokluk kavramıyla karmaşık bir şekilde bağlantılı olduğunu vurgulamıştır. Evlat edinilenler için yokluk, biyolojik kökenleri hakkında bilgi eksikliği, biyolojik ebeveynlerinden somut olarak ayrılma veya kimlikleri ve geçmişleri hakkında çözülmemiş soruların yarattığı duygusal boşluk olarak ortaya çıkabilir. Evlat edinilenlerin yokluk duygusundan kaynaklanan fanteziler, sadece gündüz düşlerinden daha fazlasıdır; kritik psikolojik mekanizmalar olarak hizmet ederler (Lifton, 1994). Fantezi yaratımı, evlat edinilenlerin duygusal ihtiyaçlarının ve gerçeklerinin anlaşılması ve ele alınmasında kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Genellikle kökenleri hakkında somut bilgi eksikliğinden kaynaklanan bu fanteziler, evlat edinilenlere tarihleri üzerinde bir kontrol hissi verir (Robinson, 2005). Brodzinsky (1992), biyolojik kökenleri hakkında bilgi yokluğunda, evlat edinilenlerin kendi anlatılarını veya fantezilerini inşa ederek bunu telafi etme eğiliminde olduklarını vurgulamıştır. Siegel ve Siegel (2001) evlat

edinilen çocuğun idealize edilmiş bir biyolojik ebeveyne ilişkin ısrarlı fantezisinin önemini vurgulamıştır. Bu fantezinin, çocuğun her şeye gücü yeten bir figürle bağlantı kurma yönündeki derin bilinçdışı ihtiyacını temsil ettiğini öne sürmüşlerdir. Quinodoz (1996) ve Wieder (1977) evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik ebeveynleriyle ilgili fantezilerinin her zaman idealize edilmediğini belirtmiştir. Bunun yerine, terk edilme veya sevlmeme duygularına odaklanabilirler. Psikanalitik çalışmalar, evlat edinilenlerin özellikle kayıp ve terk edilme konularında yaşadıkları benzersiz çatışmaları vurgulamıştır. Bu çatışmalar, evlat edinilen kişinin ruhsallığına derinlemesine gömülü bir psikik kayıp biçimi olarak anlaşılabilir ve terk edilme veya kayıpla ilgili fantezilerin yaratılmasına yol açar. Evlat edinme deneyiminin psikanalitik bir perspektiften incelenmesi, özellikle Hodges tarafından yürütülen araştırma ve klinik çalışmalar, evlat edinilen çocukların, özellikle de istismar, ihmal veya erken travma yaşamış olanların deneyimlerini anlamamıza önemli ölçüde katkıda bulunmuştur. Hodges'un (1990) çocukların "iç dünyalarına" ilişkin tartışması hem bilinçli hem de bilinçdışı fantezilerin bir çocuğun gerçeklik algısını, benlik ve ötekileri duygusunu şekillendirmedeki rolünü vurgulamıştır. Hodges, bu çocukların sıklıkla mücadele ettiği iki temel soruyu dile getirmiştir: "İlk ebeveynlerim kimdi ve neye benziyorlardı?" ve "Beni neden bıraktılar?" Biyolojik ebeveynleri tarafından istismara uğramış ya da travma yaşamış olanlar için bir diğer soru da "Ne oldu ve neden oldu?" sorusudur. Anna Freud Merkezi Araştırma Grubu, evlat edinilen çocukların materyallerinde, istenmeme, çalınma veya kaçırılma ya da ölmüş veya hasta bir biyolojik anneye sahip olma fantezileri de dahil olmak üzere tekrar eden temalar bulmuştur. Bu temalar bir ebeveynin içsel temsilini, benliği ve aralarındaki etkileşimin doğasını yansıtmaktadır. Örneğin, evlat edinen ebeveynler tarafından kaçırılma fantezisi, biyolojik ebeveynler tarafından terk edilmiş olmanın son derece rahatsız edici gerçekliğine karşı bir panzehir işlevi görebilir. Bu fantezi "istenmeyen" çocuğu iki kat daha fazla istenen bir çocuğa dönüştürür (Hodges, 1990, s. 64). McAuley'in (1987) 122 evlat edinilmiş yetişkinle yaptığı çalışma da biyolojik ebeveynler hakkında fantezi kurma eğiliminin yaygın olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. McAuley, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerini değersizleştirilmiş, idealize edilmiş, her ikisinin birleşimi ve fantezi yok şeklinde kategorize etmiştir. Benzer şekilde, Rosenberg (1992) evlat edinilmiş çocukların "asil" biyolojik ebeveyn fantezilerinin duygusal zorluklarla başa çıkmalarına ve biyolojik ebeveynlerine dair idealize edilmiş bir imajı sürdürmelerine

nasıl yardımcı olduğunu tartışmıştır. Bu çocuklar genellikle idealize edilmiş "asil" biyolojik ebeveynlerinden ayrılma ve bunun sonucunda evlat edinen ailelerle birlikte yaşamalarını açıklayan çeşitli senaryolar düşerler. Nydam (1994) fantezilerin, biyolojik ebeveynlerini arayan evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin duygusal refahını nasıl etkilediğini incelemiştir. Bu fanteziler iki temel amaca hizmet etmektedir: biyolojik ebeveynlerle psikolojik bağı sürdürmek ve duygusal acıyla başa çıkmak. Geçiş fenomeni olarak işlev görürler, biyolojik ebeveynlerin yokluğunda rahatlık ve bağlantı hissi sağlarlar. Bu fanteziler evlat edinenlerde hem olumlu hem de olumsuz imajlar oluşturabilir. Miller-Havens (1996) bebeklik ya da çocukluk döneminde evlat edinilmiş, birçoğu biyolojik annelerini aramış ya da onlarla yeniden bir araya gelmiş yetişkin kadınların biyolojik anne fantezilerini incelemiştir. Biyolojik kökenlerini aramaya başlayan evlat edinilmiş kadınların biyolojik annelerinden kopuk olma deneyimlerini dile getirdiklerini ve fantezi imgeleri yaratarak yeniden bağlanma özelemlerini ifade ettiklerini öne sürmüştür. Biyolojik anne ile yeniden bağ kurmaya (bağlantı) ilişkin fantezilerin, ayrılık veya kaybı (kopukluk) tasvir edenlere kıyasla iki kat daha yaygın olduğunu bulmuştur.

Mevcut Çalışma

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin deneyimlediği fantezi dünyasını derinlemesine incelemek ve bu fantezilerin doğasını ve içeriğini ortaya çıkarmaktır. Bu amaca ulaşmak için, bu çalışma, katılımcıların öznel deneyimlerini derinlemesine keşfetmek için özel olarak tasarlanmış nitel bir araştırma yöntemini benimsemiştir. Bu çerçevede çalışma, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerindeki örüntüleri, temaları ve anlamları ortaya çıkarmaya ve böylece iç dünyalarına dair incelikli bir anlayış sağlamaya çalışmıştır. Bu konu, evlat edinilenlerin deneyimlerini ve bakış açılarını daha da aydınlatmak, bu araştırmaya bağlam ve derinlik katmak ve düzenleyici bir çerçeve sağlamak için psikanalitik bir perspektifle bilgilendirilmiştir. Bu çalışma şu araştırma soruları ile ilgilenmiştir:

- Evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin evlat edinme ile ilgili fantezileri nelerdir?
- Katılımcıların fantezileri arasındaki benzerlikler ve farklılıklar nelerdir?
- Bu fanteziler evlat edinilmiş yetişkinler için hangi işlevlere hizmet etmektedir?

YÖNTEM

Araştırma Tasarımı

Bu çalışma, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerini, yaşadıkları deneyimleri inceleyerek keşfetmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla, nitel bir araştırma metodolojisi kullanılmıştır. Nitel araştırma, niceliksel araştırmanın aksine, ölçülebilirlik ve genelleme amacı gütmeyen, öznel ve özgün bir yaklaşım benimser. Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz (YFA) yöntemi kullanılmıştır. YFA, Smith (1996) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve sağlık psikolojisi alanında yaygın olarak kullanılan nitel bir araştırma yöntemidir. Kişilerin yaşam deneyimlerini ve bu deneyimlere yükledikleri anlamları derinlemesine incelemeyi amaçlar. Odak noktası katılımcıların hayat dünyaları, subjektif deneyimleri ve algılarıdır. Araştırmacı, katılımcıların anlatılarını yorumlar ve anlamlar çıkarır. YFA, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerini incelemek için uygun bir yöntemdir. Öncelikle, evlat edinilme deneyimi ve buna bağlı fanteziler, karmaşık ve kişiseldir. YFA'nın fenomenolojik bakış açısı, araştırmacılara bu deneyimleri derinlemesine inceleme ve anlamlandırma fırsatı sunar. İkinci olarak, evlat edinilme süreci kişisel ve kültürel faktörlerin etkileşimine dayanır. YFA'nın empati temelli yorumlama süreci, araştırmacıların katılımcı anlatılarına daha derin bir şekilde nüfuz etmesine olanak tanır.

Katılımcılar

Çalışmaya 18 yaş üstü, evlat edinilmiş ve biyolojik ailesiyle hiç temas kurmamış 6 Türk kadın katılmıştır. Katılımcılar, amaçlı örnekleme yöntemiyle seçilmiştir. Katılımcılardan homojen bir grup oluşturmak için, benzer deneyim ve bağlamları paylaşımları aranmıştır. İki katılımcının biyolojik kardeşleri mülakatlardan kısa süre önce kendileriyle iletişime geçmiş olsa da bu son temasın katılımcıların fantezileri ve evlat edinilme deneyimleri üzerindeki etkisini anlamak için çalışmaya dahil edilmeye karar verilmiştir.

Katılımcıların demografik bilgileri şu şekildedir: Katılımcı 1, 23 yaşında ve bekar. Bir aylıkken evlat edinilmiş ve evlat edinildiğini altı yaşında öğrenmiş. Katılımcı 2, 38 yaşında, evli ve iki çocuk annesi. Evlat edinilme süreci hakkında neredeyse hiç bilgisi yok. Katılımcı 3, 42 yaşında, evli, iki çocuk annesi ve evlat edinilmiş bir ablası var.

Katılımcı 4, 38 yaşında, evli, iki çocuk annesi. Biyolojik annesi ile babası evli değilmiş. Görüşmelerden 1 ay önce biyolojik babasının çocukları, 1 hafta önce de biyolojik annesinin üvey kızı kendisiyle iletişime geçmiş. Katılımcı 5, 62 yaşında, boşanmış ve üç çocuk annesi. Altı yaşındayken arkadaşı sokakta kendisine evlat edinildiğini söylemiş. Katılımcı 6 ise 60 yaşında, evli ve iki çocuk annesi. Biyolojik annesiyle bir kez, isteği dışında ve haberi olmadan bir araya gelmiş ve sonrasında düşük yapmış. Görüşmelerden iki ay önce beş biyolojik kardeşinin olduğunu ve birinin kendisinden iki yaş küçük olduğunu öğrenmiş.

Materyaller

Katılımcıların deneyimlerini derinlemesine paylaşımlarını sağlamak için yarı-yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formatı kullanılmıştır. Bu format, araştırma sorularını tutarlı bir yapı içinde keşfetmeye olanak tanırken, aynı zamanda katılımcıların anlatılarına duyarlı ve esnek bir yaklaşım sunmaktadır. Komite üyelerinin önerileri doğrultusunda, katılımcıların fantezi dünyalarını daha iyi anlamak için rüyalarına da odaklanılmıştır.

İlk görüşmede, katılımcıların evlat edinilme hikayeleri ve aile deneyimleri hakkında temel bir anlayış oluşturulmuştur. Ardından bir sonraki görüşmede, fantezilerinin keşfedilmesine odaklanılacağı belirtilmiştir. "Fantezi" kavramı detaylı bir şekilde açıklanmış, bilinçli veya bilinçdışı, basit imajlardan karmaşık senaryolara uzanan bir yelpazede yer alabileceği vurgulanmıştır. Her görüşme sonrasında görüşme soruları detaylı bir şekilde gözden geçirilmiş ve soruların açıklığı ile akışı iyileştirilmiştir.

Etik Konular

Çalışma, ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan onay almıştır. Katılımcılara bilgilendirilmiş onam formu sunulmuş ve ses kaydı izni alınmıştır. Araştırmacı, evlat edinilme konusunun travmatik anıları tetikleyebileceğinin farkında olarak hassasiyetle davranmıştır.

Prosedür

Başlangıçta sadece biyolojik ailesiyle hiç temas kurmamış evlat edinilenlere odaklanılması planlanmış, ancak bu özgün gruba erişimde zorluklarla

karşılaştığından kapsam genişletilmiştir. Evlat edinilme deneyimlerini paylaşmaya istekli evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerle ulaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Katılımcı bulma süreci, araştırmacının sosyal medya kanalları ve evlat edinme dernekleri üzerinden özel olarak tasarlanmış bir afiş dağıtmasıyla kolaylaştırılmıştır. Bu kanallar aracılığıyla katılımcılarla iletişime geçilmiş, ilgi gösterenler çalışmanın amaçları ve prosedürleri hakkında bilgilendirilmiştir. Ardından katılımcılar, randevu almak için araştırmacıya ulaşmıştır. Her görüşmeden önce, katılımcılara gizlilik önlemleri ve çalışmadan çekilme haklarını açıklayan yazılı onam formları sunulmuş, ses kaydı için de izin alınmıştır. Her katılımcı ile iki görüşme yapılmıştır. İlk görüşmelerde evlat edinilme deneyimleri, ikinci görüşmelerde ise fantezilerine odaklanılmıştır. İlk görüşmelerin süresi 60-130 dakika arasında değişirken, ikinci görüşmeler 66-136 dakika aralığında sürmüştür.

Veri Analizi

Görüşmeler ses kaydına alınmış ve kelimesi kelimesine deşifre edilmiştir. Veriler, IPA'nın yinelemeli süreç yönergeleri doğrultusunda analiz edilmiştir: Deşifreler ilk önce okunmuş ve sonra birkaç kez tekrar okunarak verilerle aşinalık kazanılmıştır. Bu okumalar sırasında, betimleyici, dilbilimsel ve kavramsal yorumlar içeren ilk notlar alınmıştır. Bu notlardan yola çıkarak, ortaya çıkan temalar belirlenmiş ve daha sonra bu temalar arasındaki bağlantılar aranmıştır. Bu süreç her bir katılımcı için tamamlandıktan sonra, bir sonraki katılımcıya geçilmiştir. Son olarak, tüm vakalar genelinde örüntüler aranmış ve temalar son halini almıştır. Bir sonraki katılımcının anlatısında bir tema tespit edilmemişse, analizin detaylı ve doğru olmasını sağlamak için tüm vakalar, nihai tema listesi oluşturulduktan sonra tekrar gözden geçirilmiştir.

Tema tablosu oluşturulurken, deşifrelerdeki ilgili alıntılar her bir alt temaya yerleştirilmiştir. Analiz süreci boyunca, tez danışmanı ve komitesi devamlı olarak tema oluşturma ve kodlama süreçleri hakkında geri bildirimde bulunmuşlardır. Bunun sonucunda, alt ve üst temalar nihai halini almıştır.

Refleksivite

Refleksivite, araştırmacının araştırma sürecindeki etkisini kabul etmesi ve bu etkiyi şeffaf bir şekilde paylaşması anlamına gelir. Ben, 30 yaşında, erkek, evlat edinilmemiş

bir psikoterapistim. Bir psikanalitik psikoterapist ve evlat edinilmemiş bir kişi olarak, bu çalışmada kişisel geçmişim ve konumum, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerini keşfetme ilgimi şekillendirmiştir. Bu araştırma fikri, bir evlat edinilmiş danışanımla yaptığım terapiden kaynaklanmıştır. Danışanım, evlat edinilme deneyimiyle ilgili canlı fanteziler paylaşmıştı. Bu fantezilerin canlılığı ve danışanımın ihtiyaç ve ruh haline göre değişkenliği beni çok etkilemişti. Bir terapist olarak, danışanımın terapiyi ani bir şekilde bırakması ve bir daha benimle iletişime geçmemesi, bende bir tür 'terk edilmişlik' hissi uyandırdı. Bu his, evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik ailelerinden ayrılma hissine paralel gibiydi.

Psikanalitik bir terapist olarak aldığım eğitim, katılımcıların anlatılarını dinleme ve empatik bir şekilde anlamaya çalışma becerilerimi de geliştirmiş olabilir. Evlat edinilmemiş bir araştırmacı olarak, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin deneyimlerine yabancıyım. Bu durum araştırma sürecinde hem fırsatlar hem de zorluklar yaratmış. Bir yandan, "dışarıdan" bakış açım konuya taze bir perspektiften bakmama ve kişisel duygusal yüklerden arınmış olmama yardımcı olmuş olabilir. Diğer yandan, doğrudan deneyim eksikliğim, katılımcılarımın yaşadıklarını derinlemesine anlama ve empati kurma yeteneğimi sınırlandırmış ve bulgularımın derinliğini ve zenginliğini etkilemiş olabilir.

Evlat edinilmemiş bir araştırmacı olarak, "tipik" bir evlat edinilme deneyiminin nasıl olması gerektiğine dair bilinçdışı inançlarım olabilir. Bu inançlar, veri toplama ve analizimi yanlı bir şekilde etkilemiş olabilir. Ayrıca evlat edinilme deneyiminin karmaşıklıklarına ve inceliklerine yabancı olmam, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerinin tam olarak anlaşılmasını engelleyerek, deneyimlerinin basitleştirilmesine neden olmuş olabilir.

BULGULAR VE TARTIŞMA

Araştırmada, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin bilinçdışı fantezilerini incelemek için Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz kullanılmıştır. Yedi üst tema belirlenmiştir: Bunlar sırasıyla şöyle isimlendirilmiştir: 1) Terk Edilme Fantezileri, 2) Tehdit Edici Fanteziler, 3) Kayıp Fantezileri, 4) Öz Değer Onarıcı Fanteziler, 5) İdeal Aile Fantezileri, 6) Bağ Kurma Fantezileri, 7) Yeniden Temas Fantezileri.

Terk Edilme Fantezileri

Terk Edilme Fantezileri, katılımcıların erken yaşlarda yaşadıkları terk edilme travması ve bu travmanın yarattığı güvensizlik ve tehlike hislerini kapsar. Bu fanteziler, katılımcıların dış dünyayı düşmanca ve tehlikeli olarak algıladıkları sembolik anlatılar içerir. Katılımcılar, biyolojik veya evlat edinen anneleri tarafından ihmal edilme, tehlikede olma ve ölümlle yüzleşme korkularını ifade ederler. Örneğin, Katılımcı 1, biyolojik annesi tarafından bir okul bahçesine terk edildiğinde köpekler tarafından parçalanma veya çöpe atılma korkusunu dile getirmiştir. Katılımcı 4, evlat edinen ailesinin kendisini aldığı bakım evinin kötü koşullarını hatırlayarak, bebek yatağında birden fazla bebeğin aynı anda kaldığını ve çok kalabalık olduğunu belirtmiştir.

Bu çalışmada katılımcılar tarafından dile getirilen terk edilme fantezileri, terk edilmenin ilksel yarasının evlat edinilenlerin iyi oluşları üzerindeki derin ve kalıcı psikolojik etkisinin altını çizmiştir. Kökleri evlat edinme ve terk edilmeye ilişkili temel travmaya dayanan bu fanteziler, tehlike, ihmal ve yaygın savunmasızlık temalarını tekrar tekrar tasvir etmiştir. Katılımcıların ihmale ve terk edildikten sonra kendilerini içinde buldukları kötü koşullara ilişkin anlatıları, bu erken dönem deneyimlerinin psikolojik gelişimleri üzerindeki derin etkisinin altını çizmiştir. Katılımcı 6, doğumdan kısa süre sonra biyolojik annesi tarafından emzirilmeyi reddedildiği için yaşadığı büyük travmayı anlatır. Emzirilmemesi, annesinin ona olan ilgisizliğini ve reddedilişini somut bir şekilde hissetmesine neden olmuştur. Katılımcı 5, ağır bir hastalık geçirip ölümlerden döndüğünü ve biyolojik annesinin onu ölü zannettiğini düşünmüştür. Bu tür deneyimler, terk edilme travmasının yarattığı derin kaygı ve korkunun bedensel hislerle nasıl birleştiğini göstermektedir.

Verrier'e (1993) göre, biyolojik anneden ayrılma ve yabancılara teslim olma eylemi, geniş kapsamlı sonuçları olabilecek psişik bir travma yaratmış ve evlat edinilen kişinin benliğinin değişmez bir parçası haline gelmiştir (Hodges, 1990). Bu anlatılar, Jackson'ın (2004) travmanın bilişsel hatırlamanın ötesine geçerek tüm duyuşsal modaliteleri etkilediği ve evlat edinilen kişinin tüm varoluşsal gerçekliğine yerleştiği iddiasıyla uyumlu olarak travmanın dokunsal ve duyuşsal doğasını yansıtıyordu.

Biyolojik ve evlat edinen annelerin bu terk edilme fantezilerindeki rolü özellikle dikkat çekiciydi. Biyolojik anne genellikle kötü niyetli veya ihmalkâr olarak tasvir edilirken,

evlat edinen anne beceriksiz veya yeterli bakımı sağlayamayan biri olarak görülmüştür. Brinich (1980) tarafından tanımlandığı üzere, ebeveyn figürlerinin bu şekilde bölünmesi, evlat edinilenler arasında yaygın bir savunma mekanizması olup, biyolojik ve evlat edinen ebeveynlerine karşı besledikleri karmaşık ve çoğu zaman çelişkili duyguları yansıtmaktadır. Bu dinamik, evlat edinilenlerin terk edilmişlik duyguları ile evlat edinme durumlarının gerçekliğini uzlaştırma çabalarını göstermektedir. Bu ebeveyn figürleri hakkında genellikle, acılarıyla doğrudan yüzleşmek zorunda kalmadan, reddedilme veya ihmal edilme duygularını doğrulayacak şekilde fanteziler kurmuşlardır. Sonuç olarak, genellikle tehlike, ihmal ve savunmasızlık temalarıyla karakterize edilen bu fanteziler, evlat edinilenlerin erken dönem deneyimlerinin bir sonucu olarak karşılaştıkları köklü güvensizlikleri ve duygusal zorlukları yansıtmaktadır.

Tehdit Edici Fanteziler

Tehdit Edici Fanteziler, katılımcıların evlat edinme deneyimleriyle ilgili derin korku ve travmaları içerir. Bu fanteziler, katılımcıların kendilerini sürekli tehlike altında hissettikleri ve genellikle aile üyelerinin saldırgan olarak yer aldığı anlatılarla doludur. Bu çalışmada katılımcılar tarafından dile getirilen tehdit edici fanteziler, evlat edinme deneyimleriyle ilişkili derin korku ve travmalara dair derin bir içgörü sağlamıştır. Herman'ın (2009) önerdiği gibi, terk edilme travması çaresizliği umutsuzluğa dönüştürebilir ve dünyanın güvenli bir yer olmadığına dair bilişsel bir şemaya yol açabilir. Bu çaresizlik ve savunmasızlık hissi, katılımcıların genellikle evlat edinen veya biyolojik aile üyelerini temsil eden figürler tarafından saldırıya uğrama veya kaçırılma fantezilerine canlı bir şekilde yansımıştır.

Saldırıya Uğrama Fantezilerini paylaşan katılımcılar, bu fantezilerinde evlat edinen veya biyolojik aile üyeleri tarafından saldırıya uğradıklarını düşlemişlerdir. Örneğin, Katılımcı 3, evlat edinen ebeveynlerinin rüyasında kurtlara dönüştüğünü ve kendisine saldırdığını anlatmıştır. Bu rüyada, güvenli bir liman olarak gördüğü ebeveynlerinin tehlike unsuru olarak belirmesi, katılımcının sahip olabileceği güven sorunlarını yansıtır. Katılımcı 4 ise biyolojik ebeveynlerini gördüğü rüyasında onların kendisine öfkeli olduğunu gördüğünü paylaşmıştır ve bu öfkenin, onları terk ettikleri için duyduğu suçluluk ve korkuları yansıtabileceğini ifade etmiştir.

Katılımcıların anlatılarında yinelenen saldırıya uğrama teması, kendiliğin bütünlüğüne yönelik derin bir tehdit olarak terk edilme travmasını yansıtan psikolojik zorluğu ortaya çıkarmıştır. Bu, kimliklerinin temel yönlerine yönelik bir saldırıya benziyordu ve evlat edinme deneyimleri ile benlik duyguları arasında karmaşık bir etkileşim olduğunu gösteriyordu. Kohut'un (1984) dağılma kaygısına ilişkin araştırması bu bulguları aydınlatmaktadır. Kohut'un kendilik psikolojisi teorisine göre kendilik, birincil bakıcılarla empatik etkileşimler yoluyla gelişen merkezi bir örgütlenme yapısıdır. Terk edilme durumunda olduğu gibi, bu etkileşimler kesintiye uğradığında veya yetersiz kaldığında, kendiliğin bütünlüğü ve istikrarı tehdit altına girerek dağılma kaygısına yol açmıştır. Kohut, parçalanma korkusunun yalnızca varoluşsal bir tehdit değil, kişinin özüne yönelik bir saldırı olduğunu ve bireyin kendiliğinin tamamen dağılması dehşetiyle karşı karşıya kaldığını belirtmiştir. Bu, evlat edinilenlerin karşılaştığı gibi kayıp, reddedilme veya terk edilme deneyimleri tarafından tetiklenebilen temel bir korkudur. Evlat edinme bağlamında, terk edilme travması, evlat edinilen bireyin ruhsallığında tekrar tekrar deneyimlenen ve yeniden ortaya çıkan içselleştirilmiş bir saldırıya benzer bir psişik düzeyde ortaya çıkabilir.

Kaçırılma Fantezisine sahip katılımcılar, kötü niyetli kişiler tarafından kaçırıldıklarını düşlerler. Katılımcı 6, çocukken sürekli olarak onu zorla götüren bir kadının olduğu rüyalar gördüğünü belirtmiştir. Bu rüyalarda, biyolojik annesi tarafından kaçırılma ya da evlat edinen annesi tarafından kaçırılma gibi farklı senaryolar düşlemiştir. Katılımcı 3, çocukken evine geç geldiğinde ailesinin onu kaçırıldığını düşündüğünü ve bu durumun ailede büyük bir paniğe neden olduğunu hatırlamıştır. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların sürekli bir tehdit altında olduklarını hissetmelerine ve bu tehditlerin bilinçdışı düzeyde ortaya çıkmasına neden olmaktadır.

Çalışma ayrıca, evlat edinilenlerin "kaçırılma fantezisinin" öz değerle mücadeleyi ve evlat edinilme hikayelerinin yeniden düşünmesini temsil ettiğini ortaya koymuştur. Evlat edinilmelerini bir kaçırılma olarak düşleyerek, evlat edinilenler kendi öz-değerlerini korumaya çalışmış olabilirler. Terk edilmek yerine kaçırılmış olsalardı, evlat edinen ebeveynleri tarafından istediklerini ve arzulandıklarını düşünebilirlerdi ki bu da biyolojik ebeveynleri tarafından terk edilmenin acısını hafifletmeye yardımcı olabilirdi. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, evlat edinilenlerin düşük özdeğer duygularını telafi etmek için evlat edinilmek yerine kaçırılma fantezileri kurdukları fikriyle de

örtüşmektedir. Hodges (1990) çalınmış bir bebek olma ya da evlat edinen ebeveynlerin bilinçsizce bir bebeği annesinden çaldıkları hissine kapılma fantezilerinin evlat edinilmiş kişilerde yaygın olduğunu iddia etmiştir.

Kayıp Fantezileri

Kayıp Fantezileri, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin önemli ilişkileri kaybetme korkularını ve bu kayıpların duygusal yansımalarını içerir. Bu fanteziler, katılımcıların orijinal terk edilme travmasının yankılarını taşıyan ve daha fazla kayıp korkusunu içeren senaryoları kapsar. Kayıp fantezilerinin üst teması, kaybın evlat edinme sürecine dahil olanların karşılaştığı temel sorun olduğunu vurgulayan mevcut literatürle uyumludur (Roszia & Maxon, 2019).

Ebeveyn Kaybı Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, evlat edinen ebeveynlerini veya onların sevgisini kaybetme korkusunu yaşarlar. Katılımcı 3, ebeveynlerine evlat edinilmiş olduğunu söylese onları çok üzeceğini ve bu üzüntünün ölümüne yol açacağını düşlemiştir. Katılımcı 4, babasının ölümünden sonra annesine evlat edinilmiş olduğunu söylemekten korktuğunu ve annesinin bu durumu kaldıramayacağını düşündüğünü belirtmiştir. Bu tür fanteziler, evlat edinen ebeveynlere duyulan derin bağlılık ve onların kaybı korkusunu yansıtır. Ebeveyn kaybı fantezisi, katılımcıların sevgilerini kaybetme veya onları üzme riskine dair algıları nedeniyle evlat edinme durumlarını evlat edinen ebeveynleriyle tartışmaktan korkmaları, Brodzinsky (1990) tarafından öne sürülen savunma mekanizmalarıyla uyumludur. Evlat edinmeyle ilgili konuları tartışmaktan kaçınma, terk edilmenin ilkel acısını yeniden deneyimlemeye karşı koruyucu bir bariyer görevi görmüş olabilir (Pivnick, 2013) ve kaybın evlat edinilenin ruhu üzerindeki derin etkisini yansıtmaktadır.

Çocuk Kaybı Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, kendi çocuklarının başına bir şey gelmesinden korkarlar. Katılımcı 2, uçakla seyahat ederken uçak kazası olursa çocuğunun yetim kalacağı korkusunu dile getirir. Katılımcı 6, ilk iki çocuğunu kaybettikten sonra kalan çocuklarını kaybetme korkusuyla yaşadığını ve bu korkunun sürekli bir endişe kaynağı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu tür fanteziler, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin kendi çocuklarına yönelik koruyucu ve endişeli tutumlarını yansıtır. Katılımcıların korku ve güvensizliklerinin çocuklarının sağlığı ile ilgili endişelere kadar uzandığı çocuk kaybı fantezisi, bağlanma örüntülerinin nesiller arası aktarımı

kavramı bağlamında ele alınabilir (Feeney & Woodhouse, 2016). Bu olgu, kaybın, evlat edinilen kişinin yaşamı boyunca merkezi, tekrarlayan bir tema olduğu ve genellikle ebeveynlik gibi önemli yaşam geçişleri sırasında yeniden ortaya çıktığı iddiasıyla uyumludur (Smit, 2002).

Öz-Değer Onarıcı Fanteziler

Öz-Değer Onarıcı Fanteziler, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin evlat edinilme nedeniyle zarar gören öz-değerlerini onarmak için oluşturdukları zihinsel yapıları içerir. Bu fanteziler, evlat edinilmenin bir tercih ve istek olduğunu düşünerek kendilerini değerli ve özel hissetmelerini sağlar.

"Seçilmiş Prenses" Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, evlat edinilmenin özel bir tercih olduğunu ve kendilerinin özel ve değerli olduğunu düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 1, evlat edinen ailesi tarafından diğer bebekler arasından saçları olduğu için seçildiğini anlatır. Katılımcı 5, evlat edinen ailesinin kendisini tıpkı bir prenses gibi giydirdiğini ve her zaman çok özel hissettiğini ifade eder. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların evlat edinme sürecini olumlu bir şekilde yeniden çerçeveleyerek kendilerini değerli hissetmelerini sağlar.

"Beni Bırakmak Zorundaydılar" Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, biyolojik ebeveynlerinin onları sevgisizlikten değil zorunluluklardan dolayı terk ettiğini düşlemişlerdir. Bu, Hodges'un (1990) beni istemedi yerine biyolojik ebeveynin çocuğa neden bakmadığını koyarak terk edilme acısını maskeleyen fanteziler olarak adlandırdığı durumu yansıtıyordu. Katılımcı 2, biyolojik ailesinin onu zorunluluktan dolayı terk ettiğini ve şimdi onu geri almak istediklerini düşlemiştir. Katılımcı 1, biyolojik ailesinin maddi zorluklar veya sosyal baskılar nedeniyle onu terk etmek zorunda kaldığını düşünür. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların terk edilme deneyimini anlamlandırmalarına ve öz-değerlerini korumalarına yardımcı olur.

Hodges (1984) ve diğerlerinin (Brinich, 1995; Greenberg, 1997) savunduğu gibi, her iki fantezi türü de evlat edinilenlerin özsaygı ve özdeğer duygusunu korumak için savunma işlevi görüyor gibi görünmektedir. Bu fanteziler evlat edinilenlerin, evlat edinilme hikayelerini reddedilmekten ziyade seçilen ve arzulanan bir hikâye olarak yeniden yazarak terk edilmeye uzlaşmalarını sağlamıştır.

İdeal Aile Fantezileri

İdeal Aile Fantezileri, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin hayatlarında eksik olan mükemmel aile dinamiklerine dair arzularını içerir. Bu fanteziler, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin düşledikleri koşulsuz sevgi, kabul ve bağlılıkla dolu aile yapılarını içerir.

İdeal Ebeveynler Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, kendilerini her yönden destekleyen ve anlayan ebeveynler düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 2, daha genç ve enerjik bir anneye sahip olmayı diler. Katılımcı 3, ebeveynlerinin genç ve sağlıklı olmasını ve kendisiyle daha fazla vakit geçirmesini ister. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların ebeveynleriyle daha güçlü ve destekleyici ilişkiler kurma arzularını yansıtır. İdeal ebeveyn fantezisi Sigmund Freud (1909) tarafından geliştirilen aile romansı kavramıyla uyumludur. Siegel ve Siegel'in (2001) belirttiği gibi, evlat edinilenin idealize edilebilir bir nesneye duyduğu ihtiyaç, evlat edinen ebeveynlerin idealize edilebilirliğinin bozulmasıyla engellenmiştir. Başka bir deyişle, evlat edinilen çocuklar, biyolojik ebeveynleri tarafından terk edildikleri bilgisi ve çözülmemiş keder ve kayıp potansiyeli gibi evlat edinme sürecinin doğasında var olan karmaşıklıklar ve zorluklar nedeniyle evlat edinen ebeveynlerini idealize etmekte zorlanabilirler.

Kardeş Sahibi Olma Fantezisi, evlat edinilenlerin arkadaşlık, dayanışma ve ortak kimlik arzularını yansıtmaktadır. Bu bulgu, evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik kardeşleriyle kurdukları ilişkilerin, kayıptan ziyade uyumluluk üzerine inşa edildiği için, biyolojik ebeveynleriyle kurduklarından daha rahat olduğunu gösteren önceki araştırmalarla tutarlıdır (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1989; Sachdev, 1992). Katılımcı 4, kendisine sırlarını anlatabileceği bir ablası olmasını istediğini dile getirir. Katılımcı 5, evlat edinen ailesinin kendisi için yeni bir çocuk evlat edinmeye karar verdiğinde, bu süreci kendisinin de deneyimlediğini ve kardeşiyle güçlü bir bağ kurduğunu ifade eder. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların ailede daha fazla sosyal destek ve bağlılık arayışlarını yansıtır.

Çocuk Evlat Edinme Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, kendileri gibi bir çocuk evlat edinerek ailelerini genişletmeyi düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 1, hem biyolojik hem de evlat edinilmiş bir çocukla büyütmeyi düşlemiştir. Katılımcı 2, evlat edinmeyi çok istediğini ancak bu durumun biyolojik çocuklarına haksızlık yapabileceğinden korktuğunu ifade eder. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların kendileri gibi çocuklara daha

iyi bir yaşam sunma arzusunu yansıtır. Bu fantezi, evlat edinenlerin evlat edinme eylemiyle empati kurmalarına ve kendi yetiştirilme tarzlarında ideal olduğuna inandıkları ya da eksikliğini hissettikleri şeyleri bir çocuğa sağlamalarına olanak tanımıştır. Olası benlikler kavramı (Markus & Nurius, 1986) evlat edinilenlerin ebeveynlik düşüncelerine uygulanabilir. Olası benlik, kişinin geçmişine ve gelecekteki hedeflerine dayalı olarak geliştirilen, mevcut benlik özelliklerini ve kendisi hakkındaki gelecek fikirlerini içeren bir benlik kavramının tezahürüdür. Evlat edinilenlerin olası ebeveynlik benlikleri çocukluk döneminden itibaren gelişmeye başlamış ve ergenlik ve yetişkinlik dönemlerinde de devam etmiş olabilir. Katılımcıların evlat edinilmiş bir çocuğa sahip olma fantezileri, yaşadıkları benzersiz deneyimler ve karşılaştıkları duygusal zorluklarla şekillenmiş olabilir.

Bağlantı Fantezileri

Bağlantı Fantezileri, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin aile bağları içinde kabul edilme ve tanınma arzusunu yansıtır. Bu fanteziler, katılımcıların aile çevrelerinde aidiyet ve tanınma arzusunu ifade eder.

Akrabalık Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, evlat edinen ailelerinin biyolojik bir üyesi olduklarını düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 4, evlat edinen ailesinin biyolojik çocuğu olmayı diler. Katılımcı 2, biyolojik ailesi yerine evlat edinen ailesinin bir üyesi olmayı tercih eder. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların ailede daha güçlü bir kimlik ve aidiyet duygusu arayışını yansıtır. Evlat edinilenlerin evlat edinen aileleriyle biyolojik olarak akraba olmayı arzuladıkları akrabalık fantezilerinin ortaya çıkışı, biyolojik bağları evlat edinen ilişkilere göre ayrıcalıklı kılan sosyokültürel normlarla uyumludur (Müller & Perry, 2001; aktaran Sammis, 2023).

Benzerlik Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, fiziksel veya davranışsal olarak ailelerine benzediklerini düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 3, biyolojik annesine benzediğini ve benzer kişilik özelliklerine sahip olduğunu düşünür. Katılımcı 5, bir ikizi olduğunu ve sürekli olarak yanlışlıkla ikiziyle karıştırıldığını düşlemiştir. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların aile üyeleriyle daha fazla ortak nokta bulma ve bu sayede kendilerini daha iyi hissetme arzusunu yansıtır. Evlat edinilenlerin kendilerini evlat edinen ya da biyolojik aileleriyle benzerlik gösteren fiziksel ya da davranışsal özellikleri tanımlama arzularını içeren benzerlik fantezileri, evlat edinilenlerin evlat edinen ailelerinden

fiziksel farklılıklara ilişkin kaygılarına dair mevcut literatürle (Vaccaro, 2012; Brodzinsky ve ark., 1993) ve evlat edinen ebeveynlerinden fiziksel ya da etnik farklılıkları olan evlat edinilenlerin genellikle daha belirgin kimlik kaygıları yaşadıklarını ileri süren araştırmalar tutarlıdır. Brodzinsky'nin evlat edinme arayışı teorisinin ortaya koyduğu gibi, beden imajı sorunları ve evlat edinen aileyle fiziksel benzerlik eksikliği nedeniyle izole edilmiş hissetmek birçok evlat edinilen için bir odak noktası olabilir (aktaran Vaccaro, 2012). Bu çalışmada katılımcılar, evlat edinen ailelerinden boy, ten rengi ve saç rengi gibi çocukluklarından beri dikkatlerini çeken fiziksel farklılıklarını sıklıkla vurgulamışlardır. Biyolojik aileleriyle ilgili fantezilerinde, onları genellikle kendilerine benzeyen çekici insanlar olarak tasvir etmişlerdir. Benzerlik fantezileri, evlat edinilenlerin evlat edinen aile soyu içindeki yerlerini doğrulamak için bir başa çıkma mekanizması olarak hizmet etmiş olabilir.

Kalabalık İçinde Olma Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, büyük aile toplantılarında yer almayı düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 1, doğum günlerinin hastaneden çıktıktan sonra ailesiyle tekrar tekrar kutlandığını ve bu kutlamaların ona büyük bir mutluluk verdiğini ifade eder. Katılımcı 6, büyük aile yemeklerinde bulunmayı ve bu tür etkinliklerde yer almayı düşlemiştir. Bu tema, evlat edinilenlerin kendi tarihlerini araştırmak, keşfetmek ve geçmişlerini anlamlandırmak için derin motivasyonları olduğunu öne süren araştırmalarla uyumludur (Vaccaro, 2012). Katılımcıların fantezilerinde ifade edildiği gibi, toplumsal eğlencelerin ve aile geleneklerinin bir parçası olma arzusu, aidiyet duygusu ve kökenleriyle bağlantı kurmaya yönelik köklü bir ihtiyaçtan kaynaklanmış olabilir. Bu temaya ilişkin bulgular, evlat edinilenlerin toplumsal kabul görme ve aile geleneklerine katılma özlemlerini ortaya koymaktadır ki bu da aidiyet duygusu ve kökenleriyle bağlantı kurma arzusundan kaynaklanmış olabilir.

Yeniden Temas Fantezileri

Yeniden Temas Fantezileri, evlat edinilmiş bireylerin biyolojik aileleriyle yeniden bağlantı kurma arzularını ve bu temasların sonuçlarını içerir. Bu fanteziler, kimlik krizlerini çözme ve öz-değeri onarma gibi arzuları yansıtır.

Aranma Fantezisi, evlat edinilenlerin terk edilmiş olsalar bile biyolojik ebeveynleri tarafından istendiklerini ve onlar için önemli olduklarını hissetmeye duydukları derin özlemi yansıtmaktadır (Hylton, 2007). Biyolojik akrabalarının onları aktif olarak

aradığına dair bu fanteziler, reddedilme acısına karşı psikolojik bir tampon görevi görmüştür (Sorosky ve ark., 1976). Katılımcı 6, biyolojik annesinin kendisini bulup alacağını düşlemiştir. Katılımcı 2, biyolojik ailesinin bir gün onu arayacağını ve geri almak isteyeceğini düşlemiştir. Bu tür fanteziler, katılımcıların biyolojik aileleri tarafından istenme ve hatırlanma arzularını yansıtır.

İntikam Fantezisi, evlat edinilenlerin biyolojik ebeveynleriyle öfkeyle yüzleştiklerini ve terk edilmelerine ilişkin bir açıklama talep ettiklerinin düşlemine içermektedir. Bu çalışmadaki evlat edinilenler tarafından güçlü bir psikolojik başa çıkma mekanizması olarak ifade edilmiş ve terk edilme, öfke ve cevap ihtiyacı duygularıyla güvenli, hayali bir alanda yüzleşmelerine olanak sağlamıştır. Katılımcı 3, biyolojik ailesine kendisini nasıl bırakabildiklerini sormak ve onları suçlamak ister. Katılımcı 4, biyolojik ailesine karşı öfkesini dile getirmek ve onları cezalandırmak için çeşitli senaryolar düşlerler. Önceki araştırmaların da öne sürdüğü gibi, intikam arzusu aşağılanma ve haksız incinme deneyimlerine verilen evrensel bir tepkidir (Haen & Weber, 2009; Morrissette, 2012). Bu fanteziler, evlat edinilenlerin genellikle kendilerini güçsüz ve reddedilmiş hissettikleri bir durumda bir güçlenme ve kontrol duygusu sağlayarak, faili sanal olarak cezalandırmak suretiyle olumsuz duyguları yatıştırmalarına yardımcı olmuştur (Haen ve Weber, 2009).

Tıbbi Geçmişi Bilme Fantezilerinde katılımcılar, biyolojik ailelerinden tıbbi geçmişlerini öğrenmeyi düşlemişlerdir. Katılımcı 3, her doktor ziyaretinde ailede genetik hastalık olup olmadığını bilmemekten duyduğu rahatsızlığı dile getirir. Katılımcı 2, çocuklarının gelecekteki sağlık durumları hakkında bilgi sahibi olabilmek için biyolojik ailesinin tıbbi geçmişini öğrenmeyi arzu eder. Bu fanteziler, katılımcıların kendi ve çocuklarının sağlıklarını koruma arzularını yansıtır. McGinn'in (2007) de belirttiği gibi, evlat edinilenler yalnızca biyolojik ebeveynlerini değil, aynı zamanda tıbbi geçmişleri de dahil olmak üzere evlat edinilmeyenlerin kanıksadıkları kritik varoluşsal bilgileri de kaybetmişlerdir. Bu bilgi eksikliği, katılımcıların doktor ziyaretleri sırasında aile tıbbi geçmişlerinin defalarca sorulduğunu anlatmalarından da anlaşılacağı üzere, hayal kırıklığına ve eksiklik hissine yol açabilir. Dahası, genetik geçmişin yokluğu, evlat edinilenlerin kendileri ebeveyn olduklarında daha büyük bir boyut kazanmıştır (Brodzinsky ve ark., 1993). Bilinmeyen genetik geçmiş, kişisel bir sorun haline gelmiş ve ebeveyn olma kararına karmaşıklık katmıştır.

Klinik Çıkarımlar

Bu çalışmanın bulguları, özellikle evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerle yapılan psikoterapide klinik uygulamalar için önemli sonuçlar doğurmuştur. İlk olarak, evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerle çalışan terapistler, ilkel terk edilme yarasının (Verrier, 1993) ve bunun sonucunda ortaya çıkabilecek fantezilerin yaygın etkisinin farkında olmalıdır. Evlat edinilen kişinin kayıp, travma ve kimlik zorlukları deneyimlerini tanımak, güçlü bir terapötik ittifak kurmak için çok önemlidir. Terapistler, evlat edinilenlerin bu fantezileri yargılamadan keşfetmeleri ve işlemeleri için güvenli bir alan yaratmalı, başa çıkma mekanizmaları ve psikolojik gelişimin önündeki potansiyel engeller olarak rollerini kabul etmelidir (Nydam, 1994). Bu çalışma, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerinde travmanın somatik yönlerinin ele alınmasının önemini vurgulamıştır. Terapistler, terapi sırasında ortaya çıkabilecek fiziksel hislere ve bedensel anılara dikkat etmeliydi çünkü bunlar çözülmemiş travmanın güçlü göstergeleri olabilirdi (Green ve ark., 2010). Tehdit edici fantezilerin varlığı, duygusal düzenlemeyi geliştiren ve güvenli bağlanmaları teşvik eden müdahalelere ihtiyaç duyulduğuna işaret etmektedir. Hughes'un (2006) kendi çalışmasında önerdiği gibi, bağlanma odaklı terapiler evlat edinilenler için özellikle faydalı olabilir ve bağlanma tarzlarını ve başa çıkma mekanizmalarını daha iyi anlamaları yoluyla güvenli, sağlıklı ilişkiler geliştirmelerine yardımcı olabilir.

Tehdit edici ve ideal aile fantezilerinde de görüldüğü gibi ebeveyn figürlerinin bölünmesi kavramı, terapistlerin evlat edinilenlerin evlat edinen ve biyolojik ebeveynleri hakkında daha bütüncül ve gerçekçi bir bakış açısı geliştirmelerine yardımcı olma ihtiyacının altını çizmiştir. Bu, nesne ilişkileri terapisi gibi psikanalitik yaklaşımlarla başarılabilir; bu yaklaşım, evlat edinilen kişinin benlik ve diğerlerine ilişkin içselleştirilmiş temsillerini anlamaya ve çözmeye odaklanır (Brinich, 1980).

Psikanalitik terapi teknikleri, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerini, arzularını ve korkularını yargılayıcı olmayan ve açık uçlu bir şekilde keşfetmelerine olanak tanır. Evlat edinilenler, bilinçdışı materyalleri benlik algılarını şekillendiren altta yatan duygusal temalar ve çatışmalar hakkında içgörü kazanabilirler. Bu süreç sayesinde evlat edinilenler, evlat edinilme deneyimlerini daha tutarlı bir kendilik duygusuyla bütünleştirmeye başlayabilirler (Kohut, 1977). Son olarak, terapistler evlat edinilmiş

yetişkinlerle çalışırken ortaya çıkabilecek aktarım ve karşı aktarım dinamiklerinin farkında olmalıdır.

Evlat edinilenlerle bireysel terapinin ötesinde, evlat edinen aileleri eğitmek ve desteklemek için çok önemli bir ihtiyaç vardı. Aile terapisi, ilişki dinamikleri ele alabilir ve evlat edinme hakkında açık tartışmaların teşvik edildiği bir ortamı teşvik ederek aile birimi içinde bağlılığı ve anlayışı geliştirebilir (Brodzinsky, 1990).

Araştırma Etkileri

Bu çalışma, Türkiye bağlamında evlat edinme ve fantezinin kesişimini araştıran bilinen ilk çalışmadır. Hem ulusal hem de uluslararası tartışmalara önemli bir katkı sağlamıştır. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, evlat edinme ve fantezi alanında gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalar için çeşitli çıkarımlarda bulunmuştur. İlk olarak, çalışma evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezileri üzerine daha güncel araştırmalara duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamıştır. Literatür taramasında da belirtildiği gibi, bu alandaki çalışmaların çoğu 2000'li yıllardan öncesine dayanmaktadır ve bu da son zamanlarda yapılan araştırmalarda bir boşluk olduğunu göstermektedir.

Bu çalışma homojen bir örneklem olan Türk kadın evlat edinenlere odaklanmıştır, bu da bulguların genellenebilirliğini sınırlamıştır. Gelecekteki araştırmalar evlat edinme fantezilerini farklı yaş grupları, kültürel geçmişler ve evlat edinme türleri (örneğin, uluslararası, koruyucu aile, açık ve kapalı evlat edinmeler) açısından inceleyebilir.

Bu çalışma ayrıca, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerinin zaman içindeki gelişimini ve evrimini anlamada boylamsal araştırmanın önemini vurgulamıştır. Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları, deneyimleri üzerine düşünen evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerdir. Ancak, bu fantezilerin çocukluktan ergenliğe ve yetişkinliğe kadar yaşam boyu nasıl ortaya çıktığını ve değiştiğini incelemek değerli olacaktır.

Araştırmanın Sınırlılıkları ve Güçlü Yönleri

Bu çalışma, Türkiye'deki evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezileri hakkında değerli bilgiler sunarak, evlat edinilenlerin iç dünyalarının ve bu fantezilerin psikolojik işlevlerinin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunmuştur. Bununla birlikte, çalışmanın sınırlılıklarını ve güçlü yönlerini kabul etmek, bulgular için bir bağlam sağlamış ve

gelecekteki arařtırmalara rehberlik etmiřtir. rneklemin homojenlięi, tm katılımcıların evlat edinilmiř Trk yetiřkinlerden oluřması, bu alıřmanın metodolojisi ve amaları doęrultusunda bilinli bir seimdi. alıřmanın amacı genelleřtirilebilir bulgular elde etmek deęil, belirli bir grup bireyin yařam deneyimlerini ve anlam yaratma srelerini derinlemesine arařtırmaktı. Bu idiografik odak, katılımcıların fantezilerinin ve bunların psikolojik neminin zengin ve incelikli bir řekilde anlařılmasını saęlamıřtır.

Bu alıřmanın bir dięer kısıtlılıęı da erkek katılımcıların olmamasıdır. Her ne kadar sadece kadın katılımcıların dahil edilmesi homojen bir rneklem oluřturmuř olsa da, erkek katılımcıların olmaması evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerinin anlařılmasını kısıtlamıř olabilir. Erkekler, evlat edinme anlatısına dair ilave igrler saęlayabilecek farklı deneyimlere ve fantezi yapılarına sahip olabilirler. Gelecekteki arařtırmalar, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerine iliřkin daha kapsamlı ve cinsiyete gre eřitlilik gsteren bir anlayıř yakalamak iin hem erkek hem de kadın katılımcıları dahil etmeyi ve cinsiyetler arasındaki potansiyel farklılıkları ve benzerlikleri keřfetmeyi amalayabilir.

alıřmanın nitel tasarımı, katılımcıların deneyimlerinin zengin ve derinlemesine incelenmesine olanak tanırken, bazı sınırlamalar da getirmiřtir. Bulgular, arařtırmacının nyargıları ve varsayımlarından etkilenebilecek veri yorumlarına dayanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, ye kontrol ve akran bilgilendirmesi gibi dřnmsellik ve doęrulama stratejilerinin kullanılması, bu endiřelerin azaltılmasına ve bulguların gvenilirlięinin saęlanmasına yardımcı olmuřtur.

Bu alıřmanın nemli bir dięer kısıtlaması da evlat edinilmiř katılımcılarla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmıř bu grřmelerin sınırlı sayıda olmasıdır. Fantezileri ve bunların psikolojik neminin keřfetmek, teraptik bir baęlamda olduęu gibi uzun sreli katılım gerektirebilecek karmařık ve son derece kiřisel bir sretir. Bu alıřmanın sonuları her bir katılımcıyla yapılan iki oturuma dayanmaktadır ve bu da deneyimlerinin derinlięini ve nanslarını tam olarak yakalamak iin yeterli olmayabilir. Gelecekteki arařtırmalar, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerini daha kapsamlı bir řekilde anlamak iin belirli zaman iinde birden fazla grřme veya vaka alıřması yaklařımı gibi daha kapsamlı bir veri toplama sreci kullanmayı dřnebilir.

Bu sınırlamalara rağmen, çalışmanın dikkate değer bazı güçlü yönleri de bulunmaktadır. Yorumlayıcı Fenomenolojik Analiz (IPA), katılımcıların yaşadıkları deneyimlerin ve anlam oluşturma süreçlerinin ayrıntılı ve incelikli bir şekilde araştırılmasına olanak sağlamıştır.

Çalışmanın Türkiye'deki evlat edinilmiş yetişkinlerin fantezilerine odaklanması, literatürdeki önemli bir boşluğu doldurmuştur; zira daha önceki araştırmalar ağırlıklı olarak Batı bağlamında yürütülmüş ve genç evlat edinilenlere odaklanmıştır. Çalışma, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerini inceleyerek, evlat edinmenin uzun vadeli etkisini ve evlat edinilenlerin iç dünyalarını şekillendiren devam eden psikolojik süreçleri irdelemiştir.

Çalışmanın bir diğer güçlü yanı, yedi üst ve birçok alt temanın belirlendiği kapsamlı ve sistematik veri analizidir. Bu temalar, evlat edinilenlerin fantezilerinin karmaşık ve çok yönlü doğasının zengin ve ayrıntılı bir şekilde anlaşılmasını sağlamış, hizmet ettikleri çeşitli psikolojik işlevleri ve kayıp, travma, kimlik ve ilişkiler gibi evlat edinme deneyiminin kritik yönleriyle nasıl ilişkili olduklarını vurgulamıştır

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