

ADOPTION: SECRET HISTORIES, PUBLIC POLICIES

Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture
April 29-May 2, 2010, MIT

Thursday 4/29/2010

All Thursday events will be held in the Bartos Theatre or the List Atrium just outside of it. Address: 20 Ames Street Building E15, Atrium level, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139. Nearest T: Red Line, Kendall Square.

- 9:30-6pm Registration, light breakfast and book exhibits
- 10:30-12:15 **Plenary: Adoption in Documentary Film I**
Chair: Emily Mann, Northeastern
Screening: *Moms Living Clean*, with discussion.
Sheila Ganz, writer, filmmaker, San Francisco
- 12:15-1 Lunch (provided to registrants)
- 1-2:45 **Plenary: Adoption in Documentary Film II**
Chair: Margaret Rhodes, UMass-Boston
Screening: *For the Life of Me*, with discussion.
Jean Strauss, filmmaker and author, Lubbock, Texas
- 3:00-4:00 **Plenary: Adoption in Documentary Film III**
Chair: Beth Coleman, MIT
Screening and installation: *Translating Hiraeth*, with discussion.
Judy Durey, installation artist, Murdoch University, Western Australia
- 4:15-5:30 **Plenary: Adoption in Documentary Film IV**
Chair: Joyce Maguire Pavao, Center for Family Connections, Cambridge, MA
Screening: *A Man Without Culture Is Like a Zebra Without Stripes*.
Ann Somers, Preparation Center for International Adoption, Belgium
- 5:30-6 Reception
- 6-7:30 Dinner (on your own)

7:30 **Welcome:** Deborah K. Fitzgerald, Kenan Sahin Dean, MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences; Professor of the History of Technology, Program in Science, Technology, and Society

7:40-9:30 **Keynote Address**
Chair: Marianne Novy, University of Pittsburgh

Screening of *A Girl Like Her* (in production)
and discussion with filmmaker

Ann Fessler

Professor of Photography, Rhode Island School of Design and author of *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women Who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades Before Roe v Wade* (2006).

Friday 4/30/2010

All Friday events will be held in either Building 46 or Building 32 (Stata Center) on Vassar St. on the MIT campus. Please consult MIT map for details.

- 8am-12pm Registration and Book Exhibits 46-3000 Atrium
- 9:00am Welcome 46-3002
- 9:10-10:25 **Keynote Address** 46-3002
Chair: Margaret Homans, Yale University
- "A Love Diverted: A Birth Mother Speaks."**
Lynn Lauber
Writer, teacher and birthmother. Author of *White Girls* (1990), *21 Sugar Street* (1993), and *Listen to Me: Writing Life Into Meaning* (2003).
- 10:40-12:00 **Plenary: Birthmothers Speak** 46-3002
Chair: Emily Hipchen, University of West Georgia
- "The Second Surrender"
Karen McElmurray, Georgia College and State University
- Title TBA
Meredith Hall, University of New Hampshire
- "Toward a Public Accounting of a Private Legacy: Family, Politics and the (Feminist) Possibilities of Birthmotherhood"
Kate Livingston, University of Cincinnati

12:00-1:00 Lunch (provided to registrants) 46-3000 Atrium

1:00-2:30 **Plenary: Secrecy and Policy** 46-3002
 Chair: E. J. Graff, Brandeis University, Schuster Institute for Investigative Journalism

"Birthmothers: Objects of Others' Desires."
 Elizabeth Samuels, University of Baltimore School of Law

"Sealed Records: Who is Being Protected – and Against Whom?"
 Adam Pertman, Director, Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute

"The ART of Family Connection."
 Naomi Cahn, George Washington University Law School

2:45-4:15 Concurrent sessions

A. Lesbian/gay Secrecy Issues and Adoption 32-463
 Chair: Elizabeth Wood, MIT

"Serial Secrets: "Coming-Out" Literature, Social Workers and the Debate on Adoptees' Origins in France."
 Bruno Perreau, Sciences Po, Paris

"Public Triumphs and Disavowed Secrets: Developing a Queer Ethics of Adoption."
 Jessica Petocz, University of Minnesota

"Closet Within My Closet: Growing Up Gay and Adopted."
 Michael Potter, University of Iowa

B. Complications of Search, Reunion, & Aftermath 32-449
 Chair: Jill Deans, University of Connecticut

"Adoptions Neither Open nor Closed: Ambiguous Secrecies in Adoption Narratives by Waldron and Hopgood."
 Margaret Homans, Yale University

"Seven Adopted American Women's Memoirs of Reunion and its Aftermath."
 Marianne Novy, University of Pittsburgh

"The Age of Search and Reunion."
 Betty Jean Lifton, psychotherapist, Cambridge, Mass.

C. Transnational Adoption as Immigration Policy 32-461
 Chair: Mary Shanley, Vassar College

"Adoption and (as) Immigration: Exceptions, Parallels, and Dilemmas."
 Sara Dorow, University of Alberta

"They're Cute When They're Young": Adoption and the 'Racelessness' of Babies."
 Karen Dubinsky, Queen's University

"U.S. Immigration Policy and the Embrace of Transnational Adoption in the 1950s and 1960s."
 Karen Balcom, McMaster University

4:30-6:00 **Keynote Address** 32-123
 Chair: Sally Haslanger, MIT

"Adoption and Mental Health: Realism, Risk and Responsibility."
Anita L. Allen
 Henry R. Silverman Professor of Law and Professor of Philosophy, University of Pennsylvania Law School.

6:00-7:30 Dinner (on your own)

7:30-9:30 **An Evening of Creative Writing and Performance** 32-123
 Chair: Michèle Oshima, MIT Office for the Arts

"Parallel Tracks."
 Martha Gelarden, Moore College of Art, Philadelphia; birthmother
 Adam Lazar, artist, Chicago; adoptee

"Time Traveler" and Other Flash Fictions
 Ned Balbo, writer, Loyola University, Maryland; adoptee

Selections from *Requitements* (Elephant Tree House, 2010)
 Rosemary Starace, poet, Pittsfield, MA; adoptee

"Whose Records Are They Anyway?"
 Craig Hickman, performance artist, activist, Annabessacook Farm, Maine; adoptee

"Ungrateful Daughter."
 Lisa Marie Rollins, activist, Adopted and Fostered Adults of the African Diaspora, UC Berkeley; adoptee

Saturday 5/1

All Saturday events will be held in Building 32 (Stata Center) on the MIT campus.

Please consult accompanying map for details.

- 9-6 Registration, light breakfast, exhibits 32-124
- 9-10:30 Concurrent Sessions
- A. Secrecy and Adoption: Historical Perspectives on the U.S., Europe, and Asia after World War II** 32-141
Chair and commentator: Barbara Yngvesson, Hampshire College
- “How to Handle a Birthparent: From Local Practice to International Policy in Early Intercountry Adoption, 1948-1960.”
Heide Fehrenbach, Northern Illinois University
- “Agencies of Adoption in Britain and Germany after the Second World War until the 1960s.”
Benedikt Stuchtey, German Historical Institute, London, UK
- “Jean Paton, Illegitimacy and the Problem of Sealed Adoption Records: A Surprising History.”
E. Wayne Carp, Pacific Lutheran University
- Carol Singley, Rutgers University-Camden, commentator
- B. Writing and Publishing about Adoption** 32-155
Chair: LeAnn Fields, University of Michigan Press ??
- “Editing *Adoption & Culture*.”
Emily Hipchen, University of West Georgia
- “Writing Adoption in a Digital Age.”
Liberty Hultberg, University of Pittsburgh
- “You Don’t Know My Family: The Ethics of Adoption Memoir Writing and Press Coverage.”
Martha Nichols, Harvard University Extension, freelance writer
- C. Adoption, Secrecy, Visibility** 32-144
Chair: Kim Park Nelson, Minnesota State University-Moorhead

“The Quiet Russian: Case Study of Russian Adopted Children in Spain.”

Lilia Khabibullina, University of Barcelona, Spain

“Racial Difference, (In)Visibility, and Popular Representations of Adoption.”

Heather Jacobson, University of Texas, Arlington

“Secrecy in Constructions of Adoptability.”

Sonja Van Wichelen, Pembroke Center, Brown University

“Secrecy, Adoption and Respect.”

Jason Grinnell, Buffalo State University

10:45-12:15 Concurrent Sessions

A. Adoption in Film

32-141

Chair: Penny Partridge, Amherst, MA

“The Horror of Adoption: The Mother, the Other and the Other Mother in *The Ring/The Ring 2*, *Silent Hill*, *The Abandoned* and *The Orphan*.”

Kim Park Nelson, Minnesota State University at Moorhead

“Adoption and the Movies: One Adopted Person’s Perspective.”

Joyce Maguire Pavao, Center For Family Connections, Cambridge, MA

B. Birthmothers: Agency and Activism

32-155

Chair: Jean Keller, CSB/SJU

“Tactile Love: Korean Birthmothers’ Online Community”

Hosu Kim, College of Staten Island

“Recovering Jocasta: Bio-essentialism and Agency in Discourse about Birthmothers.”

Frances Latchford, York University

“A History of Birthmother Activism 1976-2010”

Maryanne Cohen, Concerned United Birthparents, New Jersey

C. Adoption and Culture in 18th-19th c. England and the US

32-144

Chair: Susan Staves, Brandeis University

“Illegitimacy in the Early Republic: The Curious Cases of Ben Franklin and Ann Sargent Gage.”
Carol Singley, Rutgers University-Camden

“The Culture of Adoption in the Early Nineteenth Century Novel and Society: Family Portraits in the Life and Novels of Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen.”
Sue Howard, Duquesne University

“The ‘Delicate Investigation,’ State Censorship, and Adoption Narrative.”
Eric Walker, Florida State

12:15-1:15 Lunch (provided to registrants) Stata Lobby

1:15-2:45 **Gays, Lesbians and Adoption** 32-141
Chair: Charlotte Witt, University of New Hampshire

“Costs of Increased Access in Adoption”
Marla Brettschneider, Political Science, University of New Hampshire

"Assumed Identities, Presumed Capacities: Queer Parents and Transracial Adoption"
John Raible, Education, University of Nebraska

“Agency at the Agency? Adoption and Structural Homophobia”
Sarah Tobias, Rutgers University

3-4:30 Concurrent Sessions

A. Biological Preference Critiqued and Analyzed 32-144
Chair: Sally Haslanger, MIT

“Unknown Origins: Blood, Secrecy, and African Taboos about Formal Adoption.”
Kristen Cheney, University of Dayton

“Reproducing Bastards: The Figure of the Adoptee in Arguments against Anonymous Gamete Donation.”
Kimberly Leighton, American University

“Preferring a Child of One’s Own.”
Tina Rulli, Yale University

“Family Values: Biology, Normativity and the Family”

4:30-5:30

Charlotte Witt, University of New Hampshire

B. Adoption Practices: Analysis and Impact 32-155
Chair: Ellen Herman, University of Oregon

“Choices and Options: The Role of the Agency in the Adoption Process.”
Liz Raleigh, University of Pennsylvania

“‘Neither Common Sense Nor Justice’: Religious Matching & Adoption in Canada.”
Jenny Gilbert, University of Toronto

“The Nation’s Gardeners: The Interpretation of Heredity Through Adoption Casework.”
Patti Phillips, York University

“Hidden Consequences of the Adoption and Safe Families Of 1997: A Policy Project Addressing The Impact on Incarcerated Mothers”
Susan Castagnetto, Intercollegiate Women's Studies of the Claremont Colleges

C. Creative Writing on Adoption 32-141
Chair: Susan Ito, PACT

From *Walking Towards Everything New: A Russian Adoption Memoir*.
Cassie Kircher, Elon University; adoptive mother

From *If You Were Mine*
Carol LeFevre, University of Adelaide, Australia; adoptive mother

From “On Korean Birth Search Landscapes and Politics,” and “Poems from Paper Pavilion and others”
Jennifer Kwon Dobbs, St. Olaf College; adoptee

From *Lost and Found: A Memoir of Mothers*
Kate Vogl, writer, Loft Literary Center, Plymouth, Minnesota; adoptee

From “The Birthday Party”
Patrick McMahon, writer and activist, San Diego; adoptee

ASAC business meeting

32-144

6-7:30 Banquet R&D Commons

7:30-9:30 **Keynote Address** 32-123

Chair: Mark Jerng, University of California, Davis

Screening of *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*

and discussion with filmmaker.

Deann Borshay Liem

Producer, director, writer, and Executive Director of
Katahdin Productions, Los Angeles, CA

Sunday 5/2/2010

All Sunday events will be held in Building 32 (Stata Center) on the MIT campus.
Please consult accompanying map for details.

9-10:30 Concurrent Sessions

A. Transnational and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on

Operation Babylift 32-141

Chair: Christina Klein, Boston College

"The Politics of Orphans: The Vietnam War and Adoption
Reform in Canada."

Tarah Brookfield, Wilfred Laurier University

"Politics and the Pawns of War: Operation Babylift in
Australia."

Joshua Forkert, University of Adelaide, Australia

"We Shall Never Meet."

Aimee Phan, California College of the Arts

B. Secrecy and Openness: Legal Issues 32-155

Chair: Sara Dillon, Suffolk University Law School

"Preventing Harmful Secrecy: Blood-ties, Best Interests and
Veto Victims."

Alice Diver, School of Law, University of Ulster, Northern
Ireland

"What Went Right and What Went Wrong: Ontario Adoption
Disclosure Legislation and the Future of Law Reform Efforts
Regarding Genetic Knowledge."

Cindy Baldassi, UBC Faculty of Law

Letting the Genes Out of the Bottle: Should New Paradigms in
Medicine Lead Us to New Paradigms in Adoption?

Martha Satz, Southern Methodist University

"Safe Haven' Laws: Promoting the Culture of Secrets and
Shame in an Age of Adoption Openness--Ohio Case Study."

Marley Greiner, activist, *Bastard Nation*, Ohio

**C. Adoption and Politics in Contemporary Irish, English, and
Swedish Novels** 32-144

Chair: Barbara Estrin, Stonehill College

"Searching for the 'I': Ireland's Containment Culture,
Adoption, and Anne Enright's *What Are You Like?*"

James M. Smith, Boston College

"Small Island, Secret Island: Andrea Levy, Adoption and Race in
the UK."

John McLeod, University of Leeds, UK

"Secrecy, Openness, and Response in Ninni Holmqvist's *The
Unit*."

Claudia C. Nelson, Texas A&M University

10:45-12:15 Concurrent Sessions

A. Adoptive Parents, Race, Difference 32-141

Chair: Emma Teng, MIT

"Forever Half Ethiopian: Challenging Cultural and Biological
Differences in the Heart of the Family."

Katrien De Graeve, Ghent University

"Adoption's Secret and Silence in Spain and/or the Past's
Ghosts."

Diana Marre, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

"The Privilege of Authenticity: What Asian American Adoptive
Parents Can Teach Us About Constructing Chinese Culture."

Andrea Louie, Michigan State University

**B. Secrecy, Openness and Other Ethical Issues for Adoptive
Parents** 32-155

Chair: Theresa Sass, Boston College

“Personal/Philosophical Reflections on One Open Public Adoption.”

Bonnie Mann, University of Oregon

“Adoptee Vulnerability and Post-Adoptive Parental Obligation.”

Mianna Lotz, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

“How Many Parents Can a Child Have? Philosophical Reflections on the ‘Three Parent Case.’”

Samantha Brennan, University of Western Ontario

C. Transracial Adoption in Contemporary Literature 32-144

Chair: Patricia P. Chu (George Washington University)

“Secrecy in Transnational Adoption: Body as a Trope of Alienation and Reunion in Search Narratives.”

Marina Fedosik, John Jay College

“Alienation and De-Alienation in Korean Adoption Literature.”

Eli Park Sorensen, Cambridge University

“Narratives of Transracial Adoption as Counterhistory.”

Mark Jerng, University of California, Davis

“Strategic Essentialism and Self-Fashioning in Linda Hogan’s *Solar Storms* and Sherman Alexie’s *Indian Killer*.”

Cynthia Callahan, Ohio State University, Mansfield

END

Conference Organizing and Program Committee:

[Sally Haslanger](#) (Philosophy and Women’s and Gender Studies, MIT)

[Emily Hipchen](#) (English, University of Western Georgia)

[Marianne Novy](#) (English, University of Pittsburgh)

[Carol Singley](#) (English and American Studies, Rutgers University)

[Charlotte Witt](#) (Philosophy, University of New Hampshire)

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Conference website:

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(See website for registration information, program updates, and other information.)

Contact: asac2010@mit.edu

MIT Map: <http://whereis.mit.edu/>