RETHINKING CULTURAL MARGINALITY IN THE POSTMODERN AGE

Dialogical Ambivalence of
the Multicultural Self

Master's Thesis

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"An unexamined life is not worth living." **Socrates**

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Cultural marginality as a unique identity phenomenon exhibits growing salience in contemporary societies and revolutionizes our traditional understanding of cultural identity and sense of selfhood by alluding to an obscure and dynamic configuration of individual identity that pertains to multiple cultural systems. The concept of cultural marginality can be traced to the "Marginal Man" concept proposed by Park (1924) from the Chicago School of Sociology and has since caused considerable controversy largely due to a predominantly negative connotation perceived towards the notion. In recent decades with the prevalence of multiculturality, the issue of multicultural identity has particularly been brought to extensive debate and correspondingly spurred conceptions of the multicultural personhood that are more or less distanced from Park's original formulation. Examples include "multicultural man" (Adler 1977), "integrated" identity (Bennett, Milton 1986) and "encapsulated" and "constructive" cultural marginal (Bennett, Janet 1993). Reviewing the recent literature on multicultural identity, Sparrow (2000) contends against the arguably "radical constructivist" (Glasersfeld 2000) paradigm underpinning such interculturalists' conception of the multicultural person and calls for an integrative approach to cultural marginality synthesizing both the radical constructivist and social constructionist views.

This academic paper continues the points of inquiry of Sparrow's research and adopts an interdisciplinary approach to render a comprehensive examination of the existing literature on cultural marginality, with the aim of identifying the capacity for integrating the radical constructivist and social constructionist perspectives as advocated by Sparrow. In contrast to the pervasive, evaluative view that presents cultural marginality as a static, existential dimension unrelated to cultural dynamics, it is argued that the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality embodies a great extent of dynamism and embeddedness within the semiospheres of both culture and self. Bahktinian notion of dialogicality combined with a conception of cultural marginality as a multiple structural ambivalence is proposed to invigorate and revise our understanding of the phenomenological realities of cultural marginal individuals. Ultimately, it is asserted that a radical transformation of the traditional view of cultural marginality will first necessitate a fundamental change in our conception of such salient concepts as culture and self.

Special emphasis is levied to relate the contemporary phenomenon of cultural marginality to the sociocultural atmosphere of postmodernism. In disavowal of modernism and "postpostmodernism" (Kirby 2006), it is contended that the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality can occur and flourish only in the postmodern episteme. Amid the contemporary sociological context of consumerism and technological permeation, it is further suggested that cultural marginality presents a special microcosm for us to understand the fragmentary and diffuse nature of our general selfhood in the postmodern social current while not diminishing the salience of this identity phenomenon in its own right. Implications of cultural marginality are also discussed in relation to its conceived social significance to the world now permeating with intercultural encounters.

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Motivations

Question of selfhood has long cast its spell on countless minds of academics and ordinary laymen alike throughout human civilization across cultures and time. The curiosity is that the issue remains to mesmerize individuals and groups through generations despite that numerous scientific explanations or identity development models have been put forward for extensive scrutiny. In other words, the enigma of self is perpetual as individual and collective minds interface with the course of specific sociohistorical and sociocultural contexts.

Issues on identity in general and multicultural identity in particular have become more significant as efforts to discern and position the self against the backdrop of the seas of sociological conditions took on more fervent turns since the past few centuries and especially in recent decades with the growing salience and awareness of identity politics (see Langman 1996). Cultural marginality that suggests a unique constitution of identity dimension that is diffusely involved in multiple cultural discourses in conjunction with differential social patterns is especially intriguing with its contemporary prevalence as well as the great extent of complications with which it can be comprehended. While my primary interest in cultural marginality relates to its scientific and social dimensions, it was initiated foremost with my subjective experience as a multicultural individual. The constitution of my multicultural self, however, relates curiously to a deliberate exposure to discrepant cultures within my own psychological microcosm which served as a desperate defiance against the inevitable social constraints instilled through the immediacy of my familial context. Conscious immersion in and worship of foreign languages, literatures and cultural products during the formative years of adolescence began to sap into my identity formation that would subsequently prepare me for much identity confusion and anomie, albeit a gratifying sense of distinctness and prestige over the ordinary others. By journeying through the academic discourse on cultural marginality, I therefore intend this research as a

phenomenological process for further revelation and resolution of my personal self-construct as a multicultural person.

Led by my personal curiosities towards the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality, my scientific motivation for the subject took shape as I aimed to examine in detail what constitutes and sustains the dynamics of identity development of a cultural marginal individual. The scientific capacity of cultural marginality as a subject of inquiry becomes evident as thoughts on this identity phenomenon have arguably been overshadowed with a relatively negative approach and a largely autonomous view. This is coupled by the popularity of the differentiated conceptions of "encapsulated" and "constructive" marginality which however are not sufficient in giving an adequate response due to the largely diagnostic and symptomatic emphasis (Bennett 1993a). In other words, cultural marginality has indeed drawn on a great deal of academic interest with recurrent controversies on the subject and has nevertheless yet seen a more or less coherent conceptual orientation to the identity dimension that describes its uniqueness and significance.

In his seminal article titled *Beyond cultural identity: Reflections on multiculturalism* (1977), Adler put forward his conceptualizations of what he termed as "the multicultural man", portraying that the multicultural person has a unique self-process that can consciously and dynamically shift between changing cultural worldviews. In line with the assumptions of Adler, Milton Bennett more recently in his *Developmental model of intercultural sensitivity* describes the individual in the final "Integration Stage" as one who can consciously "construe differences" and construct realities and identities on his/her own (Bennett 1986:184). Janet Bennett also differentiates between two types of cultural marginality – "constructive marginality" and "encapsulated marginality" and argues that a constructive cultural marginal is one "who is able to construct context intentionally and consciously for the purpose of creating his or her own identity." (Bennett 1993:113). The accounts of

multicultural personhood as rendered by such authors are prominently featured in literature concerning cultural marginality and it is also this extensive reference to such conceptions in the academia that motivates Sparrow (2000) to counter the erroneous assumptions underpinning the portrayals of the multicultural person by such "interculturalist" authors.

In her article *Beyond Multicultural Man: Complexities of Identity* (2000), the title of which illustrates a clear response to Adler's conception, Sparrow challenges the arguably radical constructivist view on cultural marginality as depicted by Adler and Bennetts. Her argument is based on a critical review of existing literature on cultural marginality and a small research study of multicultural people. She argues against the autonomous representation by such authors of the cultural marginal as a conscious being with a "Cartesian concept of a mind, detached from experience, capable of determining an objective reality", and asserts that such descriptions of the cultural marginal reflect the traditional western and male paradigms at work in these scholars (Sparrow 2000:4). Instead, she attaches more significance to the social constructionist thinking which emphasizes the myriad influences of our social experiences and interactions on the construction and sustaining of our identities. Not refuting radical constructivist view altogether, Sparrow concurrently advocates integration of the radical constructivist and social constructionist perspectives for arriving at more valid understandings of this identity phenomenon more relevant to the intricate sociological realities in the postmodern age.

Sparrow and Adler unanimously invite ongoing probing of the nature of multiculturality in their respective articles. Having taken the views to multicultural identity portrayed by Adler and Bennetts as self-evident facts since their phenomenological emphasis touched upon the psychological dimension of my cultural marginal experience, I was intrigued by Sparrow's assertion for a complementary approach to cultural marginality that is geared

towards the dynamics and complexities of self constitution in relation to the myriad macro-level contextual factors. Interested likewise in the general postmodern conditions and perceiving a conceptual correspondence that underlies the fragmented nature of the postmodern self and the identity configuration of a cultural marginal, I therefore attempt to participate in the intellectual exploration of the issue and uncover the relation of cultural marginality to the postmodern episteme. This point about my scientific motivations towards cultural marginality connects to the social dimension. As cultural plurality continues to permeate the everyday landscapes of our societies where exchanges between various racial and ethnic differences interact in diverse levels and forms, each and every individual will have to cope with contrastive worldviews to different extents and with their concomitant identity challenges on a daily basis. The multicultural implications of cultural marginality therefore entail key social significance and merits deeper interrogation to better unveil the configuration dynamics of cultural marginal identity and relate its salience to our sociological conditions and directions.

With the delineated scientific, social and personal curiosities in mind, this research aims to examine two key questions. First, how can we conceptualize the nature of a cultural marginal identity? If the predominant views to cultural marginality present an overriding emphasis at the individual level as claimed by Sparrow (2000), how can we appropriate the insights of approaches that are more sensitive to the sociocultural processes and integrate into such autonomous accounts of the multicultural self to render a more comprehensive and balanced conception? The implicated perspective here is that radical constructivism and social constructionism are not necessarily mutually exclusive paradigms. Second, whereas the multiculturality of cultural marginal individuals has been anticipated as being conducive to facilitating intercultural communication, what significance can we then derive from the intercultural capacity of cultural marginal individuals and applied to the world now infiltrated with intercultural contacts? As a result, this academic study

comprises two focuses. Fundamentally, a critical review of the existing literature on cultural marginality will be conducted drawing on insights from diverse academic disciplines such as psychology, sociology, communication studies, and postmodern studies. The questions of self and reality construction are inevitably intertwined with origins and dimensions of knowledge. Particularly, the epistemological assumptions of conceptual terms such as postmodernism, radical constructivism, social constructionism and marginality will be elaborated for the purpose of clarifying the contexts in which the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality is examined. The theoretical investigation is geared towards integrating radical constructivist and social constructionist view on cultural marginality to achieve more relevant and organic understandings of multicultural identity. Subsequently, the social implication of cultural marginality other than as a mere identity phenomenon unrelated to the societal context will be invoked. The intercultural capacity of cultural individuals will be discussed as to how their dynamic, in-between personality qualities can contribute to the world at present which is still in search of what multiculturalism entails for individuals and groups alike.

1.2 Need for an Interdisciplinary Approach

Extensive as the scope of this research will touch upon, it is attested that an interdisciplinary approach can examine the very issue with fuller light. As the self exists amid the sociocultural dynamics, the nature and status of self is ineluctably entangled with numerous facets and fluxes of its embedded society. The intricate and dynamic feature of self development in relation to hosts of shaping forces requires crossing and integration of the varied perspectives of traditional disciplines to address this multi-faceted issue at hand. A specific academic view such as anthropology or psychology can yield insight on the issue from the perspective of sociocultural context and individual psychology respectively, but it cannot escape the plausible issues of limitation and distortion and can therefore be problematic epistemologically.

As Hermans (2001) also remarks, the dynamic relations between culture and self signify that any isolated field of scientific investigation will fall short of examining the sophisticated dialectics befittingly. Rather, the complexities of culture and self will require the juncture of divergent disciplines and subdisplines to collaboratively spotlight the interpenetrating issues with the insight each reveals. In the same vein, Adler (1977) also affirms the need for an integrated approach on multiculturalism in his seminal elaboration on the contemporary multicultural self. The fact that he accentuates the development of the multicultural self as a continual process of culture learning and unlearning, rather than a discrete personal construct denoting static uniformity, highlights that as various factors come to be implicated in the process of self development, no confined disciplinary investigation will suffice to tap into the complexity of the phenomenon. Rather, the process of the evolving multicultural self as it interacts with its sociocultural realities pertains to both the psychological and cultural domains as well as other discursive patterns dialectically emergent in the sociocultural context. Despite inevitable difficulties of disciplinary integration as Adler perceives, the growing salience of multiculturalism in the contemporary age warrants a comprehensive account of the individual in relation to group for unveiling its inherently complicated nature and dynamics.

The interdisciplinary methodology of this research to unravel the dialectics of cultural marginality finds its echo in the discipline of intercultural communication in which this research issue is directly embedded. Challenges of intercultural communication as an academic discipline based on multidisciplinary have well been noted in parallel with concerns regarding the uniqueness and credibility of the discipline if its methodologies and theories are derived from a variety of other humanities and social scientific sources. It is up to the development of this scientific field to discover ways of transcending the potential issue of plausibility of interdisciplinary, but its interdisciplinary theoretical and methodological paradigm grants argument for the interdisciplinary approach of this investigation on cultural marginal identity.

Whereas everyday intercultural interactions draw on individuals and the myriad contextual influences ranging from individual psychologies, sociocultural patterns, and identity and cultural politics into the communicative context, the interweaving of such various dimensions constitutes the very backdrop where the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality as a specific manifestation of intercultural communication emerges and evolves. The complex dialectics of self and sociocultural structure being posited by the field of intercultural communication in its theoretical framework and research methodology, it is further spotlighted in the phenomenon of cultural marginality with the increased extent of sociocultural discourses at work.

It is important in this regard to relate the relevance of the intercultural approach to the study on cultural marginality rather than the cross-cultural perspective. As Scollon elaborates, the primary limitation of the cross-cultural view to communication rests in its assumption of the inevitable influence of cultural categories on individuals which reduces individuals as passive receivers and representatives of the larger, categorical influences in the background (Scollon 1997). As such, it falls short of acknowledging the minds as active ones constantly reconstructing and renegotiating meanings as well as the collaborative nature of the creation and maintenance of any knowledge categories. As will be discussed later, the belief in the active nature of meaning construction by individuals and groups is at the heart of "postmodern/constructivist epistemologies" which deny passive, representational views of knowledge and reality (Sexton 1997 as cited in Raskin 2002). It is for this fundamental feature of our collaborative existence that Scollon asserts that the individuals in communication process, instead of the pre-conceived cultural categories, be attributed with focal attention and the diversity of macro-level discursive systems as possible influential factors be revealed through the microcosm of individual mediated action (Scollon 1997). As a result, the richness and complexity of the individual microcosms interacting with one another and inseparably from the macrosysms in the sociocultural framework will become manifest in our investigation. The

activity of identity construction is fueled and sustained by the process of communication and is itself the fundamental exemplar of this basic human behavior. The identity phenomenon of the multicultural identity bringing with it its extra dynamism and complexity allows us to re-acknowledge the intricate nature of human communication in general and identity configuration in particular and requires the comprehensiveness of the intercultural insight for its analysis.

The critique above on cross-cultural view to communication does not equal renouncing the concept of culture altogether. As Scollon (1997) indicates, the category of culture is still useful for our understanding of general communication and identity formation in particular, since it constitutes one of the powerful discourse systems shaping the dynamics and meanings of the communication process. As such, the cross-cultural approach is significant as to acknowledge culture as one influential parameter in human behavior and meaning attainment. Numerous cross-cultural researches have also demonstrated the relevance of differing cultural patterns on interaction patterns and outcomes (see Bennett 1998b). In addition, psychological enquiry also recognizes the tendency to categorical approach in human perception and conception. Culture is therefore one large category of artificial knowledge construction, the patterns and influences of which can be more conspicuously and conveniently alluded to for our attribution purpose. What should be cautioned however is an over-emphasis of this knowledge-construction category as to render it all-encompassing and to overlook other possible discourse systems bearing equal importance and validity. While cross-cultural approach underlines culture and cultural identity as crucial notions, the added complexity of multicultural identity serves to expand our scope of understanding beyond such conceptual categories to include in our investigation other discursive resources and voices in the individual and societal repertoires.

On the basis of the more relevant theoretical stance of the intercultural approach, the need for an interdisciplinary methodology for studying cultural marginality thus finds its justification. It is through the interdisciplinary approach that myriad plausible factors that shape the development of the multicultural identity come to reveal themselves in the process of investigation. The kaleidoscopic perspective offered aids in examining the individual self from various angles and facets which complement with one another to build up a comprehensive sketch of the identity landscape. In connection to this claim, Brofenbrenner's "bioecological approach to human development" is relevant to provide support for an interdisciplinary approach to individual development (Brofenbrenner 1971 as cited Pellegrini, 1991).

Although rooted in the discipline of psychology, Brofenbrenner does not limit his conception to the psychological dimension but expands instead the conventional focus of the psychological discipline on individual to include the multiple strata of contextual influences. The result of the dynamics of individual microcosms in relation to various "nested" macrosystems is a multi-layered individual developmental trajectory that gives unified diversity to a person's biographical experience (Brofenbrenner 1971 as cited Pellegrini, 1991). The fusion of individual psychology with various environmental, societal and institutional forces here by Brofenbrenner concurs with the rationale for an interdisciplinary study on cultural marginal identity as we integrate the psycho-biological, psycho-philosophical and psycho-sociocultural realities to shed light on the integral development of the multicultural individual.

The need for an interdisciplinary approach can also be traced to the evolving theoretical assumptions on methodology along with the paradigmatic shift from the modern to postmodern era. Berger and others elaborate the "life-world" pluralizing effects of modernity on individual consciousness, from

which we can derive implications of the consequence of discipline specialization and anonymization (Berger B., Berger P., and Kellner 1973). If modern consciousness achieves comprehension and control by means of breaking down objects of inquiry to be followed by taxonomic analysis and management, the resultant divisions need to be integrated reversely to render a comprehensive understanding. The pluralizing force of modernity segments the life-worlds and consciousness of an individual and goes on to manifest itself in the vastly discrepant academic divisions which are self-contained and incomprehensible to an outsider. As such, the task to integrate the fragments generated by the lenses of different academic disciplines becomes an imperative for our global comprehension. Modernism refutes any monopolizing view of the self and methodologically utilizes the faculty of rationality in leading to considerable canons and perspectives through which we can scrutinize the issue. Subsequently in postmodernity, we are left with the task to utilize the relative and "multirelational" nature of knowledge to unite the disjointed fragments of legacies from relevant academic canons so that we can confront the issue of self-understanding squarely (Berger et al 1973:206).

2. QUEST FOR ONTOLOGICAL EPISTEMES

Before commencing an investigation into the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality, it is of importance to launch a discussion on several key conceptual terms to detail the ideological backdrops against which we can comprehend cultural marginality more completely.

2.1 Reign of Consumerism in Postmodernity

Postmodernity is reckoned to be the epistemological context in which this research on cultural marginality lays ground in. The debate around modernity and postmodernity has been incessantly fashionable as it has been frustratingly inconclusive. Featherstone summarises that the elusiveness of the concept of

postmodernism and the concomitant futility of efforts to concretise the concept and its distinction from modernity have invited many to regard postmodernism as merely "perpetuating a shallow and meaningless intellectual fad" (Featherstone 1991:1). Nevertheless, the use of postmodernity instead of modernity to describe the epistemological and ontological conditions of cultural marginality requires to be justified. While the notion of periodization is interpreted to contradict with postmodernist conviction, the urge to differentiate postmodernity from modernity ensues once we recognize the discontinuity of the epistemological and ontological conditions of the two associated movements of ideas which call for fundamentally different understandings.

Continuing Foucault's archaeological view of historic periods, postmodern sociologist Zygmunt Bauman renders a simple outlet from the ceaseless entrenchment of controversies surrounding periodization by calling for an analysis of the dynamics of societal reality uniquely reflecting postmodernity (Bauman 1992). He presents a precise stance for postmodernity in his brief remark about the choice of term of *postmodern* over *postcapitalist* and *poststructuralist*, noting however that their shared significance as indicated by the prefix '*post'* is that they all direct our attention to what is novel and discontinuous in relation to what is prior to them in the epistemological and ontological thread than in the temporal sense. From a sociological point of investigation, Bauman contends that the concept of postmodernity can legitimate its right as a distinct societal reality fundamentally because it "generates a social-scientific discourse which theorizes different aspects of contemporary experience" (Bauman 1992:93). In other words, modernity and postmodernity embody differential integrative principles and enunciative homogeneity on the basis of the systems of dispersion and interplay of differences in their respective sociological underpinnings and philosophical assumptions. It is amid such novel constellations of philosophical and sociological manifestations of the cultural period of postmodernity that cultural marginality emerges.

The archaeological approach as propounded by Foucault and adopted by Bauman thus urges us to examine the intrinsic ideologies and dynamics of the postmodern society to unveil what characterises postmodernity peculiarly and its paradigmatic shift from modernity. For Bauman, the postmodern conditions arise as a self-sustaining dynamism foremost with its substitution of reason as the guiding authority for individuals and society alike. With the dethroning of reason and leveling up of hierarchies, plurality and heterogeneity of belief systems in the sociocultural world now constitute and sustain the postmodern conditions. In addition, consumer culture has come to constitute the integrative principle of the contemporary society. Consequent to the decentering of productive activities from individual life-worlds, Bauman envisions that "consumer conduct" has now moved in to fill the vacuum as the "cognitive and moral focus of life", which is legitimized as the central link fastening the life-worlds of individual agents and the primary rationale for systemic organization of contemporary society (Bauman 1992:49). The incessant pursuit of pleasure legitimated now as individual choice turns consumeristic enticement into instruments of social integration and systemic societal surveillance and control (Bauman 1992). From a sociological point of investigation, the advent of consumer culture operating among individuals and human groupings as the prevailing rubric lays a brand-new sociological and philosophical groundwork for postmodernism to perpetuate itself. He henceforth concludes that the fundamental transformation in the functioning of the contemporary society justify postmodernity as a "fully-fledged, viable social system which has come to replace the 'classical' modern, capitalistic society and thus needs to be theorized according to its own logic" (Bauman 1992:52).

A similar assertion is made by Featherstone (1991) and Jameson (1991) to articulate a full sociological account of postmodernism. On top of a sociological analysis of postmodernity, Featherstone's focus on consumer culture in connection to popular culture and intelligentsia in particular brings forth aesthetics as the primary paradigm in transformation pertaining to

postmodernism (Featherstone 1991). Continuing the conceptual thread of Baudrillard, Featherstone delineates that the surfeit of commodities along with their associative and arbitrary signs and images have given rise to a kaleidoscopic pretension of reality (what Baudrillard calls *hyperreality*). Inside such a hallucinatory dimension, meaning formations no longer succumb to the structuralist, differential logic while orthodox social and class markers fail any traditional social classificatory purposes. The resultant "aestheticized commodity world" and concomitant sense of "cultural disorder" and "cultural declassification" constitute the postmodern landscape as both a theoretical abstraction and an everyday practice (Featherstone 1991:23). Viewing the postmodern as a phantasmagoria of commodity signs, Jameson (1991) likewise recognizes consumer culture as the prevailing sociological landscape of the postmodern. In effect, he notes that the propagation of the sphere of culture in postmodern saturates the entire social realm ranging from economic mechanism, state authority to the very structure of the individual and collective psyche.

Despite key differences underlying their theorizing endeavors, traces of commonalities can be revealed in their viewpoints of postmodernism for the argument of using the postmodern as the paradigmatic backdrop for this research. Most conspicuously, the postmodern scholars discussed all contend for the ontological and epistemological autonomy of postmodernism as a novel and fully-fledged social formation in its own right. The movement of ideas embodied by postmodernism emerges as a fundamental rupture with its entirely different underpinning philosophically and sociologically and justifies therefore a relatively autonomous construal of the postmodern. This is to be accomplished not merely by means of a periodizing gesture but also an understanding of its prevailing dynamic in its entirety in relation to its historical and sociological developments.

Similarly, the dynamic of consumerism stands at the heart of their theorizations in relation to the postmodern world. From a sociological point of

analysis, both Bauman (1992) and Featherstone (1991) conceive the advent of consumer culture as the new integrative nexus and functioning mode of the postmodern society. Featherstone goes further than Bauman to unveil the facets and details of the consumerism framework and advocates a truthful understanding of postmodernism by examining the changing interrrelationships between the various specialist formulations of culture. Jameson also premises consumer culture as the hegemonic norm that characterises and sustains the postmodern worldview, and ties it with the directive coordination of capitalistic logic. In sum, consumer culture and postmodernism are aligned by the postmodern authors as mutually constitutive and propelling phenomena to assert their symbiotic existence. In effect, not only has the scope of coverage of the cultural sphere permeated to the entire social realm, but also the notion of culture itself has transformed. Traditionally, culture was having a largely confined status of interest in the field of sociology and its meaning was perceived in the anthropological sense in that individuals collectively sustain the everyday process of signification and cultural reality in societies (Featherstone 1991). With the infusion of consumer conduct as the prevailing integrative mechanism for contemporary sociological processes, culture however has become both the propellant and product of our everyday symbolic production. The result is its detachment from its traditional domain and self-endowment with a general sociological sense as it infiltrates the social realm and becomes a universal praxis and pseudo-guidance for everyday living. As will be discussed further in section 5.2, this simulational nature of contemporary consumeristic existence carries profound implications for identity configuration in general and cultural marginality in particular.

2.2 Validity of Cultural Marginality in face of Altered Meaning of Culture

Given the novelty of the scope and nature of culture in postmodernity, the meaning and importance of cultural marginality may seem questionable. To

clear the confusion about the concept of culture, there exist views which distinguish between the traditional anthropological sense of culture and its broader contemporary consumeristic pattern (see Featherstone 1991). Bauman (1992) however acknowledges the changing discourse of culture in light of the contemporary sociological climate as a vivid manifestation of the market-driven patterns of postmodernity. He notes that from an orthodox proselytising ideology grounded in the anthropological sense of totality, the advent of consumerism opens up and alters the conventional paradigm and defines pluralism and relativity as the new existential conditions and values of culture.

The significance of this perspective is that it not only links up the multiple meanings of culture in face of the present-day sociological current, but also renders the shift from the traditional enclave of culture to the wider contemporary salience an indissociable dialectic. Culture is not invalidated in its traditional sense but rather embodies a wider dimension which directs our attention to the consumeristic dynamic that shapes its discursive shift. Differentiating between the anthropological sense and wider consumeristic sense of culture hence would render our conceptualisation easier on the surface. But understanding the postmodern requires us to come to terms with culture as a prevailing universal dynamic in relation to its anthropological meaning from where it evolves. Paradoxically, the consumeristic sense of culture also requires a strengthened foothold of the anthropological culture to facilitate its brandishing as a ready package for consumption in the consumer market. In truth, the sphere of anthropological culture works symbiotically to fuel the momentum of expansion of consumeristic culture. The concept of cultural marginality as articulated foremost by Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935) was precisely founded on the anthropological frame of understanding, which has long served the intellectual paradigm for successive scholars to understand the phenomenon of cultural marginality. The rest of this research attempts to examine the discourse of cultural marginality as it was first conceptualised. As discussion on the initial convention begins, the investigation into the issue of culture marginality will inevitably touch upon the

implications of consumeristic culture as the discourse of culture itself undergoes a fundamental transformation in postmodernity (but not necessarily annihilating its conventional sense).

From the above delineation of major theorizations on contemporary experience, positing postmodernism as the epochal backdrop of cultural marginality naturally follows when we consider the sociological logic of present-day societies and derive the plausibility of the phenomenon therein. From a hierarchical-based meaning construction to an imagistic and symbolic world marked by floating fragmentariness, the transformed nature of perceived reality and its new integrative principle render the postmodern the befitting description of contemporary existential conditions. Cultural marginality which presupposes a coaslescence of the bounded constructs of culture can only take place where the profusion of symbols and discourses exist to provide the preconditions for shaping a multifarious personhood. The resultant paradox is that such an experential reality as the standard for individuals to configure their identities is simultaneously reinforced.

Secondly, the shift in the discourse of culture also predicates the impossible existence of cultural marginality in the modernist climate and its contrary thriving in the postmodernity. Rationality stood as the governing center in modernist thinking with the entrusted universalistic authority to curb any uncertainties and unknowns that would challenge the security its otherwise totalization would afford. Cultural ideology as it used to be legitimated and safeguarded by intellectuals (see Bauman 1991) had therefore the important sociological function to demarcate the relative boundaries of a sheltered zone for its inside members. The exotic novelty of the figural of a cultural marginal who did not conform to the collectively consented realm and was therefore feared to be unmanageable came as an intolerable violation of the modernist logic. In sociological terms, the incomprehensible cultural marginal is thereby certain to be excluded from the familiar group and "liquidated" as the

"stranger" (Berger and Luckmann 1966:115; Bauman 1998:18). It is only with the eclipse of absolutistic project which alters the discourse of culture to be defined now by diversity, as well as the acceptance of uncertainty as the established reality of the postmodern, that capacity is opened up to accommodate the distinct configuration of a cultural marginal personhood. In other words, while cultural marginality would present as an adversary, deviant definition of reality to the modernist societies, its previous dangerous character is displaced to constitute the normative landscape of contemporary societies.

On the morality level, the issue of choice amid contextual ambivalence characterises both the postmodern moral conditions and the experience of cultural marginality. In line with the conviction of universalistic reason in modernity, the institution of legislation was entrusted as the rationally conceived design to function as the supra-individual authority and decree ethical regulations for governing individual behavior and societal practice (Bauman 1995). There was in essence then no real moral choice since the authority of legislation was the reference center for retrieving moral judgment and moral decisions consequently did not originate from the individuals. With the demise of an all-encompassing ethical code to endow certainty and efficiency for moral conduct, the postmodern individual is left with the stark obligation to make the moral choices themselves without guidance of any unambiguous standard (Bauman 1995). There is no basis for moral decisions and if any appears to be one would momentarily become questionable and volatile.

Similarly if we shortly consider the moral experience of cultural marginality here, the multiplicity of cultural frames at work present confuse the authority that any single cultural voice may serve. The equally valid nature of the diverse cultural frames signifies that the individual becomes the sole actor for moral decisions and responsibilities. Since which cultural reference is adopted for judgement is weighed only contextually and no cultural system can

stand as the ultimate truth, the speculative and uncertain nature of the moral dilemmas underlies both cultural marginality and the general postmodern moral situation. To appropriate Bauman's terminology, the existence of both the postmodern self and the cultural marginal is marked by the paradoxical quality of the tyranny of choice (Bauman 1995:4). With the absolutist principles in modernity, the moral predicament confronting the postmodern and cultural marginal individual would be implausible with the security delegated by the ideology of a single cultural system and legislative authority.

2.3 Postpostmodernism as Manifestation of Postmodern Influence

A point of departure worthy of a brief discussion here is the relatively recent disavowal of postmodernism within academia. While the controversy around modernism and postmodernism continues, some scholars have proposed instead the demise of postmodernism and declared progressively the arrival of postpostmodernism. In *The Death of Postmodernism and Beyond* (2006), Kirby argues that new technologies and contemporary social forces in the Information Age have produced a sudden and irrevocable paradigmatic shift in knowledge, reality and authority. In his conception, such manifestations of a perceived epochal change have fundamentally restructured the relationship among the author, the reader and the text.

While contemporary cultural fashions may arrest our eyesight on their seeming novelties, especially given the immediacy and pervasiveness new technologies have infused into our everyday life and consciousness, the patterns of cultural behavior as they are enacted are deemed to be rather the ongoing manifestations and reinforcements of postmodern ideologies than indications of a new, unprecedented paradigm. As discussed above, postmodern life with consumer culture as its key sociological fabric entails an essentially symbolic and illusory world with eclectic mixing of codes which elude any coherence and meaning. Everyday living means the ceaseless

coming to terms with the vast displays of signs and images that constitute our sense of perceived reality and individual consciousness. In this regard, the advent of new technologies presents themselves as powerful tools to perpetuate the phantasmagoria of postmodernity, extending its scope while deepening the dimension of hyperreality as Baudrillard portrays regarding the postmodern (Baudrillard 1983a cited in Featherstone 1991).

The naturalized dependence on technologies in the everyday life of contemporary individuals signifies that the fabric of our daily living has become fundamentally fractured and that our consciousness is essentially fragmentary in nature. Infinite clicking in the cyberspace escalates the surreality of our already ontological and epistemological illusions when our beings are now transported to and alternating among previously inaccessible locations and vast arrays of realms of knowledge in split instants. Individuals are now presented with the ever-daunting tasks to manipulate more actively the imploding fluxes of signs that infiltrate all levels and facets of the daily lives. The haphazard and kaleidoscopic nature of knowledge compilation and reality sense becomes therefore more pronounced under the impact of technological saturation. Meanwhile, the instantaneous present becomes the only salient conception of temporality at the marginalized obsoleteness of past and future. As such, the extent of fragmentariness and transience is further heightened in our sense of reality, consciousness and identity configuration in the Information Age rather than being superseded.

Morrison et al similarly disavows the claim of societal revolution brought about by technical developments (2001). They caution against a direct extrapolation of technological transformations to a societal paradigmatic change. In addition, they conclude on the basis of an analyzed lack of qualitative changes in the ideational, social organizational and performative levels that the impact of technologies belongs more to a quantitative, "functional amplification" of what is already in existence than inducing

drastically new, qualitative changes (Morrison 2001:135). With this stream of thinking, it is hence deemed more relevant to conceive technological advancements as the vital engines to sustain the momentum of a contemporary sociological dynamic that has already been existing and functioning. While this is not to suggest the sociological neutrality of information technologies, we need to avoid a technologically deterministic account of social change and investigate how new technologies mediate social relations and the co-dynamic of technologies and their sociological context. In effect, it is contended that technologies in the Information Age embody the ideal companion for consumer culture to fuel its infusion into our individual consciousness and societal operations thanks to their reality-fragmenting power and the resultant kaleidoscopic existential conditions they perpetuate. As will be discussed in , what is generally characterized as the postmodern conditions in terms of transformation in social relational pattern and individual identity formation is largely seen to be the consequence of pervasive technologies of social saturation in the past two centuries (see Gergen 1991). Concerning cultural marginality in particular, technologies amplify the scope and speed of access to various cultural realms and products and facilitate the dissemination of the identity phenomenon. In sum, what Kirby has observed in present-day cultural fashion is therefore synonymous with the postmodern climate of consumerism and meaning generation which the technologies function to pronounce its manifestation.

The above countering perspectives to postpostmodernism may be interpreted by opposing views as being a mere conjectural enterprise which lacks the courage and determinism to leap from the preoccupying paradigm by intellectuals of the contemporary world (Kirby 2006). Nevertheless, as Bauman (1992) remarks, sociology is a perpetually flawed formation since it is an intrinsically relative and progressive enterprise to describe the perceived objective ontology of an evolving society. It therefore remains an open investigation as intellectuals continue to inspect sociohistorical developments and discern any paradigmatic discontinuities in the contemporary society

concomitant with the technological advances so that a novel sociological ontology can be justified (Elias 1972 cited in Featherstone 1991). Nevertheless, the significance of the claims made by Kirby and similar others lies in its increasing our vigilance to the disposition of postmodern consumer culture and its concomitant technological advancements to speculate the possible sociological pathways they present us with.

To make a heretofore brief summary, it is contended that postmodernity be conceived as the ideological and sociological context of our contemporary society in which cultural marginality is embedded. The specific constellations of individual and collective consciousness, and the thriving of consumerism as the novel integrative principle of the present-day world justify our conceptualization of the postmodern. Meanwhile, technological advancement as an engendered concomitant of contemporary consumer culture strengthens the postmodern ideologies which in turn support and legitimate the otherwise implausible sociological phenomenon of cultural marginality. As an exotic individual embodiment and sociological instance which threatened the security the modernist realms of thinking conferred, cultural marginality could only be found in the contemporary, postmodern world in which diversity is the sustaining logic. Indeed, it was in the context of active human migration in the early nineteenth century in which diversity of life experiences were progressively becoming the actuality of existential circumstances that Park (1928) first conceived the outcome of such intercultural fusion manifest in the cultural marginal individual. Following is a dedicated account on cultural marginality from a general sociological dimension of discussion.

2.4 The Original Marginal Man by Park and Stonequist

Rooted in the school of sociology, the nature and significance of the marginality concept can be comprehended only when conceptualized as a

sociological phenomenon. Virtually all researches on cultural marginality trace the marginality concept to Park when he was among the first to elaborate the portrayal of the culturally marginal man in *Human Migration and the Marginal Man* (Park 1928). His infusion of the marginality concept with clear sociological orientation is ineluctable when he embeds cultural marginality in the context of human migration, whether in the form of peaceful or hostile penetration, which enforces different races and cultures together in the individual person. Cultural marginality, as a sociological-based concept, is also founded prominently upon the notion of culture. The dual macro-level implications in the concept of cultural marginality also give rise to its tremendous complications as the unique identity phenomenon cross-fertilizes and entangles sociological and cultural aspects. Whereas culture and civilization are social legacies sedimented from the process of human sociological existence, marginality arises as a relative alternative to the normative social patterns in influence, and is experienced in the individual level by the marginal man in Park's conception. Stonequist (1935) follows Park's idea of the marginal man but extends the social underpinning beyond race and culture as the marginal individual is "unwittingly initiated into two or more historic traditions, languages, political loyalties, moral codes and religions" (Stonequist 1935:2). In other words, the origin of the marginal nature of an individual is relational and comparative to the majority of individuals constituting the principal mass of a population who have their being relatively and by and large stable in a single sociocultural system, despite considerable differences within this shared system. Furthermore, in agreeing with Simmel's portrayal of the marginal man as "the stranger", Park also underlies the "sociological form of the stranger" whose extent of marginality depends on a weighing of the social "liberation" and "fixation" of the individual in relation to an established social reality and order (Simmel 1971 cited in Park 1928:888).

The sociological and relational nature of the marginality concept as articulated by the two forerunners of the culturally marginal man is in line with

a brief visit to the etymology of the term 'margin', from which the two interconnected notions - 'marginality' as a phenomenon and 'marginalization' as the process leading to and reflecting the marginality phenomenon derive. Borrowed from Latin, margin refers to an edge or a border, in other words respective to a core and principal area of bounded dimension. The concept of margin is therefore salient only because it is conceived relative and external to its referenced core. Marginality is a valid concept to describe a sociological phenomenon and process fundamentally because the notion embodies a spatial-dimensional comparison and is transcended to a societal abstraction, and hence the juxtaposition of culture and its peripheral marginality.

Another relevant point to note to foreground the structural implications of marginality is that despite the essentially neutral suggestion of the concept, this relative positing of the margin and the center concomitantly invites the tendency to hierarchize and subjugate one dimension from another. In other words, the center is juxtaposed and hierarchized over the margin, and the principal majority over the peripheral minority. The etymological understanding of the term 'marginal' also exudes the underlying pejorative meaning of the marginality concept as the concept embeds a judgmental delegation of the margin as "of minor effect and importance" (Barnhart Dictionary). Hence the generally negative connotations of marginality as being subjugated and victimized in a social process. Indeed, in comparison with Park's marginality concept, Stonequist (1935) attaches a clearer hierarchical dimension of marginality by relating the marginal individuals to the dialectics of class and power difference between the dominant and subordinate groups. The allusion to spatial differentiation and hence exclusion thus assumes the key metaphorical representation for social structural view to target efforts in rooting out exploitative social processes and structures and transforming the entire societal consciousness and functioning, not limited to the marginalized group. Byrne (2005) for example uses the representation of spatial division to expound the dynamics of structural inequalities of race, ethnicity, gender and age through a spatial subjugation of the minor group and individuals by the

dominant ones. In effect, the development of the term 'margin' from a largely neutral, dimensionally relative concept to an adjective infused with negative judgment is implicative. Such plausible hierarchical view of marginality will be discussed in more detail shortly below.

Moving from the view of marginality as a sociocultural determinant to the individual level of inquiry, both Park and Stonequist conceive a marginal personality type when the moral conflict experienced by the marginal individual is sufficiently intense and enduring that "the personality as a whole is oriented around the conflict" (Stonequist 1935:10). Of significance here is that we can discern a subtle extension of the marginality concept by Park and Stonequist from being a sociological condition to include also its individual embodiment, pertaining in other words to the self-identity of the individual as a cultural marginal. Park speaks of marginality as "a social phenomenon [...] studied not merely in its grosser effects......but [...] envisaged in its subjective aspects as manifested in the changed type of personality which it produces" (Park 1928:887). Stonequist also describes that whereas "marginal represents a sociological process of abstraction, the core of psychological traits which are the inner correlation of the dual pattern of social conflict and identification" of the marginal personality must be reckoned with as well (Stonequist 1935:10). He achieves this by formulating a lifecycle of the individual marginal and also the marginal individuals as a group in relation to the dominant and minority groups, exhibiting his emphasis on the hierarchical dynamics of marginality as pinpointed above. Nevertheless, as a foreword to unveil the primary debate around cultural marginality, it can be indicated here that the potential confusion revolving the marginality concept lies in the foremost attempts by Park and Stonequist to blend the sociological frame of understanding of marginality with that of an individual perspective. As a result, the marginality concept embeds dual suggestions as both a sociological condition and an individual experience.

2.5 Social Structural View to Marginality

Berry's (1997) widely-used acculturation framework which posits marginality as one of the four acculturation strategies by an individual and group also exudes a paradoxical duality of the marginality concept. Considering the two dependent variables 'cultural maintenance' and 'contact and participation', marginality is defined when individuals exhibit little motivation and possibility in maintaining original culture, as well as little motivation in engaging with elements of the host culture (Berry 1997). The sociological frame of reference of marginality of Berry is clear as he posits the stalemate encountered by the individual as consequences of the exertion of group dialectics, which is then internalized and manifested by the individual. Therefore, Berry attributes an individual lack of possibility or interest in cultural maintenance and interaction with others to sociological explanations, such as "*enforced* cultural loss", social "exclusion or discrimination" (Berry 1997:9). His conclusion is that the individual acculturative behavior can be predicted as a function of personal choice intertwined with perceptions and realities of group relations as a whole. Therefore, the individual acculturative outcome depends primarily on the broader sociocultural contexts.

The amalgamation of marginality as an individual experience and social process can thus be perceived to be even more blurred in Berry's treatment of the marginality notion. In effect, the more preferred use of "marginalization" instead of "marginality" by Berry may indicate his heavier leaning on viewing the marginal concept as a process of social dialectics than on an individual level of understanding. This casts as no surprise when in fact Berry places his investigation in the context of immigration and pursues to relate findings from his ecocultural framework for the wider societal acculturation policy and program. In addition, his approach is in line with the orientation of cross-cultural psychology. Despite a fundamental interest in the psychocultural adaptation of the individual, his research ultimately condenses the individual manifestations and generalizes as a collective, categorical

phenomenon, with no particular awareness of the intricate dual embodiments of cultural marginality psychologically and sociologically. In addition, the categorical and mathematical construal of acculturative outcome as a formula of various psychological and environmental variables ignores the irreducible complexity and subjectivity of the acculturating process undertaken by each individual. An explicit critique of this regard is voiced also by Bhatia and Ram who advocate a more process-oriented analysis of acculturation rather than a categorical prediction and description (2001 as cited in Hermans 2002).

Nevertheless, Berry's approach draws our attention to the far end of the sociological approach to cultural marginality by highlighting the contemporary group dialectics of power which constitutes one of the main origins of cultural marginal experience encountered by individuals and groups. We can borrow insight here especially by structural social work as briefly mentioned above which adopts a keen group focus on marginality as intergroup differentiation and hierarchization, and plays down the phenomenological experience of marginality by the individual. In describing the transformed nature and dynamics of social structural oppression, Mullalay describes a marginalized group as "constitut[ing] (an) underclass permanently confined to the margins of society because the labor market (and the general society) will not accommodate them" and "excluded from meaningful social participation and cannot exercise their capacities in socially defined and recognized ways" (1997:266). His repeated use of passive construction here together with his contextual explanation of marginalization as the process leading to the phenomenon of marginality, yields insight in positing marginality as a victimized experience of the oppressed excluded and exploited by the oppressor group via various social structures and institutions.

Byrne (2005) also explores contemporary structural exploitation as engendering marginality comprehensively and even refrains from using the term 'marginality' which he deems as pertaining to a limited focus on discrete

individuals. Rather, he endorses the wider sociological dynamics of "social exclusion" to underlie the conjoint social processes of power struggles in contributing to marginality (Byrne 2005). Let alone a detailed investigation into the nature and mechanism of institutional confines, the contribution of social structural perspective towards marginality lies in its acknowledgment of not only the relational nature of marginality but also of the vivid power dynamics among racial and cultural groups in present-day societies. Such power imbalances and struggles directly contribute to the marginal experience undergone personally and also in relation to group dialectics and identifications from which the self and identity inseparably derive and take shape.

Although group dialectics operate throughout human history as necessary sociological processes for social and individual identity constitution, their significance is intensified amid the postmodern sociological conditions. Variety as the normative sociological landscape of the contemporary societies provides the basis of contentions and conflicts among groups which target their struggles on the exhibits of differences now made more identifiable by the postmodern advocation of diversity. The importance of the insight offered by the social structural work lies in its unveiling the inevitably politicized condition of the essentially relational and plausibly neutral nature of marginality. As such, it reminds of the poignant reality that group juxtaposition unfortunately often turns into institutionalized opposition and power struggle among the contemporary networks of power and desire. However, while the lens of structural social work lends its heavier focus on the marginality as a phenomenon arising from intergroup dialectics, it should be highlighted also that the manifestation of the marginality phenomenon on both individual and social dimensions is inherent in and indissociable from such a social process. With its mission as an academic discipline to discern and undermine structural hierarchies in a society, structural social work naturally places its enterprise at the systemic level of inquiry and critique of the social process in question. Hence its concern is rather on 'marginalization' and 'marginalized' rather than its individual realm of experience and manifestation ('marginality').

2.6 An Inclusive View to Marginality as Sociocultural Ambivalence

The discussion above describes the inherently multiple meanings and interpretations of marginality which pivot the concept with differing leanings on either the individual or group dimension wherein brew also the intellectual controversy. In effect, since the postulation of the marginal man concept by Park (1928) and Stonequist (1935), many reviews have posed challenges to the validity of the marginality concept. A summary by Del Pilar of oppositions to the use of the notion reveals that the issue concerns more a lack of conceptual precision than a lack of empirical support (Del Pilar et al 2004). Dickie-Clark asserts the marginality concept should be discarded because of "a failure to make any distinction at all between the marginal situation and the marginal personality" (1966 cited in Del Pilar et al 2004:5). Del Pilar goes further to advocate the ceasing of the concept both because of its lack of construct validity and the potential negative associations the term invites with the marginal individual and group (Del Pilar 2004).

If marginality as a construct entails such an extent of conceptual imprecision and elusiveness, is it still useful and valid then to discuss marginality in a wider sense and cultural marginality in particular? The real issue, however, is not that of failed effort to differentiate the concept of one frame of reference from another but the acceptance of the inherently ambivalent nature of the marginality concept . As pinpointed before, the notion carries dual specifications due to its simultaneous sociocultural underpinning and individual level of manifestation. Whereas Del Pilar and other critics challenge the wide appeal of the concept due merely to its commonsense plausibility, we can also think of what such conceptual plausibility can be that would support the validity and usefulness of the concept and lead to its wide popularity despite the attempts to negate it.

As invoked previously, the ambivalence of marginality is intrinsic as a sociological concept with dual specifications. Marginality as a construct underpins three essential thoughts and recognitions of sociology: first, the

existence of human beings is fundamentally sociological in nature; second, the sociological nature of human existence maintains that all social structures and spaces function to differentiate between insiders and outsiders; third, the sociological nature of human existence ratifies the inalienable intricacy infiltrating between the individual and society. Marginality arises as a relative sociological phenomenon to the customary systems of thinking and practice that have been collectively adhered to and taken for granted by the majority. Meanwhile, such relational juxtaposition of the conforming whole and the non-conformist individual cannot evade itself as being a social structural phenomenon concurrent with the binary opposition of the two entities. Such views lead to understandings of marginality as a predominantly social phenomenon involving group dialectics. Concomitantly, the sociological nature of marginality affirms a social component of the marginality experience as the individual is reckoned with or views him-/herself as being deviant. Certainly how marginality embodies in the individual level relates to an intricate dynamics among the subjective self, the identification of self to relevant groups and other various contextual factors in force. Nevertheless, encompassing an individual dimension of the marginality concept is crucial for the concept to be complete apart from viewing it as a social and group-based phenomenon. The multiplicity of meanings associated with marginality is therefore an intrinsic and salient nature of the concept and phenomenon, and accounts for the dialectics between its widespread use and criticism. We can discern that the demand by critics of the marginality concept to separate its multiple meanings will only end in circular incompleteness, since the concept as a whole resists isolation of its social-based meaning and reality from its individual manifestation. While the confounding ambivalence of the concept is its nature, the attempt to divide one dimension of understanding from another and limit marginality to only one aspect of conceptualization will only culminate in a conceptual flaw. Johnston (1976) notes also that the controversies towards cultural marginality have been polarized to either treating it as a psychological or sociological theory and urges instead for an integration of these theories to advance the theoretical implications of the term.

Weisberger's (1992) structuralist, integrative view presents one viable theory for responding to such multifold conceptual challenges of marginality and moving away from the stalemate caused by wrought conceptual oppositions. In attempting to clarify the conceptual insufficiency of Park's marginal man, he underlies squarely that the ambivalence of the marginality notion must be reckoned with, "for ambivalence is the foundation of marginality" (Weisberger 1992:434). In his conceptualization, marginality is rather a state of structural ambivalence in the sociological context. As such, this state of marginality needs to be differentiated from the various concomitant reactions to this structural dialectic. He terms these as "directions of marginality" or "social conditions", and classifies dynamically under the four topology of "assimilation", "return", "poise", and "transcendence" (Weisberger 1992:429). In other words, marginality is a structural problematic of multiple ambivalence for its embodied individuals owing to the qualitative changes and structural conflicts the specific historical contexts and differing sociocultural worldviews simultaneously pose to and exhaust the individual perceptual and interpretive framework.

The merit of positing marginality as a state of structural incompatibility is that the perspective not only acknowledges the vast variety of historical and sociocultural determinants of marginality at the contextual level on the one hand and the myriad possible responses to it exhibited at the personal level on the other. Also and more importantly, his perspective conjoins such sociological and individual dimensions of marginality with an underlying "logic" that regulates and explains the range of the manifest variances (Weisberger 1992:434). The structural ambivalence that characterizes marginality in Weisberger's conception relates more to the sociological sense in that contradictions in structured social relations constrain to determine the social location the individual actor positions at a specific context and instance. Meanwhile, it appears also that the ambivalence he describes the concept in both the sociological and psychological sense is a gesture to combine the sociological and individual aspects of marginality. Although he discusses

structural ambivalence from the sociological perspective, there is a concomitant tapping at the individual level to the subjective states, thoughts and emotions. Another related point of notice is Weisberger's conviction of sociocultural inequality as implicated in marginality, a view which sets out to reaffirm the inevitable politicization of sociological dynamics as fundamental contextual precursors brewing the phenomenon of cultural marginality. As such, the seemingly distant view presented by the above-mentioned social structuralist perspective to marginality is connectedly incorporated into this structural model of marginality theorized by Weisberger as fundamental conditions in which marginality emerges and evolves sociologically and phenomenologically.

One may contend at this point that his distinguishment of marginality from its various reactions could perhaps be instrumental in nature to yield functional convenience. Nevertheless, the capacity for his structuralist theory to integrate and explain the diversity of social positions of German Jewry in the Wilhemian era warrants empirical support for his theorization for the conceptual coherence and flexibility it renders (Weisberger 1992). In addition, this structuralist view also affords crucial clarification for the negative connotation long associated with cultural marginality. He remarks that the profile of the buffeted cultural marginal as first articulated by Park is in fact only one "single social condition" among other possible revelations (Weisberger 1992:429). Mistakenly, this limited view of the marginal man has been held as the only delineation of the experience of marginality as to have established the negative connotation tradition of the concept. His caution against confusing marginality itself and possible reactions to marginality offers apt response to the erroneous emphasis on marginality as a predominantly negative phenomenon. This evaluative view towards marginality conceals the richness of marginality as encompassing other possible responses and its intricacy as a socioculturally ambivalent phenomenon.

To borrow the view on ambivalence from a sociological perspective, the predominantly negative construal of the marginal man relates also to an over-emphasis of marginality as psychological ambivalence at the expense of sociological ambivalence which it simultaneously entails. In Merton's (1976) conception, the psychological ambivalence is interwoven with the conflicting normative expectations prescribed by the social institutions on the individual. The psychological ambivalence internalized and manifested in terms of contradictory ideas, affect and behavior by the individual is a result of his occupation of a certain social position of the total sociological structure. In other words, both psychological and sociological ambivalence are "built into the very structure of social relations" and this implies the plausibility of investigating in parallel the psychological manifestation and social structural origins in examining ambivalence (Merton, 1976:4). To rest on the cognitive dissonance and affective anomie as experienced by the cultural marginal individual is to linger on the tradition of negative connotations and confine our analysis on the consequence of marginality, or "response to marginality" (Weisberger 1992). Rather, the focus should be, if not equally, on the broad sociocultural structural patterns which cause and supply such psychological ambivalence. Using Merton's insight, the sociological inquiry into ambivalence will "instructively complement" the psychological inquiry into ambivalence of which cultural marginality presents as a salient type (Merton, 1976:5). Although, cultural marginality emerges as a distinctive phenomenon from the prevailing culture, over-emphasis on the marginal man as a single existential entity secluded from the sociocultural contexts in which it in actuality is embedded and evolves isolates it thus as a psychological phenomenon. Whether it pertains to a phenomenological analysis (see Bennett 1993b), or a general investigation into cultural marginality, the sociocultural and psychological dimensions of the phenomenon need to be analyzed in relation with each other.

As implicated in section 2.5, the significance of the structuralist understanding of marginality lies in its capacity for conceptual integration of

the multiple dimensions constituting and manifesting marginality at the social-systemic and individual level. In other words, the gesture of rendering it more encompassing and entailing a wider extent of ambivalence paradoxically brings with the conceptual clarification it sheds on the phenomenon. Therefore, to understand the dimensions and implications of cultural marginality, the inherent duality of the concept and phenomenon needs to be accepted for our analysis to begin. Arriving at this point of the discussion, the heart of the controversy revolving around the radical constructivist and social constructionist approaches to marginality as delineated by Sparrow (2000) appears with an increased hint that the debate possibly relates to a grappling between a predominantly individual and sociological focus of investigation. The challenge that Sparrow poses to the inadequacy of the two views put alone is therefore synonymous with the advocation for integration that Weisberger's (1992) model of marginality as structural ambivalence epitomizes. Ensuing is the third part of this research that will investigate the theoretical assumptions of radical constructivism and social constructionism in relation to a subsequent integrative approach to marginality. A renewed definition of cultural marginality synthesizing the views discussed will be presented subsequently in the forth part of the research.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Critiques of 'Radical Constructivist' View to Multicultural Identity

Questioning the arguably radical constructivist perspective of multicultural identity, Sparrow (2000) posits the dichotomy between radical constructivism and social constructionism as the central argument of her thesis. She contends that the current conceptualizations of multicultural identity as populated notably by Adler (1977), Jane Bennett (1993a) and Milton Bennett (1993b) share the same conceptual veins as found in the radical constructivist

conception of identity in presuming an objective and deliberate self construction unlimited by contexts. In Adler's profile of the multicultural man, the individual embodies a "style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of identity" (Adler 1977:26). In Janet Bennett's account of the constructive cultural marginal, self and knowledge are but individual constructions and what the person opts to create and undertake (Bennett 1993a). Concurrently, the individual situated in the advanced level of intercultural sensitivity in Milton Bennett's model is external to all cultural frames of reference and exhibits the ability to consciously raise any assumption to a meta-level for contemplation and judgment (Bennett 1993b). Sparrow isolates these descriptions as commonly underlying the radical constructivist proposition of an "Cartesian concept of a mind, detached from experience, capable of determining an objective reality" (Sparrow 2000: 176).

The autonomous and decontexutalised identity formation as portrayed by the constructivist interculturalists becomes empirically questionable alongside the contrary accounts of self-identity expressed by the multicultural individual subjects in Sparrow's research study (Sparrow 2000). As she observed, the multicultural students originate from a variety of cultural, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds who also bring with them diverse differences in gender, ethnicity and religious affiliations. Their identity accounts challenge the profile of a free-acting and free-constructing personhood depicted by Adler and Bennetts as the sociopolitical contextual factors come to clear light and reveal that the cultivated multicultural identity is scarcely a matter of individualistic, unconstrained choice. The accounts from students coming from collectivistic cultures particularly show deep anchoring of one's identity in group affiliations and the impossibility of a self-constructed identity even for multicultural individuals. Cross-cultural differences in the self therefore assume very salient presence also for individuals with substantial and significant exposure to other cultures. As such, the empirical evidence as obtained tends to speak against the suggestion of a free-acting individual which trivilalises cultural influences on the constitution of personhood.

The arguably radical constructivist view of multicultural identity becomes also conceptually problematic after brief literature reviews elucidate alternative identity configurations which are highly subjective, interactive and contextualised. African American and gender differences in the concept of self unitedly posit a self that is indissociably and deeply rooted in close reference and relationship to groups. Together, they emphasize contextual and cooperative underpinnings instead of experience of transcendence and separation as suggested by the constructivist interculturalists. In Sparrow's conception, insights drawn from postmodern and social constructionist views of identity also purport to dispute against the notion of self disembedded from contextual considerations as being oversimplistic. Sparrow borrows interpenetration model in the social constructionist canon to reinstate that the relationship between the self and society is never a clear-cut matter and that the complex, intersecting dynamics negates any possibility of tracing any beginning or end. As such, the constructivist assertion of the multicultural self as embodying the capacity of constructing and determining any reality or identity at will amounts to postulating it as the concrete origin of identity and knowledge. This view ignores the intricate self-societal dialectic as fundamental to the complexities of identity formation processes as elaborated by social constructionists (Sparrow 2000).

Likewise, review on critical theory also highlights the salience of sociopolitical realities as inherent in our identity construction. Ideologies and social institutions in societies are established and maintained to structurally define and constrain self-definition as a means of perpetuating patterns of domination that fulfill political interests of particular individuals and groups. Identity is therefore a deeply political and falsely objective issue that escapes individual consciousness as the process of identity formation is inextricably embedded in the networks of power and desire institutionalized and reinforced in social processes. In-depth interviews conducted by Sparrow (2000) with her ethnic minority, female students particularly underlie the sociopolitical dimensions shaping their sense of personhood. Degradation of previously

privileged and unquestioned social standings in their indigenous cultures is now accompanied by vivid encounters with sexism, racism and prejudice in the novel culture where they reside and assume as minority members. Awareness of their largely taken-for-granted identities and the embedded sociopolitical conditions is therefore forcefully imposed upon such multicultural individuals as they have to grapple with the cognitive and emotional repercussions while acculturating to the new environment. Not only do sociopolitical realities limit the options of the oppressed individuals for subsistence and social participation, but they are also constitutive factors of the identities of such multicultural individuals as they dialectically interact with the pervasive and coercive social pressures. Consequently, social constructionist and critical theorist conceptions of the multicultural self cast the constructivist formulation of the unconstrained self that is autonomously apart from sociocultural realities as fallacious empirically and conceptually.

Apart from problematizing the constructivist conceptualization of the free-acting self, the vivid manifestations of sociopolitical dimension in the multicultural personhood of the non-dominant respondents also question the constructivist concept of marginality. Constructivist thinking tends to delineate multiculturality or cultural marginality as a style of self-consciousness and "an abiding sense of marginal identity" (Sparrow 2000:13). It is hence more psychologically oriented. On the other hand, marginality embedded with considerations of sociocultural dialectics points rather to a sociological phenomenon in which privilege is deprived from the subjugated individuals within particular socialcultural contexts, as well as the process of how they manage the entry and adaptation process into new situations. Instead of a discrete self-identity, marginality in the social constructionist conception embodies a character of generality as a macro-level phenomenon interrelated with the concomitant process of self-identity construction. The revealed nuance in the concept of marginality here underlies again the ambiguous duality of the notion as discussed previously in the second chapter. Another way of describing the conceptual deviance is that whereas the constructivist view

pertains to an individualistic self, the individual and social aspects of self are blended indissociably from the social constructionist perspective. The dual specifications of marginality will be picked up further as the relevant schools of thinking are examined. Suffice now to remark that the seemingly contrastive perspectives presented by social constructionism and radical constructivism touch upon the issue of relevant empirical forms where marginality is to be understood, apart from conceptualizing the content of multicultural identity itself.

In sum, Sparrow's attempt to problematize radical constructivist thinking and distinguish it from social constructionist underpinnings of the multicultural self seems to suggest a binary antinomy of the two schools of thought. Instead of negating radical constructivist view altogether, she nevertheless discerns the capacity for combining the two intellectual perspectives to yield a more complementary and sophisticated understanding of the complexities underlying the multicultural self construction. As such, before undertaking a detailed investigation into the current postulations of multicultural identity as problematized by Sparrow, the two intellectual canons will first be examined to clarify potential misunderstandings and elucidate the capacity to integrate the two perspectives on multicultural personhood.

3.2 The Radical Constructivist Self and its Social Aspects

Sparrow (2000) attributes the profile of the multicultural individual as articulated by Adler (1977) and Bennetts (1993a;1993b) to the radical constructivist strand of thinking. We can borrow insight from Ernst von Glasersfeld (1995), prominent proponent of radical constructivism, for inquiring into the main principles of the canonical conceptualisation of knowledge and reality which is inextricably linked with the constitution of self-identity. The autonomous and highly conscious conception of the multicultural self as depicted by the interculturalists seems to sound a befitting echo to the

radical constrctivist proposition: "knowledge...is in the heads of persons, and that the thinking subject has no alternative but to construct what he or she knows on the basis of his or her own experience" (Glasersfeld 1995:1). Glasersfeld himself is aware of possible instant argument against the radical constructivist approach as implicating solipsism, and is thus prompt to emphasize the unnecessary equivalence of the two perspectives. Reducing the radical constructivist view to a solipsistic conception of the self risks missing the essence of the intellectual proposition. It is therefore crucial to comprehend the broad conceptualizing processes through which the seemingly individualistic statement derives significance and its foundation.

Glasersfeld denies the 'radical' nature of his constructivist idea as being individualistic and explains instead the constructivist theorization as formulated will entails drastic revision of views towards knowledge and reality as upheld in conventional epistemology. Traditional epistemological thinking posits an objective ontological reality from which individuals are relegated to a passive perception as gleaning ready-made and inherent knowledge. Radical constructivism refutes the conception of such an independent reality and underlies the individual mind as the ultimate origin of cognition, knowledge and meaning. In radical constructivist thought, the division between an external and internal world based on the boundary the bodily interface makes with the environment is but an artificial fallacy. Knowledge cannot be passively received in a ready-made manner but is constantly and actively constructed by the individual, since it is always a part of the domain of experience of the cognizant individual. Therefore, existence has no intelligible meaning beyond the realm of individual experience. All experiences whether within or beyond individual awareness are fundamentally subjective in nature and are within the limitation of the experiential field shaped by the individual mind.

Glasersfeld gathers epistemological cues and insights from a variety of empirical and theoretical sources in the fields of psychology,

linguistics and philosophy, and on the basis of which integrates as the main principles of radical constructivist thought. Using empirical evidences from perceptual psychology, he asserts that human perception is a product of subjective coordination by the individual rather than a passive process of accepting sensory signals in preordained clumps (Glasersfeld 1995). An analysis into the mental construction of essential concepts such as time and change, based on epistemological assertions posited by Ceccato, Berkely and Kant, also underlies that such notions do not reside readily in an objective reality independent of the knower for their mechanistic pick-up. They are instead generated by the cognizing individual through active conceptual operations of relational association for organizing and managing the flow of experience (Glasersfeld 1995). Jean Piaget's genetic epistemology provides an even more crucial foundation for the radical constructivist canon by elaborating on the basis and process of ontogenetic acquisition of knowledge by the individual. Central to Piaget's postulation is his theorization on the processes of assimilation and accommodation in conjunction with individual conceptual schemata which service as the basis of individual knowledge and learning through an accumulative and infinite mechanism of multiple-level conceptualization. At this point, criticism on radical constructivism is plausible for its exclusive focus on the individual mind and hence seeming disregard of society and social interaction. However, a close look into Piaget's scheme theory does reveal the significance attached to environmental stimuli and their dynamics with the individual cognitive structure. To shortly summarize, the process of assimilation suggests that an individual tends indeed to recognize and incorporate amid its environmental context what has already been experienced and appears familiar according to its extant schemata. However, such conceptual structures are not rigidly dictating but are liable to qualitative transformation. This happens when mismatch between an enacted activity and expected outcome produces perturbations and triggers off changes in the existing conceptual structure that allow revisions of itself and a state of equilibration to be reattained between the individual and its embedded context. Therefore, instead of pinpointing the individual mind as autonomously

constructing and determining knowledge and reality solely from materials contained in the mind, the subtlety of radical constructivist thought reveals an interacting dialectic between the mind and its embedded experiential context as the basis of cognition as well as the continual process of learning and adaptation. As Glasersfeld observes, Piaget himself often emphasizes that social and linguistic interaction with others embodies the primary and most frequent cause of accommodation, and hence individual learning and knowledge (Glasersfeld 1995). Therefore, social dimensions of individual experiences, instead of being neglected, are included as the indispensable fundamental of the constructivist working of the individual mind.

Another crucial constructivist highlight by Glasersfeld based on Piaget's constructivism is the capacity of individuals to mentally *"re-present"* an image of self and concept, as an active process of creative reconstruction based on memory of past experiences but not a reproduction of any real world (Glasersfeld 1995:61). The explanation of the active nature of individual cognition from an evolutionary epistemological perspective by both Glasersfeld and Piaget renders the constructivist theorization coherent as a whole by endowing human cognition with an adaptive and hence purposive attribute. In his conception, the biological way of considering cognition shifts the focus from striving for an ontological world as there might plausibly be to the very nature and process through which the individual organism experiences in the experiential world. As Glasersfeld repeatedly emphasizes, radical constructivism is an elaborate theory of knowing as it is observed and conjectured empirically but not a formulation of metaphysics. Therefore, it is significant to understand his constructivist conceptualization of knowledge and reality in epistemological but not in philosophical sense. The same goes also for the social constructionist theory which will subsequently be investigated.

Moving from the foundational postulation of individual experience, the crucial issues of reflection and awareness are examined. Humboldt's view is

upheld with its description of reflection as the process in which an individual exerts focused attention to "step out of the stream of direct experience", picks and isolates a chunk from the continuous experiential flow and posits it as a closed entity against itself (Glasersfeld 1995:90). In such a conception, "[r]eflecting upon experiences is clearly not the same as *having* an experience" since what is within the experiential flow (object) is differentiated from what is outside the experience stream (subject) by the "mysterious capacity" of humans of re-presentation which distinguishes and also bridges the two entities (Glasersfeld 1995:90). Following the radical constructivist axiom on the fundamental subjectivity of individual experience, a key question that naturally springs up is the plausibility of such deliberate isolation from the experiential flow, especially when the radical constructivist thought posits that the self is constantly confined to and operates within its experiential field from which a sense of reality derives. In other words, "reflecting upon experiences" must take place within the framework of "having an experience" if the radical constructivist framework is to be coherently construed (Glasersfeld 1995:90). The notice that the mind takes of its own operations as well as the entities that are being reflected upon remains thus within the subjective, experiential frame of the individual mind. I believe that it is this omission of emphasis on the subjective basis of reflection that not only escapes a consistent framework of radical constructivist conceptualisation, but also invites the mis-perception of individual reflection as belonging to an autonomous, decontextualised enterprise.

Therefore, it is important to highlight that while high reflexivity is a significant attribute of the multicultural individual, their reflexivity is within the limit of their subjective experiential frame which is shaped by the individual mind throughout its biographical interrelations with its environment. As such, the interculturalists' assertion of the multicultural self capable of rising above and reflecting upon a reality problematically erroneously suggests a purely independent and exclusive state of mental construction. It is important to understand that conscious reflection upon experiences is a significant and

valid distinction between multicultural individuals and ones that are relatively more confined to a single cultural system. But at the same time, reflection is essentially a subjective construction based on one's unique experiential frame which has been indissociably shaped so amid dynamic interrelations with its experiential context. It is therefore impossible to conceive of reflection as taking place sharply disconnected from its experiential context. As such, reflection should be refined to refer essentially to a roused and heightened sensitivity to what has been largely taken for granted and laid beyond individual consciousness, limited though within an individual experiential framework. Such reflexive capacity distinct especially in multicultural individuals allows them to contemplate on and compare among chunks of everyday cultural encounters and the symbolic meanings beneath within their subjective and fluid experiential frame.

Beneath the seemingly exclusive focus on the conceptual working of the individual mind, conscious juxtaposition as the essence of reflection underscores also the salience of social dimensions in constituting individual experience and self-knowledge. In positing entities (inert objects and other individuals) against the self as subject, an individual derives the vital notion of difference which serves to carve a mental re-presentation of boundary of the self that engenders an awareness of self-concept and yields coherence of individual identity. Furthermore, awareness and knowledge of the self is derived when different aspects of the concept of self emerge during the process of social interaction. The idea of social self is a crucial social component in the construction and evolution of an individual's concept of self when individuals enter into specific social relations and take up specific roles in relation to others. All these socially shared typifications that are internalized by the individual become constitutive of the self concept. Significantly, the same perspective can also be found later on when we consider social constructionism which posits the social self as a segment of the self that is structured in terms of socially available typifications.

On the other hand, the self-concept is also crystallized when self as a perceived entity is distinguished from self as "the locus of experience" during the individual perceptual experience (Glasersfeld 1995:124). In other words, there is "I" as the highest-level active agent that experiences and projects the experiential reach, and "I" concurrently as a perceptual entity that is being experienced and constitutes a part of the individual experiential world. It is this conceptual separation of self as agent from self as object that evokes awareness and consequently self-knowledge. Discerningly, Glasersfeld (1995) thus suggests a refined understanding of Descarte's *Cogito ergo sum* axiom. Self-identity is not actualized from the mental process of thinking or reflection but essentially from the recognition of self but not the others who is thinking and experiencing. The availability of the self as an entity among other entities as it is objectified embodies the process of externalisation by individuals which constitutes the foundational component of societal dialectic when we shall see in later discussion on social constructionism.

The significance attached to social interaction can be explored further with the radical constructivist premising the self and others as active constructing agents. Similar to social constructionist perspective, radical constructivism also considers acquisition of knowledge by individual cognitive organisms as being inherently goal-directed for enhancing its viability in its environmental context. As such, individuals are intrinsically conservative in their inductive conceptual operations in that they tend to repeat those that have worked and therefore are considered more advantageous. In managing experiential events, individual cognition functions in a recurrent and predictive manner, hence giving rise to the sense of stability of subjective experiential reality. Furthermore, the sense of a stable and objective reality is attained when the same viability of knowledge and reasoning is imputed to other individuals and obtained confirmation consequently. Glasersfeld calls the extension of assumption on viability beyond individual experience the "second-level" viability of knowledge. It is through this higher-level intersubjectification process of experiential reality, reliably sustained by corroboration of other

thinking and knowing subjects, that a sense of pseudo-objective reality is collaboratively solidified and contributes to sedimentation of sociological concepts such as social interaction and society (Glasersfeld 1995:119). As such, the realization of the necessary sense of objectivity and stability relies on an inherent circularity when the others become both the products of an individual subject's construction as well as constitutive of the person's experiential reality.

At this point, it becomes clear that although radical constructivist view denies knowledge as a mechanistic representation of an objective world, it highlights that the construction of human knowledge should still fundamentally be related to something. Essentially, knowledge as re-presented by the knower must relate and correspond to other individuals as constructing agents of their own subjective experiences. Human language in particular becomes the primary instrument for manifesting and sustaining such dynamic of social correspondence. Drawing on the structuralist view of language from Saussure, radical constructivist perspective holds that language embodies arbitrary arrangements of semantic links between signifiers and the signified meanings as abstracted in the individual user's mind rather than serves as mental reproductions which encode information from an ontic reality (Glasersfeld 1995). Therefore, whether in a specific communicative event and throughout an individual's biographical trajectory, the use of language is realistically a social dynamic process in which meanings are constantly negotiated and coordinated between users who strive towards assumed compatibility between subjective abstractions but never full congruence. As such, the indispensable correlation between individual subjects and their socially embedded dimensions is simultaneously demonstrated and reinforced by human language as the primary socially available tool for meaning approximation and reality maintenance.

3.3 Debunking Solipsistic Claim towards Radical Constuctivism

Having summarized the essence of radical constructivist thinking, it should be made evident that the the overriding solipsistic view of radical constructivism as "the mind, and the mind alone, creates the world" is both reductionistic and misguided (Glasersfeld 1995:113). While radical constructivism underlies as its fundamental proposition that the individual mind is the ultimate originator and coordinator of knowledge, it does so by conjecturing the elaborate conceptual procedures in conjunction with the indispensable others and thereby attributing them in a subtly non-exclusive manner to the individual mind in relation to social dynamics. As such, it eschews involvement with metaphysics since it does not posit the self as the sole determinant of ontological reality as solipsism does. Rather, a comprehensive understanding of the formal arguments of radical constructivism should reveal itself as a non-metaphysical and instrumentalist theorization of the complexities of individual knowing in indissociable liaisons with others.

Contrary to simplistic conception towards radical constructivism, individuals are therefore not free to construct whatever realities they wish, hence being discretely autonomous and spontaneous. As Glasersfeld notes also, this solipsistic assertion of identity and reality formation is refuted constantly by our vivid experiences that the world is hardly ever the way we would like it to be (Glasersfeld 2005). The internalization and construction of subjective meanings and realities by an individual have a fundamental sociological basis for shaping and guiding the individual cognitive processes to operate. Social constructionist insights into social dialectics as constituting and reinforcing the rooted aspects of individual identity will provide further evidence into this inevitable quality of the process of identity configuration. Within the conceptual framework of radical constructionism as a coherent school of thought, it is befitting to rather conceive of the individual mind as the central unit of analysis, while not forfeiting its intricate footing in the individual experiential context. Far from undermining the importance of social

components of existence, radical constructivism acknowledges them and underscores that all such social components are meaningful as a whole only when we consider the individual mind as the active appropriator and constructor of meanings from the diversity of subjective experiences as it interacts with its experiential environment, natural- and social-wise.

To apply this reexamined conceptualization of radical constructivist view of the multicultural self, it is envisaged that the simplistic and erroneous assertion of the radical construcitivist idea of the self as an autonomous entity entirely unrelated to other individuals in its experiential context will be revised. As the discussion on radical constructivism and social constructionism proceeds, it is hoped that the conceptual compatibility of the two schools of thought as theories of knowing will be demonstrate. With differential units of analysis and angles of emphasis, they respectively posit the individual as inextricably intertwined with others and underlie the salience of human existence as being fundamentally social and embedded in nature.

3.4 Tripartite Model of Social Dialectics in Social Constructionism

While radical constructivism takes on a primary focus on the individual mind, social constructionism looks at the broader sociological context and process in which the subjective mind is framed. From a social constructionist viewpoint, epistemology is dynamically anchored upon a sociological foundation from which concepts as social constructions derive the quality of realness and objectivity as apprehended by individuals. The sociology of knowledge uncovers the processes through which knowledge and reality come into being and become sociologically established. As we shall see in further elaboration, whereas the social constructionist highlight lies in the generality of the perceived social reality, examination into the processes of individual constructions shows that their participation in and maintenance of the

perceived social reality is indispensable. Insights are especially gathered from Berger and Luckmann (1966) who undertake to re-elaborate the task of the sociology of knowledge in their treatise in the sub-discipline of sociology which lays the groundwork of social constructionism.

To put it concisely, the sociological enquiry into knowledge premises on the self-societal dialectic as it is momentarily constituted and sustained by the correlating processes of externalisation, objectivation and internalization. Like radical constructivism, the sociological sub-discipline explicitly denies the ontological nature of reality, but it does acknowledge the paradoxical ontological character of the social world and posits its realisation as the product of human activity of the tripartite dialectical process. While externalisation and objectivation appertain to the processes through which everyday life derives its quality of being an objective and independent given, the process of internalisation is predominantly subjective as it is enacted by the individual through its unique experiential grid, though it is also mediated through the social structures and processes in the broad sociological context. To investigate each of the three dialectical components, firstly, the motive for the process of externalisation is considered as being anthropological in nature in order to compensate for the innate inadequacy of human biological constitution for stability and order by means of the consensually solidified social reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966). In line with radical constructivist thought therefore, social constructionism also views that the biological-driven necessity for assumption on mutual compatibility must stretch subjective meanings beyond the individual's sphere of consciousness. In the course of extrapolating subjective knowledge and meanings, concepts and entities are endowed with an objective quality as if they are external and independent of individual volition and go on to sediment and form the sociological storage of symbols and meanings for retrievals by the others as members of that collective pool of knowledge. The externalisation of self as an objective entity among other available entities has been invoked earlier in the radical constructivist suggestion of a perceived self. Social constructionist approach broadens the

conception on this issue in stating that the imperative for externalising the self is not particularly for engendering awareness and self-knowledge but also entails the basic momentary operation of externalisation to drive the self-social dialectic.

Viewed in the generality of the tripartite social dynamic, objectivation embodies the pivotal process through which human knowledge and reality can come into sociological being and establish the sociological basis of human existence. Through the transformative capacity of the process of objectivation, human subjective expressivity as externalised products of human activity can hereby be made "available both to their producers and to other men as elements of a common world" (Berger et al 1966:35). Objectivation of the externalised subjective meanings allows the construction of an intersubjective commonsense world which bears the appearance of detachment and objectivity. Individuals can therefore access and retrieve from the common societal stock of knowledge objectively available symbols for their subjective internalisation and meaning-construction within the particular social context. Embodiment of ontological objectivity through extension and applicability beyond subjective expressivity has been noted earlier in what radical constructivist approach posits as "higher-level" viability beyond individual viability (Glasersfeld 1995:119). The fact that all objectivations, especially human language, can be utilised as symbols which can be removed from the momentary subjective intentions and are therefore objectively accessible by others within and beyond the individual's biography underscore their infinite durability. Hence their sociological function of transcendence and integration within and across generations (Berger et al 1966). Therefore, both social constructionist and radical constructivist thoughts share the view that society and the concomitant social order are products of an ongoing human production in the course of individual externalisation and consensual objectivation of subjective meanings. It is more plausible to conceive of the two entities as derived outcomes of the incessant process of human activity, rather than as deliberately envisioned and established as the ultimate targets

towards which human activity should proceed. Nevertheless, their importance lies in the sense of stability and order that they seemingly provide and maintain upon which individuals must depend to compensate for the lack in their biological make-up.

3.5 Subjective & Objective Components of the Social Constructionist Self

Although objectivation is the core process through which society as an objective reality can be actualized, tensions that are inherent among social processes and precariousness stemming from the historicity of the institutional order stipulate the operation of other supporting social processes to stabilize and sustain the objectivated social foundation (Berger et al 1966). Institutionalization underlies the "reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors" and guides the individual operating procedure in a predictive and stable manner (Berger et al 1966:54). In the process of habitualization, the inherently artificial typifications become naturalized in the individual mind as they become submerged under individual awareness and doubt. Agents of legitimation, embodied notably by traditions as well as the institutionalized human language, function to explain and justify the institutions particularly to newcomers to and deviants from the prevailing institutional social world. Roles as objectivated performances and institutionalized conduct act as the vivid representatives of the abstract institutional order so that it appears more real and continues to be adhered to by individual subjects (Berger et al 1966). Anonymous as the socially assigned typifications are, the sociology of knowledge regards an entire aspect of the self that is structured in terms of such de-individuated types as necessary to counter the contingencies of social relations and malevolences of abstruse idiosyncratic experiences.

Social self as one aspect of the self-identity is included in radical constructivist thought which emphasizes the social foundations of the

development of self-concept. Social constructionist view articulates further that as objectivations are internalized by individuals and sediment in the self-consciousness, social self crystallizes as a distinct segment of the self that is entirely structured in terms of such objectivations (Berger et al 1966). The division of the self-identity allows the possibility of an internal dialogue between the different sectors of the self and provides distance for judgment and reflection (Berger et al 1966). Contrary to essentialist thoughts which regard the individual mind as a complete cognitive core, the dialogical nature of the self as posited both by radical construcitivist and social constructionist views underlies the fundamentally fragmentary and processual nature of self-identity formation.

The various processes of institutionalization and legitimation for safeguarding the institutional order contribute to the process of reification which further strengthens the self-evident facade of the objectivated social world. Developed as the extreme manifestation of the objectivating process, reification shapes the paradoxical "modality of consciousness" that apprehends human-made phenomena as products of "non-human" or "supra-human" origins (Berger et al 1966:89). The unawareness of own authorship in the phenomena reinforces the incomprehensible quality of the reified domain and fixates it as "inert facticity" independently of human activity and volition (Berger et al 1966:89). The unawareness of human authorship in the phenomena they produce congeals the institutionalized social world with the objective quality of massivity and inevitablity which direct the newcomers and deviants to adopt the socially assigned order, in conjunction with their innate propensity towards sociality. Consequently, the ramifications of objectivations and institutions, sustained by legitimations and other mechanisms of social control, render plausible the sense of everyday life as the paramount reality and the all-encompassing universe of meaning. Everyday life as the reference and integration center of idiosyncratic experiences and deviant meanings is paradoxically based on the sociological dynamics of knowledge which is in turn rooted in individual expressivity. Therefore, both radical constructivist and

social construcionist thoughts partake the view that while independence and objectivity are necessary conditions for establishing the perceived sense of social reality, they are de facto appearances derived from the processes of artificial intervention, in terms of individual cognition and social production in the respective theoretical focuses of the two schools of thought.

Whereas social constructionist dynamism enables society to assume the character of objectivity and inevitability, its sociological basis is premised on subjective internalisation as a fundamental component of the societal dialectic. The processes of externalisation, objectivation and internalisation constitute an inherent circularity that sustains both individual subjectivity and the institutionalized social order. The same conception of circularity featuring individuals and others has also been portrayed earlier in radical constructivist approach. Given the artificial nature of institutionalization and the danger of non-identification of newcomers with the institutional order, the remote and abstract social world must be embedded in the individual's consciousness to safeguard the operation of its dynamic which is based on individuals as its building blocks. In other words, while society embodies an objective and subjective reality simultaneously, the process of internalization mediates the two entities in continuity in conjunction with externalization and objectivation. Internalization signifies that the objectivity of social reality must be interpreted within the framework of subjectivity to render the institutional social order subjectively meaningful for individuals and evoke their allegiance to the prevailing sociological practice. Despite that Berger and Luckmann (1966) negate the conception of the tripartite components in a temporal sequence, the conception of internalization as the beginning point of the dialectic emphasizes the subjective construction of meanings as the prerequisite of the sociological basis of knowledge. However, it is important to note that while internalization works in relation to externalization and objectivation, individual internalization is by no means tantamount to autonomous construction. Socialization serves the vital pedagogic function to consistently induct the individual into the elements and

processes of the institutionalized social order throughout its ontogenetic development, with the significant others and other anonymous individuals as agents of knowledge transmission and reinforcement. Accordingly, what the individual internalizes on the basis of the societal stock of knowledge must therefore be conditioned and mediated by socially institutionalized knowledge. The sociological basis of internalization implicates that as the individual subjectively internalizes knowledge that is organized around the institutional social order, identity formation of the self and others as it is subjectively constructed must inherently include such socially assigned abstractions and typifications.

Operation of subjective internalisation and meaning construction within the sociological framework does not however eradicate the capacity of individual volition. In effect, the task of the social constructionist approach is to evoke the recognition that the perceived social reality is but the product of continual human production that lies outside human awareness due to the reifying internalized constraints laid down by the institutionalized patterns. Apprehended by individual newcomers to the institutional social system, the social reality that confronts them therefore appears relativized as an objective, a priori given since it has constantly been operating prior to their entry into the social world. In addition, it has in stock for them the comprehensive processes of initiation into the established social order. The innate predisposition towards sociality adds to the aspect of coerciveness that social order is ascribed with since the elaborate processes of socialization are inevitable for compensating humans' biological limitation and enhancing individual viability. However, it is important to underlie that while human individuals are subject to social and biological forces, they are however not pawns subjugated to the manipulation of such tendencies. As Berger and Luckmann (1966) highlights, biological lack does not mean that individuals are born to be instant members of the society but that this feature only presents them with the propensity for socialization. Society is therefore but a product of human production and is indeed subject to transformation. The social constructionist tripartite processes of externalisation,

objectivation and internalisation reveal to us that the human individual produces both reality and himself/herself in the incessant course of actively accommodating and appropriating such predilections.

3.6 Radical Constructivism as Amplified View of Internalization

Through elaborating the tripartite dialectics between the self and society, social constructionism, the sociological inquiry into knowledge elucidates the processes by which social phenomena evolve in particular social contexts in continuous conjunction with individuals. Such social individuals are the foundational units to constitute and sustain the sociological basis of knowledge. Therefore, the three dialectical moments of externalization, objectivation and internalization all possess micro-sociological and macro-sociological aspects that are indivisible for our analysis and for the fundamental functioning of the societal dialectic.

As such, the sociological basis of knowledge and reality refutes the simplistic view of society as a quantitative aggregate of discrete individuals. Rather, it accentuates the intricate dynamism infiltrating through all aspects and moments of the societal dialectic. Society comes into being as individual subjectivity and expressivity are dialectically interwoven to incline towards reciprocal compatibility and viability amid the contingencies that their biological lack renders them ill-prepared. Therefore, the dialectical nature of the sociology of being and knowing transposes a mechanistic and cumulative relationship between individual and society to assume a qualitatively different dynamism from which the society derives its prevailing factual generality and integrative capacity.

The profile of society as a given, ready-made structure inexorably imposed upon individuals must be scrutinized in relation to individual and reciprocal human actorship to avoid the deterministic view of knowledge and

reality. Social constructionism therefore transcends the inert, dualistic treatment of self and society and provides an empirical theorization of knowing as it is observed in sociological contexts. Its empirical specification of the tripartite dialectic process in a comprehensive conceptual framework should hence open us to the realization of it as an instrumentalist theory of knowing like radical constructivism. Social constructionism and radical constructivism are unified in accentuating the active and "endogenic" nature of knowledge and reality construction (Gergen 1985:8). They vary only in the scope of the conceptual framework they respectively set to encompass, and hence their differential focus of empirical analysis. The inquiry into the sociological basis of knowledge naturally leads social constructionism to take on a broader, sociological plane of description and explanation, thus potentially obscuring its statement of individual expressivity as the foundational component. Its comprehensive scope should however sensitize us to the mutual constitution amid the micro and macro levels of knowledge. Comparatively, radical constructivism adopts its angle of analysis from the perspective of the individual mind and posits it as the center of its conceptual framework, but it nevertheless relates the conceptual formations of the individual mind to social interactions and embeds subjectivity within the sociological framework. The radical constructivist thinking therefore can be regarded as a weighted elaboration of the internalization process. As such, it is deemed that radical constructivism and social constructionism are mutually complementary and hence compatible theories of human knowing and being when we underlie their shared endogenic standpoint and integrate their discrepant empirical scopes and theorizing focuses.

4. TOWARDS AN INTEGRATIVE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CULTURAL MARGINALITY

4.1. Integrating Radical Constructivism and Social Constructionism

As noted in introduction, problematic as Sparrow perceives towards the radical constructivist view of the multicultural self constitution, she urges for an integration of the seemingly discrepant theorizations of radical constructivism and social constructionism instead of superseding the former with the latter. This call for a combinatorial approach underlies the acknowledged value of radical constructivist thought in its focus on the self towards identity configuration.

The concise probing above has highlighted the places of commonalities and complementariness of the two streams of thinking. To pinpoint again, both intellectual paradigms refute downrightly any realist and ontological assumption of knowledge and reality. Antithetical to a unilateral, representational view of human knowledge as perpetuated in traditional epistemological thinking, radical constructivism and social constructionism are united in highlighting human actorship and participation in constructing individual and social realities. The two theorizations detail how we come into being and knowing individuals and evoke our stark awareness to what has been predominantly taken for granted and relegated in our unconsciousness as deceptively self-evident facts. They do so by elucidating the processes of knowledge and meaning creation whether from the perspective of the individual mind or the sociological context as the unit of investigation. Related and second to that, the active nature of human knowledge and meaning connotes that this can be plausibly conceptualised and become empirically real only when the factor of constitutional lack is present which renders the factor of human actorship a viable response. As noted, both views commonly place a

high emphasis on their respective epistemological accounts on biological aspects which condition and shape the individual mental functioning and social dynamics for coping with the innate limitations. The highlight on empirical viability for both the individual and groups also threads the two views commonly as theories of knowing for articulating the processes from which knowledge and reality emerge to prove viable for individuals in relation to the demands of natural and social environment. In considering constructivist and constructionist theories as the quintessence of "postmodern/constructivist era", Sexton also notes that their shared epistemological emphasis on creation, rather than discovery, of personal and social realities connects to their highlight on "viability, as opposed to the validity, of knowledge claims" (Sexton 1997 as cited in Raskin 2002).

The correlative nature of individual and societal functioning as delineated by both perspectives also refines our understanding of the nature of individual choice. As discussed earlier, one major argument voiced by Sparrow (2000) towards the radical constructivist view of self-identity is its seeming suggestion of a disembodied self from contextual influences. There are two points to note here in relation to the assertion. Firstly, we need to look into the validity of the claim that interculturalists' portrayals of the multicultural person actually denote a radical constructivist conception. Secondly, even if the statement could be legitimated, the misconception of radical constructivist view as an solely solipsistic account of the mind would implicate the crumpling of the basis of contention which is built on such an exclusive view of the theorization. These two issues will be taken in detail later in the dedicated discussion on interculturalists' depiction of the multicultural identity.

Nonetheless, the previous analysis into the epistemological principles of the radical constructivist thought has demonstrated that the self as depicted by the paradigm signifies in fact an embodied self that has its individual mental functioning premised on its social dimensions and

experiential context. The sociological inquiry at both the levels of individual and sociological explication denotes even more directly the social institutional constraints on the experience of individual subjectivity. The inherent correspondence and hence indissociable relation between self and society as shared by both views invites us to revise our conventional construal of individual choice as an autonomous capacity exhibited by the self. Instead of a Cartesian conception of self that can autonomously construct all meanings based on a disembodied mental process, both radical constructivist and social constructionist thoughts underlie that knowledge and meaning is inherently an embodied process in inseparable relation to its embedded context. Choice as undertaken by the individual is therefore not a decontextualised affair occurring spontaneously in an existential vacuum. It points instead to the exercise and realization of authorship in active retrieval of available symbolic resources among individual and societal stocks of knowledge, as well as innovative appropriation of such resources in accordance with individual subjectivity and internalised social structural constraints.

Despite the common eschewal of human knowledge as positivist representation, the two paradigms diverge on the fundamental notion of the origin of knowledge constructions (see Penuel and Wertsch 1995; Raskin 2002; Stam 1998). As elaborated, while radical constructivism conceptualises from the perspective of the individual mind as the origin of meaning and reality creation, social constructionism emphasizes the sociological origin of human knowledge as being discursively and communally generated. In other words, the two epistemologies share common negative identity and differ primarily in their positive identities (Stam 1998). The specification on the origin of human knowledge creation has proliferated to such a minute extent that there are in actuality as many varieties of social constructionist theories as there are of radical constructivist ideas (Raskin 2002). In an attempt to bridge the discrepant perspectives, there have been approaches that aim to discover and highlight their commonalities as the basis of their consistencies. Raskin (2002), for example, underlies that radical constructivism and social constructionism

belong to the broader conceptual framework of constructivism in their shared principle on the active nature of human knowledge construction. By sub-classifying constructivism into "epistemological constructivism" and "hermeneutic constructivism", he considers the radical constructivist belief in the existence of an observer-independent reality as embodying the former and the contrastive social constructionist disavowal as belonging to the latter (Raskin 2002). He also identifies the inclusion of social dimensions in the radical constuctivist articulation of self and knowledge (see "second-level viability" in Glasersfeld 1995 and "structural coupling" in Maturana 1992 cited in Raskin 2002) as an important echo to the social constructionist conception of identity. Stam (1998), likewise, looks at the problem of relativism as underlying the two paradigmatic assumptions.

While threads of commonalities can be readily examined, I believe that an investigation into their apparent differences can instead help uncover the capacity for integrating the two paradigms. In other words, it is of more salience to look at how the two theories of knowing can be compatible with each other by means of acknowledging their conceptual and methodological deviations. It has been stated before that the crucial difference in the theoretical framework between radical constructivism and social constructionism originates from their differential unit of analysis and plane of theorization. Conceptualisation from the perspective of the individual mind and hence a principal focus on psychology inclines many to interpret radical constructionism as portraying a "fully 'interiorized' and cognitively isolated profile of self (Raskin 2002:9). On the other hand, social constructionist emphasis on social influence has been carried to another further end of the academic debate with the implication of a socially deterministic view on individuals and hence a focus on sociology. The polemic then rests and relies on a needless dichotomization of self and society to sustain an irreconciliable circularity of the two epistemological propositions, which obscures the dynamic, irreducible dialectics between self and society.

The tension between the psychological focus of radical constructivism and the sociological focus of social constructionism relates to what Penuel and Wertsch conceive as a natural difference in "analytic primacy" of different academic disciplines to which their disciplinary identities connect (Penuel and Wertsch 1995:84). In discussing the critiques cast towards Erikson's psychological focus on individual mental functioning and Vygotsky's emphasis on sociocultural processes, they justify the respective analytical primacies of the two strands of thinking as necessary starting points in methodology for the formulation of their theoretical content. They observe that Erikson's and Vygotsky's work has been operationalised primarily in the psychological and sociocultural terms at the neglience of their alternative insights. Likewise, the differential foci in the individual mind and sociocultural processes as articulated by radical construcionism and social construcionism suffer a similar reductionistic conception of their framework. Rather than positing the two perspectives as two bipolar ends, Penuel and Wertsch advocate an integrative account which sees "these two poles as existing in a dynamic tension, though each [gives] primacy to one of the two poles in their work, providing different foci for the problem of individual mental functioning" (Penuel et al 1995:88). Their view acknowledges the inherent complexity of knowledge construction and identity development as operating momentarily at various but interconnected levels. Consequently, rediscovering the specific ways in which sociocultural processes enter identity development and conversely, the manner in which individual factors come to be manifest in the larger sociocultural processes offers the capacity for paradigmatic integration.

In previous discussions, the role of social dimensions in individual mental functioning has been reiterated to restore the conceptual comprehensiveness of radical constructivism. Likewise, reliance on the sub-discipline of sociology of knowledge to describe the process of social construction of knowledge and reality is also strategically aimed for its

coalescence of individual and sociological realms. Varieties of social constructionism exist, but the dialectical framework offered by the sociological inquiry into knowledge is particularly befitting for the equal importance it relegates to both the self and society in positing them as mutually indispensable dialectical elements that engender and sustain each other. As consensually recognized, the common enterprise of social constructionist thought is to unravel "how contextual, linguistic and relational factors combine to determine the kinds of human beings that people will become and how their views of the world will develop" (Raskin 2002:9).There lies a potential risk however when excess emphasis is placed on such "exogenic" factors that could potentially swing the conceptual pendulum to an extreme end as to put forward a mechanistic and unilateral social determination on individual identity (Gergen 1985). I surmise that recent development of the realist social constructionist enterprise could underlie such a progression towards a representational view of knowledge and reality formation, which paradoxically is what the constructivist and constructionist paradigms set themselves to counter originally. Here the question of analytical primacy can be brought up again. But viewing the social construction of knowledge in terms of a momentary dialectic established and sustained by its components has the merit of truly elucidating the processes of emergence and transformation of knowledge at both the individual and social levels, carried out by the simultaneously idiosyncratic and cooperative human actors. It is intriguing in this context to remark on the common criticism of social constructionist approaches for being anti-humanistic (Gergen 1995a), while Berger and Luckmann (1966), detailing the sociological dynamics of knowledge, accentuates the social construction of knowledge as a humanistic enterprise. At this juncture, radical constructivism and social constructionism glanced especially from the dialectical framework of the sociology of knowledge research converge at their common conviction of a thoroughly human-made world.

In my summarizing remark of social constructionism, I offered one potential way in which the two epistemological paradigms can be integrated by

considering radical constructionism as an amplification of the individual plane of internalisation among the broad social constructionist framework. This proposition is based on acknowledgment of the distinct analytical primacies of each perspective. Correspondingly, Glasersfeld (1995) also expressed that his radical constructivist account of knowledge is in fact fully compatible with the social constructionist view when the latter taps into the individual thought and motivation in conjunction with its focus on manifest sociocultural processes. The agreement of the two views therefore relates to the construal of knowledge and meaning construction in a broad totality, with radical constructivism and social constructionism anchoring their respective inquiries at different but interrelated analytical levels. It is with this undertaking that the constructivist and constructionist paradigms can be understood to converge not only in instances of their shared empirical postulations but also in their meta-theoretical complementariness.

4.2 The Dialogically Moving Self and Culture

As an extension of this integrative consideration of meaning construction by individuals, a dialogical and polyvocalic account of self offers a comprehensive perspective to encompass both the individual and sociocultural dimensions, as well as to describe the ways in which they infiltrate and pattern each other. The pivot of this theory is its revision of the concept of self from being a uniform and permanent construct to embodying multiplicity and contextual dynamicity. Hermans (2001) combines the respective insights of James and Bakhtin on the divisive nature of self and polyphonic narrative construction to conceptualise a distributed and multivoiced self "in terms of a dynamic multiplicity of relatively autonomous I-positions" (Hermans 2001:248). Due to their spatial and temporal dynamicity, these heterogeneous selves of an individual can be juxtaposed to establish dialogical relations among themselves that constitute the individual's internal and external dialogues in interacting within self and with others.

The unity of self is thus attained as it encompasses continuity and discontinuity across multiple intrinsic and extrinsic interactions and not to be perceived as a circumscribed core which exhibits sameness in all contexts. Premised on this decentralised notion of self, Hermans postulates a "model for moving positions" to characterise the high interactivity and permeability of the componential selves situated momentarily in internal, external and outside domains (Hermans 2001). The dynamism exhibited as the multiple selves rival or cooperate with one another embodies the dialogical nature of an individual being at intrapsychological and interpsychological levels. This dialogical conception of self also highlights the contextualised feature of its existence as it is always situated in a particular space and time. The dialogical insight into self construction suggests that while the self is conceived to comprise highly diffuse and situational parts, the basic unity it remains to evince can accommodate all planes of epistemological and ontological relevance to the self constitution, whether in the sociocultural or psychological level.

4.3 Vygotsky's Mediational Sociocultural Approach

As a concrete operationalization of this dialogical view of self, Vygotsky's mediational action approach epitomizes how such a comprehensive analysis of meaning construction can be accomplished. The core of Vygotsky's sociocultural psychology is premised on the sociocultural, historical and institutional situatedness of all individual mental functioning (Penuel et al 1995). Although his principal intention is to demonstrate the ways in which how sociocultural processes come to manifest and transform individual development, these social influences are examined on the basis of how they become internalised by individuals. Therefore, while his research primacy is on the sociocultural origins of all human knowledge, his theory evades a realist social representational view of individual learning since it considers at both the psychological and social plane and how they mutually interact to constitute individual development. Penuel and Wertsch note that what organizes

Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to identity formation and his developmental studies on individual development is his view that all human action is mediated by tools, language and other sign systems (Penuel et al 1995). Synonymously as the sociology of knowledge research, such available tools and symbols are seen not as ancillary representation to serve individuals' purposes but as resources possessing the capacity to alter such purposes and mediate mental functioning in the course of being deployed. Therefore, while the utilised tools and symbols are instrumental for individual purposes, it is more important to bear their sociocultural relevance in mind since they as "cultural artifacts...form the basis for patterns of intermental functioning or social activity" (Penuel et al 1995:86). Individual intentions thus do not dictate the outcomes of actions but rather direct the latter as do sociocultural tools. An individual action as undertaken embodies in essence an intricate interaction among the individual actor, cultural tools and the broader sociocultural processes.

As such, rather than examining individual psychology or sociocultural phenomena alone as if they operate in isolation with each other, using mediated action as the unit of analysis "broadens the focus of psychology to consider the way that agents, mediational means, and sociocultural contexts all contribute to development" (Penuel et al 1995:86). In other words, a simultaneous focus on individuals and sociocultural processes into identity formation is rendered plausible theoretically when we consider the empirical connectedness of the involved realms through the analytic unit of human action. Meanwhile, Penuel and Wertsch (1995) remind that because of the primacy accorded to sociocultural processes, the use of mediated action as the unit of research should be considered more in Vygotsky's sociocultural strand. It is also for this sociocultural emphasis that social constructionists have resorted to Vygotsky's sociocultural psychology and Bakhtin's dialogicality to formulate a strand of social constructionism called "rhetorical-responsive" to highlight the polyvocalic and dialogical nature of individual rhetorical talk and its social-responsive function (Stam 1998).

Using Vygotskian mediated action approach as the unit of inquiry rather than an inner sense of individual identity, Penuel and Wertsch (1995) integrate the overlooked theoretical interests of Erikson in cultural and historical tools, and of Vygotsky in individual functioning and development while maintaining their original analytical primacies. This is achievable, since:

> recalling the dynamic and irreducible nature of the tension between society and individual, [...]regardless of whether one chooses to examine the dynamics of individual functioning or of sociocultural processes, it is necessary to account for the appearance of the other. In that way, one pole of the tension is not left out altogether, but examined in terms of the other. (Penuel et al 1995:89)

The resultant identity research on the basis of such a mediated action approach becomes thoroughly integrative in nature and imbued with profound contextuality as it cross-fertilises developmental-psychological inquiries with sociocultural and sociohistorical manifestations. Penuel and Wertsch (1995) conclude that cultural and historical resources are saliently integral for identity development as empowering and constraining tools for identity formation. Viewed in this way, it becomes clear that societies have a crucial role in conditioning how individuals can become through the offered array of socially institutionalised and distributed ideologies available as choices for individual retrieval and identity shaping. This is in conjunction with the sociological basis of knowledge construction voiced by the sociology of knowledge research.

It is also for this reason that identity research must be examined in contexts where identity struggles and shifts occur (Penuel et al 1995). The salience of identity politics as discerned through various domains of social discourse is invoked in the identity formation of discrete individuals as well as their interrelated groups. For Penuel and Wertsch (1995), the challenges posed by the variety and dynamicity of sociocultural process to an inner sense of coherence of psychological identity are valid. However, they can be satisfactorily reconciled by the mediated action approach, so long as we acknowledge and examine individual agency in relation to the sociocultural

framework. In other words, individual choice is contemplated in relation to what and how the specific cultural and historical resources are obtained and utilised to fulfill individual purposes in specific ontogenetic and sociocultural stages. The psychological need for identity coherence is achieved through the sense of meaning subjectively acquired in connection with the limitation of sociocultural constraints. Dialogical relation of self and others in the form mediated action is therefore explicitly embedded using the mediational approach to studying individual identity development.

4.4 Identity Politics of "Ideological Becoming"

Tappan (2005) offers an illustrative case study to examine the identity formation of socioculturally oppressed individuals on the basis of Vygotskian mediated action and Bakhtian dialogicality. Based on the well-known autobiography of the criminal-turned-Islamic-leader Malcom X as a member of oppressed group, Tappaan examines the development of dialogical self as it relates to various sociocultural patterns of domination and subordination. In his view, the development of self and oppression are both "mediated, dialogical phenomen(a)" (Tappan 2005:68). In accord with Wertsch's advocation for Vygotskian mediational approach, Tappaan considers the process of individual identity development as constituted by series of mediated actions. In the course of appropriating linguistic and cultural tools to perform such actions through the exercise of individual agency, mastery and ownership of the sociocultural resources become established by the individual. This process is marked by the entry of various voices into dialogical relations of competition and collaboration among themselves. In connection with this necessary development of self in a mediational, multivoiced and communally shared context, "ideological becoming" marks the dialogical dimension of identity development as an individual "gradually com(es) to authorize and claim authority for one's own voice, while remaining in constant dialogue with other voices" (Tappaan 2005:55). In this regard, Bakhtin's distinction between

authoritative discourse and internally pervasive discourse as two types of salient discourse in the process of ideological becoming is vital in two aspects. Whereas both types of discourse underlie the relational nature among the individual and other selves, internally pervasive discourse is genuinely dialogical since there are intense interactions among the diverse voices through which ideological consciousness of the self becomes established. In contrast, authoritative discourse is internalised factually due to the sense of authority built into it (Bakhtin 1981 as cited in Tappaan 2005). It is for the significance accorded to the internally pervasive discourse that the dialogical view repudiates the notion of self as being merely occupied by social categories and upholds the fundamental of individual agency and choice in the development of identity.

The mediational and dialogical nature of individual actions also forms the basis in which socially institutionalised patterns of domination and subordination enter into the identity formation of individuals and groups. Implicative in this proposition is the precondition of sociocultural realities as being laden with ideological inequalities. Tappan (2005) particularly borrows insights of critical theorists to describe how social institutions are artificially intervened by dominant groups knowingly and unknowingly as to legitimate and perpetuate their power and status over their subordinates. When cultural tools and signs ingrained with ideologies defined by the dominant groups are utilised in the mediated actions of individuals, the hidden oppressive messages as appropriated by the dialogical self shape the constitution of individual identity as a subjugated self. Tappaan underlines that the oppression is *appropriated* rather than *internalised* to avoid a construal of the processes as predominantly psychological phenomena (Tappaan 2005). He argues that social dialectics of domination among groups and selves are plausible only when they are considered as dialogical and sociocultural phenomena. On the other hand, an overtly psychological account will not suffice to explain how such phenomena are manifested in individual conception of self and relate to and reinforce the social structure. Applied to the identity studies on Malcom X, the

joining of mediational view of social structure and self development uncovers the various political dimensions throughout the course of his biographical development. In the course of secondary socialization and adolescence, the structurally patterned ideologies transmitting messages of African Americans' inherent inferiority and the whites' racial supremacy became fully appropriated by Malcom as socially evident truths:

> he has mastered it, and more importantly, he has 'made it his own' in the context of his ideological becoming. He 'retells' this ideology 'in his own words' – it has become, as Bakhtin says, 'internally persuasive'...As such, [...] Malcom exemplifies the way in which appropriated oppression, as a form of enacted/performed/mediated identity, arises via the process of ideological becoming. (Tappaan 2005:63)

This is however not to unilaterally suggest that individuals exposed to the diversity of sociocultural ideologies must inevitably absorb them into their own ideological make-up. The implication of societal dynamics as nothing more than a massive social brainwashing naively obliterates the centrality of individual agency and the social institutional basis of knowledge as premised on individual undertaking. The intense identity struggles of subordinated individuals underlie that even when the oppressive ideologies are fully appropriated, the idiosyncratic process of appropriation points to the vivid capacity for individuals to recognize and resist dominant social interpretations of realities. Malcom's "double consciousness" of himself as both an insider and outsider of the white dominant group, a dilemmatic melange of his appropriated oppressed identity and his unshakable racial origins, places him in existential agony of identity grappling. Such a socioculturally mediated internal struggle will prepare him for the sunsequent paths of religious conversion and liberation from the discourses of domination and subordination. This serves as one vivid exemplar of the working of his internal discourse in face of all the socially sanctioned realities (Tappaan 2005:66). The relative autonomy of the personal and sociocultural parts of the self requires a study of their dialogical relations to reveal how their interrelations contribute to the process of identity formation on a developmental scale.

4.5 Cultural Marginality as the Dialogical Self in Ambivalence

In the second chapter of this research, a brief review of existing literature on cultural marginality was conducted. It was remarked that the social structuralist view towards cultural marginality has the merit of encompassing a wider scope of consideration, from psychological to sociocultural dimensions. On the other hand, the various intellectual perspectives reviewed above in this chapter have all converged from their own theoretical and empirical plane of analysis on the multidimensional and dialectical nature of self and society. Significantly, they affirm that individual identity formation can implausibly happen in a decontextualised manner as depicted in the ideal of the Cartesian self. Insights taken from the sociocultural theorizations underlie the intricate interplay of individual mental functioning and sociocultural processes and posit the development of individual identity as grounded and conditioned in sociocultural and sociohistorical context. A model which can take into account the comprehensiveness of multicultural identity formation is therefore theoretically and empirically necessary to revise traditional conceptualisations bent on either individual or social reductionism. In relating to the peculiarity and complexity of the phenomenon of cultural marginality, I would therefore propose an integrative approach based on a synthesis of Vygotskian-Bakhtinian developmental-dialogical conception of self with Merton's notion of sociological ambivalence.

As the discussion on marginality reveals, any investigation into the phenomenon of cultural marginality must commence with the basic understanding of its dual embodiment of psychological and sociological aspects. As a cultural marginal person confronts discrepant cultures, the resultant cognitive, affective and behavioral manifestations in the individual psychology are certainly salient and deserving much analytic attention. But without broadening the scope of our investigation from a psychological to sociocultural plane, the descriptive and explanatory effort on the psychological dimensions of culturally marginal individuals will only allow our eyesight to linger on the symptoms rather than on the causes (Merton 1976). The cognitive dissonance and emotional implications of being on the margin of two cultures

should therefore be associated with sociocultural structures in which the individual is embedded. Consequently, the uncovering of structural roots in relation to the psychological manifestations can yield a comprehensive analysis of what embodies cultural marginality psychologically and sociologically. An individual is a cultural marginal not merely because he/she is located at the junction of cultures. In fact, such a simplistic and situated view would only add to the marginalization of cultural marginality by virtue of assigning an existential character to cultural marginality and obscure an intelligible study into the contextual origins of this identity phenomenon. Moreover, it implicates a passive view of cultural marginality and omits the high extent of dynamism between the cultural marginal self in relation to the sociocultural systems in question. In contrast, the insight of sociological ambivalence accords that an individual becomes a cultural marginal when the normative expectations of the relevant cultures become irreconcilable in the course of idiosyncratic appropriation into the identity development of the individual. Cultural marginal individuals, like others in the sociological fabric who are within the relative stability and coherence of one cultural worldview, undertake their phenomenological experiences amid the interweaving of sociocultural networks. The construal of cultural marginality as a special type of sociological ambivalence (see Merton 1974) therefore underlies the inherent sociological basis of the dilemmatic situatedness of cultural marginal individuals among but not outside the multiple cultures. Viewed in this way, the typical description of culturally marginal individual as being at the margin of two cultures thus misconstrues the state of cultural marginality out of its contextuality in social structures and overlooks the contextual causes of the phenomenon.

By eschewing the individual state of ambivalence as a mere consequence of idiosyncratic history or personality, sociological ambivalence also refutes cultural marginality as an fundamentally individualistic undertaking. As mentioned earlier, one main critique of Sparrow's (2000) research on multicultural identity is directed against the Cartesian notion of a disembodied self as implicated by the interculturalists. The argument in effect

becomes valid when we consider the capacity of deliberate construction of cultural context and boundary by multicultural individuals as portrayed by Janet and Milton Bennett (see Bennett 1993a; Bennett 1993b). Rather than a lifestyle opted by personal choice and unfettered by sociocultural structures, the social structural perspective reminds that the state of cultural marginality is essentially a result of particular sociocultural positions an individual finds him-/herself located. At the same time, the often out-of-consciousness structural constraints are now rendered incompatible in the manifestation of the individual and cause heightened awareness. The emphasized connection to social structural constraints also highlights the inseparable social aspects that the discourse of cultural system involves. Hence the dual macro-level pertinence of cultural marginality involving the sociological and cultural realm, apart from the psychological dimension as asserted earlier. The construal of multicultural identity as an autonomous, individual pursuit as expounded by the view of multicultural self construction as a matter of self-consciousness thus overlooks the social realities underlying the multicultural individual.

The view of sociological ambivalence to cultural marginality clarifies that whether the identity formation appears as a relatively liberal undertaking by the individual or saliently interposed with structural factors, they all pertain to patterns of opportunity and deprivation as associated with specific sociocultural positions. In other words, identity constitution whether as a chosen style or a structural imposition relates in effect to the institutionalized patterns of privilege and constraint inherent in the sociocultural structures. The tying of the apparent psychological dimensions of cultural marginality to the underlying sociocultural positions therefore poses staunch challenges to an autonomous conception of the multicultural self and re-emphasizes the sociocultural embeddedness and conditioning of all individual manifestations.

In addition, the view of ambivalence presents a more interactive view towards the relation between self, culture and society. As remarked above,

an individual becomes a cultural marginal not simply due to its positioning at the edge of cultures. Situating multicultural individuals tangentially excludes their active participation in the multiple cultures and therefore contradicts the cognitive and affective tension so extensively reported in psychological case studies of cultural marginal individuals. Rather, the cognitive and emotional pressure at the individual level reveals the intensity of contradiction in perspectives and clashes of loyalties in the individual mind and substantiates the active involvement of multicultural individuals in the respective cultural systems. An individual becomes a cultural marginal when the beliefs, values and norms of varied cultural systems are actively appropriated from the sociocultural domains to the individual level where they are construed as inconsistent and incompatible by the individual mind. As such, it is important to state that cultural systems and their respective stocks of sedimented knowledge and symbols are not inherently contradictory to each other. By themselves as systemic elements, such cultural symbols and means cannot clash with each other unless acquisition by human actors in dialogical fashion set them in motion in the context of individual performative actions. In other words, they become contradictory and therefore generate circumstances of ambivalence only when appropriated by the multicultural individual who is embedded in particular sociocultural positions with the multiplicity of their associated social roles. This assertion predicates that the socioculturally transmitted knowledge in its mere presence is entirely irrelevant unless it is utilized by and manifested in individual embodiment. When considering cultural marginality under the broad framework of structural ambivalence, the centrality of individual agency and the conditioning capacity of sociocultural constraints are simultaneously recognized to characterize their dynamic interrelations.

Integrated with a dialogical conception of self and culture, cultural marginality as a unique instance of sociocultural ambivalence offers an interactive and processual view of multicultural self formation. In concluding his dialogical study of culture and self, Hermans (2001) proposes the use of

dialogicality to study cultural processes at the meeting point between cultures rather than a categorical comparison between cultural cores. Viewed in dialogical terms, cultural marginality presents an exemplar for which its processual dynamism can be examined at the juncture of cultures on top of the static view of it being a distinctive phenomenon. As delineated earlier, a dialogical approach to self underlies the multivoiced nature of self and posits the corresponding salience of the individual aspects of self and their dialogical relations with the "collective voices" in sociocultural contexts. Synonymously, the dialogical view also portrays culture as a collectively sedimented "cultural capital" in which its constituent symbols are constantly reconfigured and transformed in the course of idiosyncratic utilization by individuals and dialogical relations among themselves. By virtue of the bi-/multiculturality of cultural marginals, the processual nature of their construction of multicultural personhood becomes conspicuous when we consider their constant retrieval and manipulation of elements pertaining to different cultural systems. This is accompanied by the dialogical relations established among the multiple discourses associated with individual and sociocultural realms. At the individual phase of discursive appropriation, the incompatible expectations ascribed by the different cultural systems and sociohistorical contexts become salient in the individual that is positioned by such structural constraints and undermine the reconciliatory effort of the multicultural person. The experienced outcome is hence circumstances of sociocultural ambivalence. More than a mere marginal phenomenon external to cultures, cultural marginality embeds the multicultural self tightly within the dynamism of self and culture and requires the dialogical conception to describe its comprehensive and interactive extent.

Support by Penuel and Wertsch (1995) and Tappaan (2005) for the Vygotskian mediational approach to multicultural identity formation is thus warranted for the multiplicity and interactivity of dimensions it encompasses. A dialogical view to ordinary identity formation forges our recognition of the plurality of individual and social discourses in working. Investigating the

added complexity of the dialogical nature of the multicultural self will require an integrative methodology that is not biased by a particular analytical primacy of a theoretical enterprise as to render a distorted account of the identity development. As such, using individual identity to study ordinary and multicultural self construction is therefore both theoretically and empirically implausible. This is due to the fact that the very notion of identity entails already an intricate cluster of differential dimensions. Using mediated action as the unit of analysis eludes reductionist assumptions in studying individual and sociocultural aspects of self in isolation. Besides, the approach enables simultaneous analytical primacies accorded to both domains in obliging us to unscramble the various contextual factors underlying the constitution and enactment of the mediated action. For cultural marginality, the concept of mediated action allows us to examine what mediational means from the multiplicity of cultural systems accompany a particular action and are thus salient in the identity formation and transformation of the multicultural individual. Using the mediated action as the starting point to expand our analysis outwards also implicates the unchartable nature of the dialectic between sociocultural structures and internal mental functioning in leading to the process of ideological becoming. In other words, neither the individual mind or the sociocultural processes can be regarded as the beginning or end, and be defined apart from each other.

As Penuel and Wertsch states (1995), questions regarding the nature of and manner in which certain cultural tools come to be utilised in the mediated action are significant. They prompt probing into the diversity of sociocultural contexts and psychological factors that dialogically organize the individual deployment of cultural means and induce the experience of ambivalence as found in cultural marginality. The self-narrative construction of multicultural individuals thus does not happen in a free space out of spatial and temporal context. It occurs instead in a dynamic field of tensions among the multiple sociocultural and personal positions occupied by the individual in the relevant sociocultural structures. In this regard, a dialogical conception of the

multicultural self premised on the analytical unit of mediated action integrates the constructivist dimensions of the individual self as well as the constructionist influences of sociocultural processes.

It is the profound extent of multidimensionality and contextuality of self development that an autonomous view of identity construction cannot be vindicated. As Hermans argues (2001), the dialogical process of sociocultural influences in relation to individual development can underlie the intrinsic influence of social power and status in our identity formation. The simultaneous tapping into several sociocultural systems of multicultural individuals sharpens the salience of social and cultural asymmetries when patterns of domination and subordination fuse inevitably with racial and ethnic issues. As such, "dominance relations organize and constrain not only the interactions within societies or groups, but also the interactions between different cultural groups" (Hermans 2001:265). The autobiography of Malcom X reviewed by Tappan (2005) and the oppressed experiences of those in Sparrow's (2000) research study serve as vital illustrations to demonstrate how patterns and issues of identity politics are saliently embedded into the very process of their multicultural self constitution. Sociopolitical dimensions should thus not be ignored as peripheral in our analysis. As Sparrow (2000) underscores, the effects of structural constraints on self development are especially marked when attention falls onto individuals with non-western and non-dominant experiences of identity. To conceive multicultural identity apart from such salient social realities is therefore sociologically untruthful. On the contrary, social constructionist concepts of interpenetration and interaction can attest the contextualized nature of identity processes. Using the mediated action approach to accentuate the dialogical relations among social ideologies and individual voices offers an important starting point for identity researchers to gradually unravel the social structures involved that constrain or even repress the access to and expression of certain meaning systems for an individual.

The stance for a dialogical examination of cultural marginality converges with a mediational view to intercultural communication as articulated by Scollon (1997). In keeping with the traditions of Bakhtin and Vygotsky as well as the sociology of knowledge research, Scollon (1997) foregrounds the very activity of intercultural interaction as the primary unit of analysis. The purpose of his research is geared towards revealing how the plurality of discourses have come to manifest themselves in the mediated actions of individual participants and transform the process and outcome of the communicative event. His firm conviction in the pervasiveness of the mediational nature of all aspects of interpersonal communication in fact directs him to prefer the notion of interdiscourse communication as to characterize all instances of human communication. Nevertheless, the attention given to the notion of culture in terms of specifying the intercultural character of communication is still justified by the salience of culture as a valid discursive category. Another accompanying condition is that a mediational view follows our examination of the communication process. What I intend to draw from the mediational view towards intercultural communication to the process of multicultural identity development is their common dialogical conception that cross-cuts sociocultural structures and individual actions at the individual level of interaction. The dialogical nature of intercultural communication as a general activity and multicultural identity formation as its specific instance underlie that all human communications are intricately intersected by various social, cultural and individual discourses contingently. The ambivalent nature of the two processes is also underscored by the contradictory normative expectations embodied by individual actors in the course of interaction. As such, the consummation of the intercultural communication activity and identity construction pivots on the role of individuals to continuously negotiate and reconcile the ambivalence of diverse resources. Such processes of attaining individual rhetoric is never complete since any communication is a response and precursor to other discourses as subsequent resources for the embedded individual and others in the framework of societal dialectics (Scollon 1997).

Conversely, Connidis and McMullin (2002) worry that sociological ambivalence risks treating the competing structural demands as an abstraction that has little meaning in individual actions. They urge for a correlation of the two empirical levels by means of a symbolic interactionist focus on individual actions. I view that within the dialogical universe of mediated interactions, individual actorship in the microframe of communication with sociocultural others can be seamlessly conjoined to the macro-frame sociocultural structures and discourses. It is through the dialogical nature of all human communication activities that the infinite idiosyncrasies of intercultural and identity experiences from both a phenomenological and objective perspective can be described and explained. This is particularly the case for multicultural identity formation that carries an increased multiplicity of discursive resources available from differential sociocultural frameworks,

4.6 Critiques of the "Interculturalist" Perspective

Having stated my proposition for a mediational approach to examining the ambivalence of multicultural identity in the tradition of dialogism, I will now briefly return to some of the main critiques expressed in the research conducted by Sparrow (2000). As mentioned in discussions before, her central argumentation is directed against an individualistic and disembodied conception of identity construction. Despite secondary differences in their focuses and scopes of analysis, the various sociocultural approaches explored above have unanimously highlighted the intrinsic embeddedness and fluidity of human existence among the multiplicity of sociocultural networks. The alternative of considering identity development as an autonomous undertaking as if in an existential vacuum thus falls short of fulfilling the sociocultural and sociopolitical realities in vivid working in relation to their constituent individuals.

Both Janet Bennett and Milton Bennett regard cultural marginality as "internal cultural shock" (Bennett 1993a; Bennett 1993b). In other words, the existence of multiple cultural frames of reference that have been internalized by the individual constitutes the basis of ambivalence for the cultural marginal. However, the notion of ambivalence that Bennetts have in mind differ essentially from that of the sociological perspective in the empirical level it pertains to. Sociological ambivalence underlines the intersection of the double levels of ambivalence psychologically and sociologically (see Merton 1974). Bennetts however appear to limit the concept of ambivalence to only the psychological realm by confining their conception of multicultural identity as an intrapersonal state of affair, thus excluding the interpersonal dynamics originating from the sociocultural dynamics. This underlying assumption can nevertheless be related to their primary emphasis on personal training of intercultural competence. Milton Bennett's developmental model of intercultural sensitivity exemplifies this practical orientation on the basis of concrete and sequential categories which imply measurability and pliability (Bennett 1986; Bennett 1993b). His assertion for a phenomenological approach to training is justified for individual training purposes. As he borrows the notion of phenomenology from Kelly's personal construct theory, individual experiences are not merely filled up by succession of objective incidents but must be organized and appropriated as subjectively meaningful to the individuals (Bennett 1986). The emphasis of knowledge construction at the individual level can also be found in the radical constructivist and the sociological inquiry into knowledge as delineated earlier. An underlying assumption is that a phenomenological approach to training intercultural sensitivity can serve as a link to bridge the duality between the 'outsider-trainer' and 'insider-subject'. In effect, this possibility of perspectival and affective displacement of the trainer to the trained subject is synonymous with the notion of *empathy* that he asserts (Bennett 1993b). Arguably, it is this overt emphasis on the psychological aspects of the selves of trainer and subject that endows his developmental model with a heavy primacy on the individual dimension. The psychological leaning of his model is also marked with the use of difference as

the organizing concept of the developmental sequence (Bennett 1986; Bennett 1993b). In other words, qualification of an individual for a particular category along the stage model of intercultural sensitivity is founded on the manifested cognitive, affective and behavioral responses of the individual to the concept of cultural difference. As Milton Bennett states:

> development of intercultural sensitivity is ultimately the development of consciousness and, through consciousness, developing a new "natural" approach to cultural difference. [Therefore,] it is useful to consider intercultural development as it moves through cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. (Bennett 1986:26)

More than regarding the individual as the primary unit of analysis, his view implies his conviction in the psychological realm as the sole basis of knowledge and identity development. It is this limitation to construing intercultural sensitivity as an essentially psychological capacity that leads towards his conception of a multicultural self that is disembedded from the sociocultural contexts. In the final stage of his developmental model, the integrated person, marked by a high self-reflexivity, is the "constant creator of one's own reality" and "understands that his or her identity emerges from the act of defining identity itself" (Bennett 1986). Furthermore, the capacity of deliberate consciousness and autonomous choice of an integrated person can be most obviously perceived in Bennett's depiction of empathy. He underscores the "intentional" and "temporary" character of empathy to differentiate it from the unintentional and relatively enduring feature of cultural pluralism (Bennett 1993b). In the process of exercising intercultural empathy, the self is fully conscious of both the boundary and content of own identity; capable of setting the boundary temporarily aside and momentarily expanding it to fuse self with environment. It can then re-create the boundary "at will" once an empathic experience into the other's perspective and emotion guided by the operation of intuition is completed (Bennett 1993b). In other words, the overriding assumption is that reality and identity construal are entirely contained within the individual who, as the deliberate and autonomous subject, can spontaneously initiate transformation in the frames of reality and knowledge. That sociocultural contexts are now rendered objective and irrelevant to

processes of individual knowledge and identity construction is anchored in this type of dualistic thinking between individual and sociocultural factors.

In a seeming echo, Janet Bennett (1993a) also highlights the conscious character of reality and identity construction. Particularly in the case of constructive cultural marginals, they evince the conscious attribute of choice and have a well-developed control of boundary contraction and expansion in a self-determining character:

> they are coming to terms with the reality that all knowledge is constructed, and what they will ultimately value and believe is what they choose, based on the context and frame of reference they construct. (1993:128)

In contrast to the overt disembodied manner of identity formation as implicated by Milton Bennett (1986; 1993b), a closer examination into the capacity of relativistic and synthetic thinking characterizing constructive marginals reveals however the contextual basis that underlies the cause of cultural marginality and also provides the platform of individual action by the cultural marginal. The attainment of contextual relativism:

> depends on the person's ability to tolerate ambiguity, respect other perspectives, and define his or her own frame of reference. Ultimately, it requires the person to make a commitment to a value system honed from many contexts and an identity actively affirmed and based solidly on self as choice maker. (Bennett 1993:119)

Janet Bennett's portrayal of cultural marginality therefore does attach importance to the contextual basis of reality and identity construction of multicultural individuals. In the course of confronting ambiguities of the internalized cultural frames, they have to reconcile contrastive elements of the differential cultural bodies for re-establishing a relatively coherent value system that will allow them to function fluidly across the multiple cultural systems. Nevertheless, her highlight on the recourse to individual choice and its conscious nature in resolving the inconsistencies of the different cultural systems implies that the basis of resolution lies entirely in individual volition. Her notion of individual choice therefore assumes an existentially detached

nature of the self that is capable of determining its functioning outside the cultural frameworks. As such, its undertone of an autonomous self naturally becomes the point of dispute in light of the more socioculturally sensitive views which hold that each reconciliatory undertaking by the individual is inevitably caught up among the diverse sociocultural processes and structural constraints. The accounts of institutionalized inequalities as reported by the women and ethnic subjects in Sparrow's research also underpin their awareness of sociocultural ambivalence is rather a result of structural imposition than an exercise of individual will. Options, if there are any to cope with their cultural dilemma, are intrinsically limited by the sociopolitical realities embedding them (Sparrow 2000).

Adler's (1977) seminal portrayal of the multicultural man appears to share the paradox of individual autonomy and hints of contextuality as noted in Bennetts' work. In the introduction of his conceptualization, Adler already grounds the emergence of the multicultural personhood in the contemporary context of profuse cultural exchange not so importantly at the superficial level as at the ideational level (Adler 1977). Although Adler is exhilarated by how the contemporary complex of social, political and economic interactions have led to the development of the novel kind of multicultural personhood, his use of the *individual* multicultural man as the beginning point and basis of his theorization directs his approach to an emphasis on psychological aspects. This limitation to the psychological level of conceptualization is also demonstrated in the paradox of his description of multicultural identity as a "social-psychological style of self process" in which the individual "has psychologically and sociologically come to grips with a multiplicity of realities" (1977:25). Berger and Luckmann (1966) have stated that the insight of social psychology shall enable a specified account of the nature and functioning of the dialectical process between self and society which is beyond the reach of the discipline of sociology of knowledge.

Nonetheless, it appears that the social-psychological process of self in Adler's conception is unilaterally hinged onto the unit of the psychological self. Regarding cultural identity as well as the qualitatively different multicultural identity, Adler conceives that the content and contour of the identities as formed ultimately rely on a self process for integrating the three interrelated levels of psychobiological, psychosocial and psychophilosophical realities (Adler 1977). The positing of the self as the sole and primary agent to incorporate the different levels of psychologically relevant identities omits a necessary concern of the social dialectical process during which such culturally contoured identities are built into the identity configuration of the individual. As such, an undertone of the unique identity configuration of multicultural individual as a largely individualistic pursuit is built into his conception. It is exemplified especially in his construal of multicultural identity construction as "a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality" (Adler 1977:26). Concurrently, the view of multicultural person as being "capable of major shifts in their frame of reference and embody(ing) the ability to disavow a permanent character and change in socio-psychological style" also underscores the deliberate and individualistic nature of reality shift that he has in mind (Adler 1977:29). Despite that he places a heavy reliance on culture for multicultural individuals to maintain their relativity and fluid cultural make-up, the sole emphasis of the role of self to enact such transformations paradoxically removes self from its embedded context and ignores the largely unconscious patterning capacity and process of our sociocultural structures.

A commonality of conceptual distortion towards multicultural identity can be perceived from such "interculturalist" authors (Sparrow 2000). It is their common analytical primacy accorded at the individual level that inclines them to uphold the process of reality and identity development as an essentially psychological pursuit removed from the sociocultural processes that actually encompass and situate the individual. In this respect, I am in accord with Sparrow's (2000) consideration of such postulations as predicating on the

autonomous, Cartesian notion of self. In one sense, such portrayals by Adler and Bennetts can also be posited as embodying radical constructivism when we consider their shared psychological underpinnings. But as I have attempted to delineate in the brief literature review of radical constructivism, the mutual inclusion of individual mental functioning and social dimensions in constituting individual operation is indeed maintained in the comprehensiveness of the paradigmatic framework. While admittedly privileging the individual as an analytical necessity, radical constructivism eschews any autonomous notion of self by establishing the theorization of self functioning on the contextualised foundations. It is this discovery that leads to my argumentation on the largely compatible nature of the radical constructivist and social constructionist paradigms. Likewise for this reason, I will evade classifying the interculturalists' approach to multicultural identity under the school of radical constructivism.

Nevertheless, Sparrow's (2000) critique on the predominant interculturalists' view of multicultural identity serves as an important reminder of the intrinsically disparate nature of cultural marginality. Beneath an integral umbrella term as it appears to be, it is hardly a homogeneous phenomenon to capture all the idiosyncratic trajectories and dimensions of the multicultural identity development of each cultural marginal individual. Interestingly, while Sparrow criticizes the limiting portrayal of the multicultural self by the interculturalists, she observes close correspondence between such articulations and the accounts reported by her male research subjects. She in turn attributes such similarities to the gendered and socioeconomic differences in the concept of self (Sparrow 2000). For such male individuals who are relatively fortunate as not to fall victim to the institutionalized patterns of domination, the increased opportunities and cultural resources they possess endows them with an illusory sense of autonomous choice in shaping their multicultural selfhood. They apparently embody what Adler calls "a style of self-consciousness" (Adler 1977:26). Hence, it is one major contribution of Sparrow's critiques in including the nature of cultural marginality of those that are caught in between

the networks of power and exploitation in the sociocultural structures. Their dimension of sociopolitical entanglement reveals that choice in multicultural identity formation is a thoroughly relative matter. The parallel parody of choice for such oppressed persons is thus often a conditioned enforcement.

4.7 Need for a Differentiated Account of Multicultural Personhood

Here I am reminded of Morley's advocacy for a differentiated nomadology of contemporary times (Morley 2001). His studies on transnational patterns of communications and mobility and the resultant transformations in ideas of belonging and identity question a homogeneous presumption of the postmodern nomad. A generalized postmodern nomadology is thus inadequate and unrealistic. Instead, postmodern spatiality is transected by salient power dialectics, "in terms of who has control over their mobility" (Morley 2001:430). Therefore, it is important to distinguish those that are mobile voluntarily from those who are forced into mobility or sedentariness for economic or political reasons (Morley 2001). The same can be applied here for understanding the expansive dimension of cultural marginality. Whereas cultural marginality embodies individuals who have a relative liberty to construct their multicultural selfhood as a matter of personal style, power relations extort those that have to grapple with the salient politics of identity associated with their race and ethnicity. The former case tends to bespeak multicultural identity as an individualistic-psychological pursuit while the latter underscores the heavy implications of sociocultural contexts. When we speak of cultural marginality then, it is important to render an expansive conceptualization of the myriad possibilities of constitution and manifestation of multicultural identity.

It is with this concern that a dialogical account of multicultural selfhood is deemed to be especially relevant and useful in enabling an objective

and comprehensive analysis of the phenomenological process of multicultural identity formation of each individual. A dialogical conception does not speak for categories of identity and individuals. Instead in processual terms, it describes the complexity and dynamism of identity development as discourses are drawn, transformed and redistributed to the communally available stock of knowledge among its social participants. Dialogical relations among the variety of such individual and socially available discourses engender infinite possibilities of identity construction in general. The extent of complexity unpredictability augments particularly for the case of multicultural identity development as multicultural individuals access semiotic resources from multiple sociocultural stores and formulate unique multicultural identity manifestations. In undertaking an analysis of the dialogical and polyvocalic nature of identity construction, both the psychological and sociocultural dimensions are tapped and can be rendered as complementary. It is in the dialogical approach that a differentiated phenomenology of cultural marginality can be plausibly sketched, encompassing both the pseudo-autonomous characteristics as well as the inevitable sociopolitical realities.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF CULTURAL MARGINALITY

5.1 Interlocutory Potential of Cultural Marginal as the Stranger

By virtue of their simultaneous membership and non-membership in multiple sociocultural groups, the interlocutory appeals of cultural marginal individuals in relation to culturally bounded others become intuitively obvious. In Simmel's (1971) conception of the *Stranger* upon which Park (1928) first based his profile of the *Marginal Man*, the distinct qualities of the stranger as a sociological mediator are clearly delineated. Owing to a paradoxical synthesis of "nearness" and "remoteness" in the stranger, his/her specific character of

mobility in contrast to the fixity of those within bounded group enables the individual to embody the important characteristic of objectivity (Levine 1971). This quality of perceived objectivity in the spatial terms leads the stranger to have access to and obtain confidences from those bounded within groups that are otherwise limited to their individual and subjective biases and distortions. It is important therefore to stress the quality of objectivity of cultural marginals as being perceived in nature. Because this explains the active nature of their objectivity in terms of "a positive and definite kind of participation", namely "a distinct structure composed of remoteness and nearness, indifference and involvement" rather than "mere detachment and nonparticipation" (Levine 1971:186). Concurrently, the sense of freedom that such a stranger exhibits is closely woven with such paradoxical qualities of objectivity and engagement. The literal distinction between subjective and objective orientations as we normally understand it is therefore not relevant to the condition of objectivity of the stranger. This is because the subjectivity of the stranger is simultaneously manifested in and constitutive of his or her objectivity and which in turn gets dissolved.

Once we acknowledge the dialectical foundation between the stranger and group in the sociological sense, a cultural marginal individual can be likewise conceived as the stranger in relation to the sociocultural groups in question. In the same vein as the sociological stranger, the capacity of cultural marginal individuals to mediate between individuals and groups relatively bounded within their subjectivities relates to an incessant process of simultaneous attachment to and detachment from cultural groups. This process is rendered plausible only with their entrusted attribute of mobility and objectivity. The paradox of remoteness and nearness, aloofness and involvement of cultural marginals as strangers underlies their continual process of engagement in and disengagement from cultural frames. The binary synthesis of such qualities also constitutes their unique identity structure and process. Adler (1977) celebrates that such adapational self-process of multicultural individuals allows them to be dynamically situated to probe into

the workings of and facilitate contact across alternative cultural systems. It is in relation to such mutable and situational qualities of the multicultural self that Adler describes the multicultural individual as constantly alternating identities "through a process of both cultural learning and cultural un-learning" and "becoming a part of and apart from a given cultural context" (Adler 1977:28,30). In light of Simmel's initial conception of the stranger and cultural marginal as one distinct instance, the contextual basis of multicultural individuals becomes clarified through the ambiguous fusion of remoteness and nearness, attachment and detachment of themselves as strangers in the respective cultural systems. In other words, the paradox of the mobile characteristic of cultural marginal is that it is always interwoven with embeddedness. Shift from one cultural context to another can occur only while the cultural marginal is involved with the relevant cultural contexts, just as the stranger can mediate between individuals within and among groups only in the course of interacting with them. It is this peculiarly indissociable blend of attachment to and detachment from cultural contexts of cultural marginals that endows them with the interlocutory potentials to bridge contact across varied cultural spheres.

In the contemporary world saturated with intercultural exchanges, the potential contribution of the mediating capacity of multicultural individuals is undoubtedly immense. Paradoxically, increased intercultural exchanges at varying levels worldwide do not point to any state or even tendency of convergence towards a common and uniform world-civilization. The dialectical complexities of the phenomenon of globalization defy the apparent homogenization the term naively suggests. The manifested divergence obliges us to delve into the dynamics of the globalizing force in conjunction with counter-tendencies as manifested in nationalism, tribalism and the return to communities (see Welsch 1999). In contrast to modernity, postmodern times are marked by the universal ethic of diversity in terms of protecting and cultivating each element of difference in its own right. But Bauman (1998) reminds that the state of coexistence of such diversities is in fact more of

segregationist nature. Hence, the appeal of community returns to constitute a new form of racism based on the dynamics of polarization and the politics of exclusion. Resurgence of communalism and nationalism in the contemporary age likely carries with them the potentially destructive forces in aggravating myopia and breeding seeds for prejudice and racism on the basis of such stratified intolerance of differences. What is under the grand slogan of multiculturalism deserves our second thought.

In this regard, the mediating potential of cultural marginals to act as links across discrepant sociocultural frames is of great appeal and relevance to the present-day arena. The increased extent of semiotic resources from the plurality of sociocultural spheres increases the possible combinations of such resources for mediating within a certain interactive context made salient by particular sociocultural discourses. The intercultural capacity of cultural marginals lies exactly in this innovative quality to manipulate the diverse discursive resources cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally. It is not merely an augmented quantity of sociocultural resources that is primary to their intercultural competence, but the infinitely possible ways in which such semiotic means can be dialogically deployed by the cultural marginal. Beyond a mere fulfillment of contextual demands as they emerge, the intercultural capacity of cultural marginals is not confined to a mere situational sensitivity to cultural differences. More significantly, the contextual dynamism cultural marginals are capable of demonstrating spontaneously is built upon the nature of their identity configuration process. Their intercultural capacity is therefore permanent and enduring while being flexibly adaptational. With their peculiar quality of objective but committed relation to particular cultural contexts, cultural marginals can simultaneously tap into alternative frames of perspectives and sentiments. In so doing, they can bridge across diverse sociocultural systems shrouded respectively in own cognitive and affective enclosures. Apart from facilitating interactions across cultures in positive terms, the intercultural capacity of cultural marginals is especially important in cases of intercultural antagonism and conflict, in which the impediments to

conducive communication are particularly exacerbated more by emotional barriers than perspectival differences.

The inevitable nature of contemporary sociopolitical realities, intertwined invariably with issues of ethnicity and race, also points to the significance of cultural marginals as social critics and mediators of conflicts. As discussed above by authors predisposed to sociocultural approaches (Hermans 2001; Penuel et al 1995; Sparrow 2000; Tappan 2005), the political dimensions of sociocultural systems are themselves salient factors in empowering and constraining the formation of self and identity. In light of the highly politicized context in postmodernity (see Bauman 1998), the ideological and political character of sociocultural processes as constituted by human interventions provides a prolific breeding ground for the dialectical development of identity politics. Cultural marginals, especially those that subjugated experience in the relevant sociocultural structures, can find themselves in vantage points in which such sociopolitical factors can be keenly discerned, reflected and compared with the concomitant forced awareness. Rather than readily taking for granted and submitting oneself to the stratified patterns of domination and subjugation, cultural marginals with their exposures to various sociocultural systems can realize that such structural constraints are in fact results of human interventions. They are therefore not inevitable and unalterable. While bearing in mind that each sociocultural framework has its own systemic foundation of operating and providing meanings for its members, cultural marginals can acknowledge such intrinsic justifications of each sociocultural system while critiquing the contrived elements of suppression exuded by those with deliberate or unconscious political intentions. In postmodernity, this distinct role of cultural marginals to uncover and critique sociocultural inequalities will become more sharpened with potentially increasing malices directed against them owing to their perceived strangeness. In the original conception of the stranger, Simmel (1971) describes the concurrent dangerous possibilities associated with the appearance of foreignness and mobility of strangers. Similarly, Bauman (1998) also argues

that in the "heterophilic" style of human encounters in postmodernity, the pervasive extent of strangeness and the sense of uncertainty and fear it carries will lead individuals to more frantically disentangle themselves from perceived strangers (1998:32). Cultural marginals, especially those that find themselves in minority and subjugated positions in a certain sociocultural system, plausibly will experience an augmented and more poignant extent of structural inequalities and identity struggles. In turn, the dialectical constraints will sharpen their roles as social observers and critics with wider vision and keener intelligence they have come to embody as cultural marginals.

The fluid embeddedness of cultural marginals in differential cultural contexts also carries relevance to the postmodern conditions which favor the surge of individualism. As Hoare (1991) envisages, contemporary trends of secularization in conjunction with the modern differentialist society and technological innovations have caused a fundamental "shift from a collective morality value to a personal competence value orientation" (Hoare 1997:45). Alienated from self and from other individuals, the postmodern self is primarily preoccupied with the fulfillment of self and gratification of self-interests. From a psychosocial perspective, the development and achievement of mature identity requires the transcendence of narrow individualism to a connected, multi-relational and inclusive self-system that tolerates and accepts differences and different others (Hoare 1991). Foreseeably, the process of individuation and phenomenon of self and social alienation in postmodernity will hint challenges to the development of genuine sensitivity to cultural pluralism which is based on a recognition of the intrinsic differences between diverse sociocultural systems rather than an individualist and universalistic acknowledgement. The committal identity experience of cultural marginals as rooted but not fixed in specific cultural contexts thus entails salience to the postmodern conditions in that the more mature psychosocial identities that they embody make them less prone to an individualist myopia and manifestations of social pathologies. In brief, they can act as real-life models to mediate and expand the relatively limited intercultural vision for those that are relatively

bounded within cultural groups and become everyday disseminators to educate about the plausibility of multiculturalism in contemporary societies.

However, the interlocutory capacity of cultural marginals is not limited to culture in the anthropological sense. To expand the plausible scope of mediation by cultural marginals, we need to move beyond the notion of culture to encompass other discursive dimensions in the societal dialectics. So far, the interpretation of the concept of culture has been confined at the anthropological level while the interlocutory capacity of cultural marginals conceivably extends beyond one discursive dimension. As noted above, Scollon (1997) prefers using interdiscursive communication to capture the pervasiveness of discursive influences in human interaction. At the same time, he accepts the term intercultural communication when analytical primacy is given to the discourse of culture. Nevertheless, his mediational approach to examining human interaction reminds that other discursive possibilities cannot be obliterated despite the analytic primacy rendered to culture. This broader concern of other sociocultural discursive forces is likewise noted by Rogers (1999) in his disapproving attitude towards the limitation of understanding intercultural communication that obscures other salient discursive fields such as socioeconomic status, gender and age.

In this regard, cultural marginals present a specific type of cultural hybridization when we examine from the perspective of culture as one discursive source, whereas any individual situated in the sociological fabric of dialectics is in essence a discursive hybrid of different combinations and types. Nevertheless, the prominence of the discourse of culture along with its accompanying factors of ethnicity and race signifies that the mediating potentials of cultural marginals can be both specifically applied to the empirical levels of culture and its other discursive associations. They can therefore also be generally utilized to bridge differences involving other more discrepant discursive domains. After all, the expanded repertoire of cultural marginals in

terms of cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions relates essentially to transformations of qualitative and attitudinal nature and hence not limited to specific discursive contexts where knowledge and skills can be cumulatively acquired and developed. In contrast to modernity and premodern times where geographical limitations endowed the sociocultural structure with less mobility and hence more simplicity and stability, postmodernity sees escalating transfusion of diverse sociocultural patterns. The interweaving of different discursive fields and individual positioning within the contemporary sociocultural networks signifies that complexities of human interaction at the basic interpersonal level will require a great extent of flexibility and sophistication of embodied individuals to sensitively mediate between the discursive spheres. The adaptational capacity of cultural marginals which transcends beyond the discourse of culture is thus of great salience in the contemporary age where intersection of myriad discourses would necessitate individuals that can bridge such structural discrepancies on an everyday basis.

5.2 The Social-Saturated Self in Consumeristic Postmodern

> It is in the mind of the marginal man that the moral turmoil which new cultural contacts occasion manifests itself in the most obvious forms. It is in the mind of the marginal man − where the changes and fusions of culture are going on − that we can best study the processes of civilization and of progress. (Park 1928:893)

Such are the concluding notes by Park (1928) in his description of the marginal man which restore our insight from the embodied cultural marginal individual to the broader contemporary context in which cultural marginality emerges. With the bulk of his original essay dedicated on the sociohistorical origin of the marginal person in terms of human migration, such ending comments remind that the evolving content and dynamics of the contemporary sociology be examined and related to the peculiar identity phenomenon of cultural marginality. Likewise, Adler envisages that the

widespread interlinking of cultures and persons in the contemporary times, despite the accompanying hazards of disorientation, presents "a new possibility in the way humans conceive of their individual identities and the identity of the human species" (Adler 1977:36). In the previous section, it was noted that the pervasive and elaborate nature of discursive influences that constitute the complexities of contemporary existence is to present a vibrant stage for cultural marginals to realize their personality capacity as interlocutors. When we extend our attention beyond the realm of culture to other discursive domains, the polyvocalic transfusion of discursive forces in the embodied cultural marginal can be generalized to reveal the complexities of contemporary personhood in the postmodern age.

From the sociohistorical perspective, the requisite for constant shift in reality and identity is intrinsic for individual functioning given the sociological basis of knowledge and reality construction. Berger and Luckmann (1966) explain that the coexistence of multiple spheres of reality in individual consciousness inevitably emerge during the symbiotic dialectical process of societal and individual functioning. As such, the sociological nature of individual existence entails the inherent need for constant shift in attentiveness. Therein also lies the dynamic tension in reality and identity alteration for individuals. However, whereas social distribution of knowledge is thus an inherent feature of all societies, the extent of such differentialist sophistication has grown more severe in contemporary societies as a reinforced continuation of scientific consciousness in modern times. Essentially, the scientific mode of thinking functions upon principles of division, segregation and specialization as manifested in the prevailing characteristics of componentiality, mechanisticity, reproduciblity and measurability (Berger et al 1966). The scientific worldview and engineering mentality manifest themselves particularly saliently in the content and correlate styles of work, and entail pervasive psychopathological consequences for individuals and societies operating within the entire modern symbolic universe (Berger et al 1966).

Beyond the centrality of the work realm, this segregational spirit of modern consciousness inevitably carries over to engender the engineering and segregational mode of operation within individual consciousness and in individual management of social relations. The scientific worldview carries particular relevance for the embodied individuals in terms of pluralization of their life-world – a reality constitutive of individual consciousness and perceived to have an overall structure of meanings within which symbols and experiences are organized and derive their collectively shared and integrative significance (Berger 1966). The contemporary societies are similarly conducted in the modern consciousness where everyday life is highly segmented and numerous sectors become vastly discrepant from one another. The outcome is a fundamental cleavage from within the individual consciousness as the multiplicity of enclaves are perceived to be incomprehensible and undermine the plausibility of meaningful integration of the unrelated fragments of realities in individual consciousness and social environment. In particular, the usurpation of religion as the superintending authority to unite such pluralized individual life-worlds is both an inevitable consequence and contributory reinforcement of the scientific worldview which has come to constitute the epistemic constellation of modernity and postmodernity (Berger et al 1966). Problems of disidentification and anomie within self and with others are therefore characteristic of the contemporary societies featuring a profoundly differentiated sociological fabric.

The multiphrenic nature of self and reality as indicated by Berger and Luckmann in their explanation of the modern homeless mind is borrowed by scholars such as Gergen (1991) to extend the implications of a differentialist mode of individual and societal functioning in contemporary times. Rooted in a social constructionist conception of self and reality construction, Gergen describes extensively the potential hazards of the ultra-sophisticated and ultra-pervasive communications technology in leading to the process of "social saturation" and "populating of the self" (Gergen 1991:49). His emphasis on the technological context in contemporary societies underlies the fundamental

transformation and drastic increase in both the forms and styles of human interaction. Prior to the prevalence of communications technology when human communications and social relationships were largely confined by geographical distance to occur primarily in the face-to-face and communal context, individual meaning and reality making were thus perceived to be relatively consistent and enduring, real and authentic. But as a result of exponential advances in communications and transportation technology which undermine traditional temporal and territorial limitations, human interactions can thus proliferate simultaneously in infinite and vicarious possibilities. The defining characteristic of the contemporary lifestyle is hence "a swirling sea of social relations" (Gergen 1991:61).

The electronic expansion of social relationships is however realized at the expense of the quality of such saturated social life for individuals which has now taken on more transient, superficial and incoherent character. Concurrently, the new mode of social constructionism in the contemporary age operates hand-in-hand with the construction of the socially constituted self. As an individual undertakes a multiplicity of incoherent and disconnected social relations, reality and self-conception also undergo a corresponding process of "pluralization" and fragmentation (Berger et al 1973). Embedded in the myriad directions of social relationships, the resultant variety of social roles and the plurality of vying voices obscure the very concept of an authentic and essentialist self so that "the fully saturated self becomes no self at all" (Gergen 1991:7). Alternating between the multitude of social relations and perceived realities, self-identity thus becomes inherently erratic as the contemporary individual now exists in a state of continuous construction and reconstruction. In sum, this new constellation of sensibilities and self-consciousness in contemporary life subsume the individual to a permanent identity crisis characterized by "multiphrenia", a condition of internal split in consciousness as in the portrayal of modern individuals (Berger et al 1973). Gergen's conviction in the socio-psychological impact of the soaring technological developments in contemporary times leads him to assert that the postmodern

condition is essentially a by-product of the contemporary technologies of social saturation (Gergen 1991).

The multiphrenic nature of the contemporary self as an inevitable outcome of technological prevalence is in conjunction with the general conception of the postmodern persons as alien and anonymous beings. Bauman (1998) asserts that all individuals in the postmodern conditions are essentially equal strangers to themselves and to each other. As discussed section 2.1, Bauman (1992;1998) conceives the sociology of postmodernity as being fundamentally discrepant from the modernist paradigm of order and control in its disavowal and dissolution of boundary and authority. The overall postmodern conditions are therefore characterized by the permeating atmosphere of "ambient fear" marked by boundless possibilities and a concomitant lack of consistency and direction (Bauman 1998:22). For Bauman, the advent and proliferation of consumeristic sociology as the new ruling mechanism in the postmodern is the primary force for the changing pragmatics of interpersonal relations and the upsurge of individual identity fragmentation.

Led by the irrational and myopic logic of consumer freedom, social bonds and self-image have now become ephemeral, superficial and indeterminate as they constantly undergo "split(s) into a collection of snapshots" and shift(s) between such available snapshots" (Bauman 1998:24). In his conception, "palimpsest identity" which is continuously self-effacing and experimenting has come to embody the postmodern personhood while such a characteristic has simultaneously injected the quality of "sliminess"into each individual (Bauman 1998:25-26). In postmodern life, each human individual has become the stranger for him-/herself and other individuals. This in turn culminates in a peculiar and pervasive reciprocity of strangeness among individuals and a volatile nature of coexistence among such strangers since fear of uncertainty of the perceived sliminess of other strangers is latent deep within each individual stranger. Returning to the permeation of semiotic voices in the

consumeristic mode of sociological functioning, Bauman (1998), in accord with other postmodern scholars such as Featherstone (1991) and Jameson (1991), remarks that the contemporary stranger-individuals inevitably exist in a recurrent loop of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction amid the phantasmagoria of signs and discourses. Besides the figural of stranger, the quality of superficiality and evanescence that has come to characterize the identity and reality experience of postmodern existence points also to the simultaneous status of the stranger as the stroller, vagabond, tourist and player (Bauman 1995).

5.3 Multiculturality as Instance of Postmodern Self-fragmentation

The conception of the overall postmodern conditions as a collage of floating fragments where semiotic opposition collapses to give way to infinite possibilities of reality and meaning construal induces a fundamental paradigmatic shift in the concept of self as an essentialist, stabilized core. Grounded in the open systems perspective, Sampson (1985) and Kim (1994) both posit self identity as a diffuse open system. Coming from the psychological discipline, Sampson combines insights from other disciplines such as non-equilibrium physics and the school of deconstruction to repudiate the egocentric view of self exhibiting unity across all situations in the traditional psychological canon and western cultural paradigm. Because this perspective ignores the precondition that individual functioning occurs within but not external to the changing environmental context which altogether constitute an open and integrated system (Sampson 1985). The idea of a decentralized self which exists in a continuous process of becoming and evolving is thus necessary to accommodate systemic interchange and fluctuation that the self must evince in order to attain continual equilibrium.

Kim (1994) also argues along a similar conceptual thread which leads even to his obscuring the notion of cultural identity which is traditionally

implicative of an exclusive and fixed entity. He favors instead the dynamic concept of intercultural identity for all individuals. Particularly in the present world saturated with possibilities of intercultural communication activities and encounters, a revised conception of selfhood which embodies at once complexity and richness is imperative to capture the various intercultural interfaces and consequent impact to our identity construction. His conception of identity development based on the "stress-adaptation-growth" dynamics underlies the inevitable process of successive identity transformation and reorganization of knowledge and selfhood in relation to the cultural others. In addition, the dynamics view posits individual psychocultural adjustment as a trajectory of increasing interculturalness that has come to characterize individual contemporary existence. Finally, Hermans (2001) also argues against the inherent inadequacy and irrelevance of the traditional idea of self and culture as essential cores. He opts to appropriate the dialogical conception to encompass the polyvocalic and dialogical nature of human interactions that are inevitably marked by power dialectics.

In sum, the confluence of social differentiation, technological applications and market economy in the contemporary postmodern societies signify correlated paradigmatic shifts in both macrosociological and microsociological manifestations. The implications of postmodernity at the macrosociological level have been covered earlier in terms of a fundamental alteration in the ruling principle of the sociological mechanism. At the microsociological level, the new dynamics of social relations underlies that its interwoven processes of individual reality perception and identity construction also undergo transformations in the course of their exponential proliferation. The vastness of possibilities implicate that in the postmodern psychological world, individuals can now mix and match realities and identities in an increasingly complex array of circumstances and in a growingly idiosyncratic fashion that nevertheless retains manifestations of the conditioning influences of the novel sociological patterns. Ceaseless reality and identity shift amid the plethora of semiotic fragments therefore becomes the existential preconditions

for all embodied individuals in the postmodern conditions. In that sense, the continuous process of reality and identity shift across discrepant cultural contexts that is so central for our understanding of the cultural marginal person presents a particular focal point in which the contemporary sociocultural trends unfold at the individual level of manifestation. It is probable that some may attempt to downplay any extraordinary quality of this contemporary identity phenomenon by asserting the overall fragmentary nature of postmodern selfhood. However, I reckon that as long as we acknowledge the notion of culture as one prominent discursive force, cultural marginality can still distinguish itself as a peculiar identity phenomenon while revealing the general postmodern social landscape. This is not to exaggerate the discursive importance of culture at the risk of obliterating other plausible discursive factors. We can easily recall ardent reminders from intercultural scholars in the tradition of dialogicality who are in disapproval of the limiting view of cross-cultural approach (see Scollon 1997; Hermans 2001). But while the notion of culture undergoes a fundamental revision into a perspective more inclusive of possibilities and dynamic to change, its significance remains as one powerful discursive field that transects human interaction activities, along with others.

The overall conditions of the self in the postmodern are therefore marked by a heightened extent of complexities and uniqueness that escape any certain and ready categorization. From the social constructionist view, a phenomenological inquiry into each unique identity experience of an individual that takes into account all sorts of contextual variables and realities is justified in its relevance to the complications in contemporary sociocultural existence. In other words, there is an imperative to construe a "chaos theory of identity" for all individuals and multicultural persons (see Sparrow 2000). The collective dissolution of certainty and order in the postmodern that paradoxically steer human individuals from their instinctual tendency for predictability and consistency presents profound implications for a correspondingly new pattern of social and self management. The individuation of social relations and self construction in postmodernity portends that truths also become highly

privatized and relativistic. The concern for the postmodern morality where "anything goes" (Gergen 1991) is widespread in the academia. Postmodern nihilism is one likely premonition in fear of the implications of the schizophrenic conception of the psychological and social self (Stam 1996). Gergen asserts instead that postmodern relativism needs not be cynically equated with nihilism. He invites our conception of commitment in relativism, or what he terms "serious play", as a responsive characteristic of self manifestation in the changing course of postmodern conditions (Gergen 1991:193):

> We engage in serious play when we enter into various relational forms – including linguistic constructions and associated actions – while at the same time treating the forms as contingent or contextually bounded. This means honoring the existing endeavors of human communities as possessing an internal validity for the participants, but acknowledging that their validity lies wholly within their particular spheres. (Gergen 1991:196)

In other words, the decentralized and contextual nature of the postmodern self does not exclude our capacity for commitment in embedded interrelationships with others. This manifestation of contextual engagement of the embodied individual lies at the center of Hermans' argumentation for the dialogical self where unity is embodied in multiplicity rather than exhibits rigid uniformity across all instances (Hermans 2001). In the case of cultural marginality, this capacity of contextual relativism across diverse cultural discourses is the particular highlight of cultural marginal individuals by virtue of their spontaneous shift between cultural frames while retaining connection to such contexts (Bennett 1993a; Bennett 1993b; Sparrow 2000). If individualism is the consequent psychosocial patterning of the postmodern conditions, one feasible response can be plausibly offered through our committed participation in the communal forms. For Gergen (1991), this postmodern move of people towards interpersonal collaboration should be interpreted as beneficial in contrast to the stifling confinement within each fortified ideological camp. The postmodern self, as demonstrated by the crucial case of the cultural marginal person, exists thus in a paradoxical union of

uniqueness and embeddedness and challenges us with a new way of thinking about personality that can find resolution amid the concomitant tension and unavoidable ambiguity.

5.4 Justification of the Concept of Cultural Marginality

It has been mentioned in the section 2.6 on marginality that since the inception of the marginal man concept by Park (1928), there has been considerable controversy over the implications of the term within academia. In fact, it can be discerned that marginality is only referred to more explicitly by its early progenitors and has since largely lapsed into disapproval and eschewal by intercultural scholars. The profile of the stranger and the marginal man are respectively analyzed in purely sociological and sociohistorical terms by Simmel (1971) and Park (1928) without any value judgment. In other words, the sociological emergence of the stranger and marginal man are delineated objectively as they are conjectured by the two forerunning sociologists. The accounts encompass both the inherent strengths and challenges of the socially perceived alien person owing to his or her distinctiveness. In his seminal essay on the subject, Adler (1977) abjures altogether the marginality term and uses instead *multicultural man* in accordance with his largely exhilarated attitude towards this novel possibility of identity make-up. Milton Bennett (1993b) bases the Integration stage of his developmental model of intercultural sensitivity on Adler's account of the multicultural man. He evinces his disapproval of the marginality term also in suggesting "an unhealthy outsider status" (1993b:63). The explicit use of the marginality term by Janet Bennett (1993) is an exception in the recent history on the debate as she adopts a liberal attitude towards cultural marginality. For her, cultural marginality can be either encapsulating or constructive depending on the personal choice of cultural lifestyle. In contrast, Sparrow (2000) undertakes her discussion by using multiculturality and cultural marginality interchangeably. Such an approach also marks the style of this research paper.

Understandably, there are plausible problems associated with the term of cultural marginality. The first dispute relates to the curious possibility of marginalizing the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality. By construing cultural marginality as relationally peripheral to the mainstream dimension of culture, the term risks allocating cultural marginals in an existential domain that is discretely segregated and irrelevant from the cultural dynamics that actually sustains its constitution. As argued earlier and stressed also by Park (1928), the emergence of the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality needs to be traced back and correlated to the backdrop of the sociocultural currents in the postmodern episteme. Detaching cultural marginality from the contemporary dynamics of culture and society falls short of examining this distinct manifestation in its own right. This gesture also obscures a proper and comprehensive understanding of the interrelational dialectics between the discursive force of culture, cultural marginality and the sociological patters as a whole. In conjunction with this problem, the segregation of cultural marginality from the domain of culture also presents a static view of cultural marginality and fails to recognize the dynamism of this distinct identity experience that gives rise to its phenomenological uniqueness. In previous discussion, it was elaborated how the combination of structural ambivalence and dialogical conception can remove such plausible implications of the term. The approach does so by injecting a dynamism that will correlate the individual agency of the cultural marginal person to the multitude of sociocultural voices in the background.

The third contention against the marginality term is of affective in nature that concerns its negative connotation. In response to this pervasive evaluative attitude towards marginality, an intriguing question one might ask is whether the negativity of marginality is conceptually intrinsic or it is merely an artificial projection by those who perceive it. The answer appears to be both. As discussed in the section 2.4, the marginal nature of cultural marginality derives from its relativization to the mainstream manifestation of a cultural pattern. As such, both the mainstream cultural domain and the marginal realm

are in principle saliently justified by the pervasiveness and stability of the former and the relative scarceness and distinctness of the latter. This juxtaposition underlies that marginality in fact needs not be negatively judged, meaning that it is not an inherently bad or evil phenomenon. When we start looking into the original conception of the stranger, we can uncover negativity is inherent to the sociological formation of the stranger. While the perceived qualities of mobility and objectivity are attractive to the members of bounded groups, this same freedom of the stranger paradoxically also spells hazards for the stranger. Simmel (1971) explains that the abstract nature of any social relation to the stranger renders the person prone to deliberate distortion of his/her sociological role as a stranger, especially when the group and its embodied individuals seal the group boundary to fortify the self and collective interests. Negativity is hence an intrinsic quality of the marginal person because the reciprocal tension of nearness and remoteness means that its sociological formation carries with it the social functions of sustaining the specific form of social interaction and social identity. At the macrosociological context, the intrinsic negativity of marginality inevitably becomes further fused with negative valences when it is appropriated in the ideological discourse of domination and subjugation as a structural manifestation and reinforcement of its social functions. Therefore, the negativity embodied by the marginal nature of the stranger needs to be reckoned with objectively while it paradoxically calls for an eschewal of any negative value judgment.

The forth dispute concerning cultural marginality relates also to this reciprocal juxtaposition between the cultural mainstream and marginality, since spatial relativization of the two notions could implicate a uniform and closed concept of culture. As pointed out earlier, the traditional view of culture as an internally homogeneous and externally distinct entity has been called into revision for its inadequacy and irrelevance to the postmodern realities (Hermans 2001). In a similar argumentation, Welsch also denounces the traditional concept of culture as erroneously implicating "inner homogenization and outer separation" (Welsch 1999:195). He contends that pervasive usage of

the terms "intercultural" and "multicultural" which are rooted in this autonomous and bounded view of culture risks perpetuating and normalizing the destructive dangers of cultural fundamentalism and cultural racism (Welsch 1999:197). Though Welsch has not explicitly stated a dialogical rationale behind his thesis, his assertion of using "transculturality" to describe the qualitative transformation of culture at the macro-sociological and micro-sociological level reveals a clear inclination to the dialogical view of culture and self (Welsch 1999:197). For him, transculturality is an adequately dynamic and diffuse notion to simultaneously denote a connection to cultural spheres (-cultural) and an emergent qualitative distinctness as a result of continual mixing of diverse possibilities (trans-). Hybridization is therefore the constitutive characteristic of culture and individual identity on the basis of such transcultural configuration (Welsch 1997). While the use of transculturality as an attempt to shake off the old homogenizing and separatist view of culture is warranted, I perceive that the terms of multiculturality, interculturality and cultural marginality can retain their conceptual significance and usefulness. This can be achieved provided that the notion of culture is radically revised to encompass its "internal differentiation" and "external networking" based on the dialogical thinking (Welsch 1999:197). A befitting notion of culture should express its paradoxical dialectics between diffuseness and concentration which sustains the relative nature of cultural boundary and endows it with a vital social integrative function. Each of the three terms of multiculturality, interculturality and cultural marginality thus describes plausible dialectical processes and manifestations when intercultural interfaces occur through the embodied actions of individuals and groups.

5.5 Dialogical Formation of Intercultural Third Space

As a side-tracked remark, my accord with the notion of transculturality to portray a concurrent embeddedness and change connects to my concern over the postulation of third-culture formation (Chen and Starosta 2005). The

concept of third space and thirdness to denote a qualitatively different identity dimension is valid only as it recognizes the dialectical nature of this dimension with the first and second cultural spaces from which it evolves and sustains, but not posits it as a radical break from its origins. Again, I find in the dialogical view of culture and self a ready resolution to this potential distortion as it regards the formation of the third-space in continual dialogical relations with the relevant cultural spheres. In this regard, the research by Kostogriz (2005) presents a relevant application of a transcultural underpinning in construing an intercultural third space based on the Bakhtianian dialogical approach. He conceives that while boundaries exist between self and others, as well as among different cultural spheres, it is important also to recognize that flux of motion constantly infiltrates within and across such boundaries. The plurality of semiotic discourses enter into dialogical relations, intersecting and transforming individuals as well as both the content and form of the cultural "semiosphere" during the course of osmotic dynamics (Kostogriz 2005:197). Through this view of diffuse and interactive "semiotic motion" in the spheres of self and culture, a third dimension takes shape as:

> the open space of in-between-ness in which the very fact of being located outside of monadic cultures and identities may result in the surplus of vision and creative understanding of both the self and the Other. Consequently, the border between self and the Other becomes a Thirdspace: a third category for understanding cultural dynamics as a process of creative hybridization. (Kostogriz 2005:195)

Participation of cultural marginal individuals in such an interpersonal and intercultural dialogue signifies that their identity configuration at the intangible margin of cultural semioshpere needs to be comprehended in thoroughly dynamic terms. This continuous mobility allows them to tap into vocalic resources from the relevant cultural realms, simultaneously engendering a third identity dimension that endows the person with a special vantage point of perceiving its embedded cultural spheres and appropriating their respective semiotic resources in an added innovative character. A dialogical conception to the peculiar identity formation pertaining to cultural marginality, in conjunction with a dialogical notion of culture,

liberates us from the traditionally fixated view of cultural marginality and portrays the existential domain of an individual living at the margin of multiple cultures as highly interactive and mobile.

5.6 Collaboration of Culture and its Consumeristic Counterpart in the Postmodern

Another perceived challenge to the notion of cultural marginality is concerns the contemporary postmodern conditions. Featherstone (1991 cited in Chambers and Curti 1996) argues that the term marginality should be discarded given its evaluative and exclusive connotation and hence irrelevance in the postmodern consumer culture. As discussed in section 2.1 on postmodernity, there is a general consensus among postmodern scholars that what patterns and propels the distinct sociological landscape of the postmodern episteme is the reign of consumer culture. The invasion of culture from its anthropological sphere to all realms of everyday life and contemporary social structure is simultaneously featured by a qualitative transformation in the nature of culture. Therein casts an added complexity to the notion of culture in postmodernity in terms of a dialectical relation between its traditional anthropological meaning and its novel consumeristic realm. Amid the contemporary surge of possibilities for intercultural encounters brought by technological profusion, human communications whether conducted face-to-face or via various technological mediation inevitably take place within the saturated context of semiotic signs of cultures. This new macro-sociolgoical reality signifies that all micro-sociological manifestations of self and identity are essentially intercultural and fragmentary. They differ only in relative intensity and duration. A relevant problem posed to cultural marginality by this collective, postmodern view on individual identity is that it effaces any peculiarity of this identity phenomenon since the postmodern sociological current now spreads to encompass all identity configuration practically.

In response to this potential disappearance of the significance of cultural marginality, the dynamics of culture needs to be reckoned with. I have earlier argued for a dialectical recognition of the postmodern culture between its anthropological and consumeristic sense. In other words, the shift from the anthropological sense of culture to the consumeristic sense is always rooted in the anthropological sense. In the course of consumeristic manifestation, the anthropological sense of culture is reinforced and symbiotically strengthens the momentum of the sociolgical rule of consumeristic culture in the facade of anthropological culture. Instead of effacement, the paradox is thus the anthropological culture will flourish while producing an alternative dimension more pervasive than its generative origin. Therefore, I perceive that the discursive salience of anthropological culture will persist. This argumentation goes in conjunction with the predictive view of the growing influence of culture in the postmodern social dialectics when individual and group insecurity of strangeness will fuel the demarcating dynamics of communalism and nationalism (Bauman 1998). The discourse of anthropological culture shall prevail with the pervasive reign of consumer culture. At the same time, the ineradicable value of marginality shall continue as a vital sociological phenomenon, if we recall Simmel's view on the social integrative and social identity construction function of the stranger based on the dynamics of differentiation and exclusion. As long as such preconditions continue, the validity of cultural marginality as a postmodern identity phenomenon with its distinctness in the postmodern conditions needs to be acknowledged for its present vivid manifestation as well as its continued relevance in the future.

In brief, I perceive that any reluctance towards cultural marginality can be understood to relate largely to a lingering obsession with the traditional concept of culture and its correlative marginality as suggesting boundedness, exclusiveness and stagnancy. It is in this light that the Bakhtinian dialogical conception to culture and identity, together with the Vygotskian mediational approach to the sociocultural basis of identity formation, are advisable as they offer useful insights in dispelling the misconceptions towards cultural

marginality. Meanwhile, the approaches allow us to sketch the dialectical and complex realities of personhood in its specificity in cultural marginality as well as in its generality in postmodernity.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

As reminded by Berger (1966) and Weisberger (1992), any theoretical undertaking will need to be put into empirical verification to vindicate its empirical validity. Weisberger attempts to fulfill this requirement by using the notion of structural ambivalence to explain the variety of social positions taken by the German Jewry in the Wilhelmine era (Weisberger 1992). Tappan's (2005) appropriation of Bahktian theory of dialogicality to analyze the contextual development of the structurally subjugated identity of Malcom X presents another empirical insight into the application of the dialogical framework. The abundance of autobiographical materials and domains of public discourse signify that identity research that explains the salient political and structural dimensions with the dialogical and ambivalent underpinning is one viable pathway through which the proposition of this research can be empirically examined.

In terms of the field of communication studies, Scollon's mediated view to intercultural communication can be applied to analyze the specific communication process of multicultural individuals. His theorization which is based on Bakhtinian-Vygotskian sociocultural trend serves as an important juncture where sociocultural theoretical approaches fuse with communication pragmatics when multicultural individuals articulate their self-narratives in discursively relevant manner. Using his mediated action as the unit of analysis, the prominent realm of culture and other discursive systems involved can be examined in concrete terms when the process of interaction of the multicultural

individual is scrutinized for comprehensive and interactive correlation among its constituent factors.

Another direction that this research could potentially guide is the investigation of postmodern dialectics between the anthropological and consumeristic sense of culture and how this will possibly affect the evolvement of cultural marginality. Finally, if alteration among cultural contexts and concomitant shift in reality and identity construction distinguishes cultural marginality as a worthy subject of scientific inquiry, then this special phenomenon while reflecting the changes in contemporary social landscapes also prepares us for grappling with a fundamental transformation in our selfhood in the postmodern era. It is this extension of the relevance of cultural marginality into the general sociological domain that it can be discerned and contemplated empirically in our everyday lives.

7. CONCLUSION

Intrigued by the contemporary commonplace of multicultural personhood that is believed to carry vast sociological and scientific significance as well as personal relevance, I have conducted this thesis along the research strand of Sparrow (2000). My intent was of inquiring into the symbolic universe that creates and sustains the special identity phenomenon of cultural marginality. I have done so by first examining the general conceptual framework of radical constructivism and social constructionism respectively, out of intrigue with the seemingly dichotomous manner the two paradigms were treated in Sparrow's research. Also, I recognized that the issue of identity formation will inevitably touch on issues of epistemology. The capacity for integrating the two epistemological paradigms can be identified when we acknowledge the necessarily discrepant "analytical primacies" that methodologically and hence

theoretically divide them (Penuel et al 1995), while underlying their conceptual convergence and compatibility in instances regarding epistemology and ontology of human existence.

To encompass the entirety of discursive forces that shape the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality and evade plausible conceptual distortion, an inclusive account of both the psychological and sociocultural dimensions along with a revised, animated view of the identity phenomenon is imperative. In this connection, I assert that a dialogical conception and mediated-action approach to the interactive process of identity development, as supported by views from sociocultural and intercultural scholars (Hermans 2001; Penuel et al 1995; Tappan 2005; Kostogriz 2005), can most relevantly portray the dynamism and intricacy of the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality at both the micro-sociological and macro-sociological planes. It is also with the dialogical view to the sociocultural processes and individual identity that the view of cultural marginality as a multiple structural ambivalence can at once be animated to dissipate the worries of structural perspective about its plausible stagnancy by including a dynamic view towards the individual and sociological levels of manifestation.

It is in this light that the issue of cultural marginality requires a multidisciplinary approach that delves into the diversity of macro-level and micro-level discursive involvement at the individual level of embodiment. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach can study these salient factors in interrelation rather than in separation at the risk of obliterating other plausible discursive forces and their in-between dynamics. Concomitantly, the dynamism and comprehensiveness embodied in such alternative perspectives to cultural marginality will necessitate a revision of such traditional concepts as culture and self that suggest boundedness, homogeneity and exclusiveness.

In conjunction with this call for a radical conceptual review, the paradigms of dialogism, radical constructivism and social constructionism all beseech us to transform the prevailing view of individual choice as an autonomous entity into a peculiar one that is embedded among the empowering and constraining strings of the sociocultural networks. When individual choice and freedom are comprehended in the traditional context that ignores the conditioning capacity of macro-level processes, misconception emerges as in the case of the interculturalists' assertion. It is this shared acknowledgement of contextual embeddedness that underlies human existence that we can discern the common humanistic foundation that underpins the conceptual paradigms of radical constructivism, social constructionism, dialogicality and structural ambivalence. In sum, they all assert the primacy of human agency and activity in face of the saturated variety of semiotic resources in the sociocultural dynamics. The undeniable reality is that individuals and groups are interwoven in the macro-structural networks of society and culture. Predictively, this is even more the case with the growingly salient and complicated sociocultural and sociopolitical realities in contemporary societies with their magnified constraining and empowering capacity and extent. Nevertheless, without the active enactment and embodiment at the individual level that relates such macro-level processes, the constraining and empowering capacity of sociocultural processes can but lapse into meaninglessness. The four main academic perspectives discussed in this research, despite their minute differences in conceptual details, have a shared view on the transfusion of plurality of discursive voices at the individual level of embodiment.

I entitled this thesis as *Rethinking Cultural Marginality in the Postmodern Age*. I have attempted to clarify the marginal man concept as handed down in the tradition of Park (1928) and expand the notion of cultural marginality beyond the limiting view as found in the interculturalists' approach, In the process, I have also come to recognize that reconsideration of such traditional concepts as identity, culture and society is crucial for a comprehensive revision of the identity phenomenon of cultural marginality in

relation to the epistemic shift with the advent of postmodernism. Such traditional concepts are so typified in their pervasive usage in everyday life and academic discourse that their implications can become taken-for-granted largely. Rather than fixated in terms of an existential psychological dissonance of the marginal man (Park 1928; Stonequist 1935) or the pseudo-autonomous dimension of the multicultural man (Adler 1977; Bennett 1993a; Bennett1993b), an approach to cultural marginality amid the postmodern societal dialectics needs to accommodate an extensive array of phenomenological experiences of cultural marginality. It is reckoned that the dialogical conception with the methodology of mediated action to portray the the dialectical motion in the structural ambivalence experienced psychologically by the individual can flexibly allow a differentiated scope of cultural marginality that embodies both the possibilities of personal style and identity politics. If the span of this research has seemed unduly extensive and diffuse to achieve an impressionable depth, it is hoped that it has at least come near to embody a "complex, general theory of (cultural) marginality" by means of synthesizing the epistemological and socio-psychological insights of radical constructivism, social constructionism, dialogicality and ambivalence (Weisberger 1992).

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