



ASAC NEWS



ASAC Announcements

Fall 2011

After many years of successfully proposing special sessions and special events, ASAC (Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture) has received allied organization status with the Modern Language Association, the largest professional association for scholars and college-level teachers of English and other modern languages and literatures. This means that we will be guaranteed an academic session at the annual MLA conventions beginning with 2013 in Boston. Participants must be MLA members. At the 2012 MLA, in Seattle, January 5-8, people will have the opportunity to be updated about ASAC and meet other members at what will be listed on the online MLA program as an open business meeting, though it will be informational rather than decision-making (according to MLA policy, it will be held in the evening of either Saturday the 7th or Thursday the 5th). Claudia Nelson will preside.

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There will be one or two openings for co-chair and executive committee member in 2012. Emily Hipchen, Marianne Novy, and Carol Singley are a nominating committee for new officers. Please contact one of them if you want to make a nomination. The vote will be held at our business meeting at the ASAC conference in Claremont March 22-25.

(cont. on page 3)

Plans for ASAC Conference in March 2012

ASAC's next conference, Mapping Adoption: Histories, Geographies, Literatures, Politics, to be held at the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, California, is taking shape for March 22-25, 2012, under the leadership of Susan Castagnetto, Scripps College, and Marianne Novy, University of Pittsburgh. While the conference will add consideration of parallels to adoption such as technologically assisted reproduction and various processes of removing children from parental custody, most of the events will again be addressing the experiences, institutions, and cultural meanings of adoption.

The two keynote speakers are Catherine Ceniza Choy, Associate Professor of Asian American and Asian Diaspora Studies, University of California, Berkeley, and Dan Chaon, adoptee, fiction writer, and Irvin E. Houck Associate Professor of the Humanities at Oberlin College.

(cont. on page 3)

Adoption History at 2011 Conferences

Karen Balcom

In my tour through this year's conference season, I've encountered excellent presentations on adoption history at every stop. At the Canadian Historical Association in Fredericton, New Brunswick in May, Tarah Brookfield (Laurier University-Brantford) followed up her recent work on the politics of the Vietnam baby-lift to Canada (presented at the last Adoption and Culture conference) with a paper based on oral histories with Vietnamese-Canadian adult adoptees reflecting on identity, belonging, culture, Canada and Vietnam in their lives. At the Society for the History of Children and Youth in New York in June, Sara Fieldston (Yale) spoke about child sponsorship "adoptions" in the 1940s and 1950s United States, while Shurlee Swain (Australian Catholic University) spoke about various contexts of child removal and adoption in "The Politics of Apology: An Australian Genealogy." Rachel Winslow, Moire Maguire, Arissa Oh and I spoke on a panel devoted to immigration policy and procedures in transnational adoption to the United States. At the same conference, Wayne Carp, Ann Fessler and Elizabeth Samuels presented a panel on "Birth Mothers, Children, Adoption and the Stigmas of Illegitimacy."

The event I will think about for a very long time was a Sunday morning workshop on Gender and Indigenous Adoption in Settler Colony Nations at the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians at U Mass Amherst in June. The workshop featured papers by Shurlee Swain on adoption in the Australian Stolen Generations Narrative, by Allyson Stevenson (University of Saskatchewan) on the connections between the US Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 and Aboriginal child welfare activism in Canada, by Erica Newman (University of Otago) on a personal investigation of transracial adoption

and Maori culture in New Zealand, by 19th century United States, by Margaret Jacob (University of Nebraska, Lincoln) on the US Indian Child Welfare Project and by Amy Lonetree (University of California, Santa Cruz) on the return of Aboriginal adoptees to their birth cultures and tribal communities.

Comment came from Laura Briggs (University of Mass., Amherst), Karen Dubinsky (Queen's University) and Denise Cuthbert (Monash University). The discussion was broadly comparative though always with an eye to national and tribal specificity in these stories. The large links and connections were through the place of child removal in a wider context of state policy toward Aboriginal peoples in the white settler nations, assimilation and "modernization" narratives in support of child removal, child removal as a process linked to land removal, the cultural damage to children and birth communities in extensive child removal, sexual violence and sexual exploitation as subtext in child removal, and Aboriginal adoption as transnational adoption.

A real highlight came in a closing comment from Steve Unger, one of the most important activists in the protest movement that led to the US Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 and the author of an important PhD thesis tracing the history of that movement. There is talk of an anthology or a special edition of a journal collecting the papers and comments from the session. I will look forward to this, as I also look forward to much more discussion of the history of adoption at the 2012 Adoption and Culture conference.

Karen Balcom, McMaster University, is a member of the ASAC Executive Committee.

(Announcements cont. from page 1)

Sally Haslanger has established a Mailman listserv for ASAC members. People can join the listserv by going here: <http://mailman.mit.edu/mailman/listinfo/asac>

Then you will be able to send your messages to the listserv directly by writing asac@mit.edu.

For more information about ASAC, its constitution, and some past events, see this website: <http://www.pitt.edu/~asac/>. Thanks to Emily, you can now also find us on Facebook.

(Conference Plans cont. from page 3)

Choy's forthcoming book, *Global Families: A History of Asian International Adoption in America*, examines how Asian international adoption has contributed to the transformation of the U.S. into an international adoption nation and how its history is also a history of race, labor, immigration and intimacy. Chaon's first novel, *You Remind Me of Me*, deals with the impact on a woman and her two sons of the relinquishment of one of them for adoption. His most recent novel, national bestseller *Await Your Reply*, also addresses adoption. *Await Your Reply* was named one of the ten best books of the year by *Publisher's Weekly*, *The New York Times*, and other publications.

Also confirmed are showings of two films. One is *Made in India*, a 2010 documentary film about the human experiences behind the phenomena of "outsourcing" surrogate mothers to India. The film shows the journey of an infertile American couple, an Indian surrogate and the reproductive outsourcing business that brings them together. This film has shown at 20 film festivals and won jury awards for best documentary at three of them. At least one of its directors, Rebecca Haimowitz & Vaishali Sinha, will be present. The second is *Somewhere Between*, about the coming of age of four girls adopted from China. This film won the 2011 Sundance Channel Audience Award at the Hot Docs festival. The director, Linda Goldstein Knowlton, will speak about it along with one of the subjects.

Other confirmed plenary speakers are Jacqueline Stevens, Professor of Political Science at Northwestern, author of *States without Nations: Citizenship for Mortals* and of a blog documenting the harm of deportation (including deportation of at least one adoptee), Christine Gailey, Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Riverside, author of *Blue Ribbon Babies and Labors of Love: Race, Class, and Gender in US Adoption Practice*, and Raven Sinclair, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Regina, Canada, one of Canada's leading researchers on the adoption of indigenous children by white families, and coeditor of *Wicihitowin: Aboriginal Social Work in Canada*.

The planning committee, which also includes Emily Hipchen and Mark Jerng, are currently trying to winnow and arrange other speakers from the over 100 proposals they have received.

A conference website at <http://pages.scrippscollege.edu/~scastagn/ASAC-2012/Home.html> is under construction.

Three New Books on Adoption in American Literature

Marianne Novy

With the publication of Cynthia Callahan's *Kin of Another Kind*, Mark Jerng's *Claiming Others*, and Carol Singley's *Adopting America*, this past year has more than doubled the number of single-authored books dealing with literary representations of adoption in the English language. All three works are valuable, and a look at their different scope and emphases facilitates a sense of the different directions in which literary adoption studies are moving. I give here more attention to those described more briefly in the member news column.

Singley's *Adopting America* contextualizes with more of a historical American Studies approach, starting with Calvinist theology and the language of adoption in Puritan sermons considered in relation to writings by other early Americans, from Benjamin Franklin to the adoptee Ann Sargent Gage, as well as to the history of orphans, fostered, adopted, and bound out. Singley sets sentimental nineteenth century adoption novels in a dialogue with novels such as *Scarlet Letter*, that refuse the sentimental happy ending. She shows how *Our Nig*, about an African-American indentured servant, contrasts with *Bound Out*, about a white servant who is rewarded for her sufferings by adoption. Even Louisa May Alcott, whose novels are full of happy adoptive families, in her late *Jo's Boys* dramatizes the impossibility of including a part-Indian boy into society. The book ends with a chapter on the 1917 novel *Summer* by Edith Wharton (on whom Singley is a particular expert) showing how it "questions a literary tradition that assumes the beneficence of adopters." This book is steeped in American cultural and literary history, as well as, often, in authors' biographies, while it also sets forth how adoption is conceptualized in relation to citizenship, religion, heredity, and child-rearing.

Callahan's *Kin of Another Kind* discusses literature dealing with transracial adoption in relation to many works that have been previously categorized as ethnic literature and analyzed in terms that emphasize ancestry and neglect the specificity of the adoptive experience. In her first chapter, she gives background in the history of transracial adoption and in theories of race, identity, and passing, as well as discussing the paradoxical nature of identity in Jane Jeong Trenka's *The Language of Blood*, a key adoptee memoir. Callahan then analyzes works from the turn of the twentieth century, including fiction by the African-America Charles Chesnutt and the white Kate Chopin and William Faulkner. These works center on a character whose racial identity is ambiguous; in Chesnutt's the individual has some freedom to choose identity, while in the others there is no possibility for living outside the racial system without being punished.

Setting later novels by African-Americans Robert Boles and Toni Morrison in their context in the later twentieth century, Callahan shows how *Curling* (1966) predicts the problems that opponents of transracial adoption will later find. Callahan sees Jadine, of *Tar Baby*, with unusual complexity—she is usually seen only as adopted by her black aunt and uncle, but Callahan perceptively analyzes her as a transracial adoptee because of the dominating presence in her life of their employers, the Streets.

Showing unusual empathy for Jade as she responds to a critical emphasis on the construction of origins, she argues that "the possibility that origins are fictional does not do Jade much good if everyone else remains invested in them" (102). In her fifth chapter, Callahan discusses the dialogue among novels that deal with adoption of American Indians. These novels are written by Dallas Chief Eagle, Barbara Kingsolver, Sherman Alexie, and Leslie Marmion Silko.

In the sixth, she shows the ambivalence about origins in fiction about Asian Americans by Sui Sin Far, Anne Tyler, and Gish Jen. Callahan's particularly interesting analysis of *The Love Wife* places the characters in terms both of their historical, social, and ethnic positions and their complex individual psychology. Callahan analyzes well how these texts show the appeal to adoptees of inherent biological identities, the political uses of rhetoric that invokes biology, and its restrictiveness for those who deviate from the community's norms.

Jerng's *Claiming Others* begins conceptually with the fact that American formal adoption severs legal ties between the child and the birthparents. Thus the dominant political philosophies of identity and citizenship, for which birth and lineage are crucial, do not work for adoptees, especially if they are transracial and/or transnational. He analyzes narratives to show how adopted characters develop selves by forming identifications and attachments, projections and transferences, and how race is thus developed in relation to others, not as a property of distinct individuals.

He begins the history of American transracial adoption writing with captivity narratives from as early as the seventeenth century, and analyzes frontier romances of the 1820s (by Cooper and Sedgwick) linking their portrayal of various kinds of adoption to contemporary debates about the status and rights of Native Americans. The next chapter analyzes various relations of adoption to slavery, showing through nineteenth century writing that an emancipated slave who is adopted is still dependent. His third chapter relates the anxiety about racial identity in Chesnut and Faulkner to the early twentieth century development of institutionalized matching procedures for adoption. Jerng's last three chapters focus on recent personal narratives by and novels about transracial/transnational adoptees.

He contextualizes them with regard to the history of US paternalism in adoption across race and nation, as well as with attempts to deal with adoption with human rights language and psychology. He sees narratives by Trenka, Deann Borshay Liem and Chang-rae Lee as part of a "struggle over negotiating normative conditions of personhood" (131).

He analyzes *A Gesture Life* to show the relevance of Hata's transference onto his adopted daughter of feelings from an earlier relationship, as well as the history of the relations between Japan, Korea, and the US, as and interracial relations within the US. Finally, he uses Gish Jen's *The Love Wife* to discuss how adoption stories struggle against the centrality of biology for our dominant understanding of personhood, which is strengthened both by the connections between biological resemblances and identification and by the use of family as a metaphor for race and nation.

Jerng's book deals in most depth with the relation between adoption, literature, and political and psychological theory, but Singley's and Callahan's books, both historically and textually grounded, also provide important new ways of seeing both literature and adoption. Anyone seriously interested in adoption studies in the US should read all three.

Marianne Novy is a professor of English at the University of Pittsburgh and current co-chair of ASAC.



NEWS OF OUR MEMBERS

NED BALBO's third book, *The Trials of Edgar Poe and Other Poems* (Story Line Press/WCU Poetry Center, 2010), is a finalist for *ForeWord* magazine's Book of the Year Award in poetry. The collection explores adoption issues by way of Poe's biography, popular culture, and New York history. In addition, two poems from *Galileo's Banquet*, his first book, appear on Eileen Tabios' blog *Poets on Adoption*. Also out or forthcoming are the adoption-centered poems "Elusive Enterprise" (*Hopkins Review*) and "From a Son of Marco Polo in the Village of Blue People" (*Iowa Review*). Other new poems appear in *Able Muse*, *Cimarron Review*, *Potomac Review*, *Sou'Wester*, and *River Styx*.

KAREN BALCOM's book *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-Border Adoption and Baby-Selling Between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972* appeared in August from the University of Toronto Press.

Between 1930 and the mid-1970s, several thousand Canadian-born children were adopted by families in the United States. At times, adopting across the border was a strategy used to deliberately avoid professional oversight and take advantage of varying levels of regulation across states and provinces. *The Traffic in Babies* traces the efforts of Canadian and American child welfare leaders – with intermittent support from immigration officials, politicians, police, and criminal prosecutors – to build bridges between disconnected jurisdictions and control the flow of babies across the Canada-U.S. border.

Karen A. Balcom details the dramatic and sometimes tragic history of cross-border adoptions – from the Ideal Maternity Home case and the Alberta Babies-for-export scandal to trans-racial adoptions of aboriginal children. Exploring how and why babies were moved across borders, *The Traffic in Babies* is a fascinating look at how social workers and other policy makers tried to find the birth mothers, adopted children, and adoptive parents who disappeared into the spaces between child welfare and immigration laws in Canada and the United States.

"Through a series of dramatic and compelling narratives, Karen A. Balcom effectively links the story of Canadian children adopted by American parents to central themes in the history of child welfare. Her examination of the practical and constitutional challenges that reformers faced in transnational family-making offers a powerful corrective to triumphal narratives about child-friendly liberal welfare states. *The Traffic in Babies* is both a very interesting read and a genuinely original contribution to the field of social welfare and adoption history." Ellen Herman, Department of History, University of Oregon.

Adoption and Culture, Volume 3

Volume 3 of *Adoption & Culture* will be available in early 2012 and will be sent to those who have paid their \$20 annual membership for 2012, by Paypal or by check to ASAC sent to Emily Hipchen, Department of English and Philosophy, The University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA 30118. Look on our website or facebook page for an announcement of when it is ready. Some of what it will include: essays by Marina Fedosik (on narratives of Eastern European adoption), E. Wayne Carp (on the legacy of Jean Paton), Claudia Sadowski-Smith (on adoption consumerism in adoptive parent memoirs), Marianne Novy (on memoirs of reunion by adopted women), and Kim Leighton (about "origin logic" in gamete donation), and reviews by Tobias Hubinette, Martha Satz, Mark Jerng, and Marina Fedosik, of *Adopted Territory: Transnational Korean Adoptees and the Politics of Belonging*, by Eleana J. Kim; *Belonging in an Adopted World: Race, Identity, and Transnational Adoption*, by Barbara Yngvesson; *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*, by David L. Eng; *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in American Literature*, by Cynthia Callahan; and *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging*, by Mark Jerng.

CYNTHIA CALLAHAN, Assistant Professor of English, has recently published *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption and American Literature*, with the University of Michigan Press.

Kin of Another Kind examines the appearance of transracial adoption in American literature at certain key moments from the turn of the twentieth century to the turn of the twenty-first to help understand its literary and social significance to authors and readers alike. In juxtaposing representations of African American, American Indian, and Korean and Chinese adoptions across racial (and national) lines, *Kin of Another Kind* traces the metaphorical significance of adoption when it appears in fiction.

At the same time, aligning these groups calls attention to their unique and divergent cultural histories with adoption, which serve as important contexts for the fiction discussed in this study.

The book is advertised on the following website:

<http://www.press.umich.edu/titleDetailDesc.do?id=2516956>

MARYANNE COHEN also has some poems on Eileen Tabios' site Poets on Adoption:

<http://poetsonadoption.blogspot.com/2011/04/mary-anne-cohen.html>.

KELLY CONDIT-SHRESTHA was an invited panelist on the topic of "Korean Adoption History: Refugees, Migration, and Race in the 20th Century," at the Intercountry Adoption Summit, Stratford, Ontario, Canada.

JENNIFER KWON DOBBS reports that a bill promoting adoption reform may be about to pass in South Korea. Under current South Korean law, prospective adoptive parents don't need to undergo criminal background checks.

Moreover, agencies counsel unwed mothers, whose children comprise almost 90 percent of adoption placements, to sign illegal paperwork consenting to adoption even though their children are still in their wombs. The new bill proposes urgent revisions to change these realities and stipulates a court process for adoption, a cooling off period for child surrender without duress, and the documentation of identities, among other provisions.

ERIN ELLERBECK, now at the University of Victoria in a position that is expected to become tenure-track, has published "Adoption and the Language of Horticulture in *All's Well That Ends Well*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 51.2 (2011): 305-326.

SHEILA GANZ, birthmother and filmmaker, is pleased to announce that her documentary *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* is now airing on The Documentary Channel for two years starting May 2011. Air dates will be posted on the film's website – <http://www.unlockingtheheart.com> on the Screenings page.

The channel finder link is

<http://www.documentarychannel.com/getdoc.php>.

This 56-minute film bridges the gap between birth and adoptive families through diverse personal stories of adoptees, birthparents and adoptive parents in same race and transracial adoptions interwoven with Sheila's story as a birthmother revealing the enormous complexities in their lives with fascinating historical background.

On March 19, 2011, Sheila was interviewed on *The Mary Jones Radio Show* about the film and the lifelong process of adoption in April. You can listen to the 15 minute show on the film's website – http://unlockingtheheart.com/www/A_screenings.htm.

For more information email unlockingheart@hotmail.com.

SHEILA is also pleased to announce updates for her documentary-in-progress *Moms Living Clean*. First, the title has changed to *On Life's Terms: Mothers in Recovery*. Also, another mother in recovery is being interviewed for the film: Brandi, 33, Native Hawaiian, who had five forced relinquishments and just graduated from a gender specific residential treatment program at Brown University, where she gave birth to her sixth child, a daughter. Interwoven with the women's stories are the views of two experts in the field: Barry Lester, PhD., Professor, Psychiatry & Human Behavior and Pediatrics, Brown Medical School, Founder / Director, Brown Center for the Study of Children at Risk, Women & Infants Hospital and Brown Medical School, and Sheigla Murphy, PhD., Director, Center of Substance Abuse Studies, Institute for Scientific Analysis. Coauthor *Pregnant Women on Drugs: Combating Stereotypes and Stigma*. For info and trailer: <http://www.onlifesterms.org>.

MARK JERNG has published *Claiming Others: Transracial Adoption and National Belonging* with the University of Minnesota Press. See <http://www.upress.umn.edu/book-division/books/claiming-others>.

Adoption and Mothering, edited by FRANCES LATCHFORD, will be published by Demeter Press early in 2012. The book is an international and interdisciplinary collection that examines birthmothers and adoptive mothers; it investigates debate, discourse, and the politics of adoption that surrounds them and impacts contemporary notions of motherhood as biological and non-biological kin in North American contexts. Written by authors from disciplinary perspectives in the humanities and social sciences, its essays offer critical perspectives on adoption and mothering that challenge institutionalized ideas, assumptions, pathologies, and psychologies that are used to interpret birthmothers and adoptive mothers.

Its authors interrogate questions of race, gender, disability, class and sexuality as they relate to the experience, identity, and subjectivity of 'mothers' who are marked by the institution of adoption. It investigates historical and contemporary themes, language, law, and practices that concern mothering in closed and open adoption systems, and in transracial and transnational adoption. It critically explores the expectations, scrutiny, and liminality that birthmothers and adoptive mothers often face. It looks at imperatives that mothers be the keepers of culture, potential adversaries, and borderland *mothers*. In effect, it creates a productive and exciting dialogue between birthmothers and adoptive mothers to challenge traditional notions of motherhood. For more information visit the Demeter Press website at: <http://www.demeterpress.org/adoptionandmothering.html>.

JESSACA LEINAWEAVER's book, *The Circulation of Children: Adoption, Kinship, and Morality in Andean Peru* (Duke University Press, 2008), won the 2010 Margaret Mead Award from the American Anthropological Association and the Society for Applied Anthropology. This award honors her book for interpreting "anthropological data and principles in ways that make them meaningful to a broadly concerned public." She also received three national grants (National Science Foundation Senior Research Grant, Wenner-Gren Foundation Post-Ph.D. Research Grant, and Fulbright Senior Research Award) to support ethnographic research on a new project titled "Transnational Adoptees and Migrants: From Peru to Spain."

PATRICK MCMAHON has just published his memoir, *Becoming Patrick*, with Deep Root Press. The book's website, with praise from many readers, and instructions for ordering, is <http://www.patrickmc.com>.

DIANA MARRE is a member of The “Adoptions, Families and Childhoods” (AFIN) research group, which brings together faculty and professionals from different disciplines such as anthropology, sociology, psychology, law, and education with a common objective: improving the quality of research on childhood and disseminating the research results in order to contribute to a better understanding needs of children and families.

Based at the Autonomous University of Barcelona but participated in by members from others Spanish, European and American Centres, AFIN has just finished its second year of publishing a monthly newsletter available in Catalan and Spanish; starting this year, the newsletter is also available in English. Newsletters are available for download at <http://afin.org.es>; subscriptions are available by email at info.afin@afin.org.es. The first newsletter in English, Vol. 18, includes a personal and analytical essay by TOBIAS HUBINETTE and selections from the multimedia exhibit *Tracing Trades: International Adoption and Nordic Colonialism*, assembled by Tobias and Jane Jin Kaisen.

MARIANNE NOVY gave a keynote speech, “‘This is What an American Family Looks Like’: Transracial Relations in Adoption Novels by Ann Patchett, Lorrie Moore, and Gish Jen,” at the December symposium on Representations of Family, Univ of Uppsala, Sweden, and spoke on “Breeding from Foreign Seeds: Intercountry Adoption in *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare’s *Time*, and *Our Own*” at the Intercountry Adoption Summit, Stratford-upon-Avon, Ontario, in September.

CAROL SINGLEY’s book, *Adopting America: Childhood, Kinship, and National Identity in Literature*, has recently been published by Oxford University Press (2011).

This book is a literary history that considers works by celebrated authors to illustrate the relationship between adoption and nation-building in American culture.

American literature abounds with orphans who experience adoption or placements that resemble adoption. These stories do more than recount the adventures of children living away from home. They tell an American story of family and national identity. In narratives from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, adoption functions as narrative event and trope that describes the American migratory experience, the impact of Calvinist faith, and the growth of democratic individualism.

The roots of literary adoption appear in the discourse of Puritan settlers, who ambivalently took leave of their birth parent country and portrayed themselves as abandoned children. Believing they were the chosen children of God, they also prayed for spiritual adoption and emulated God’s grace by extending adoption to others.

Nineteenth-century adoption literature evolves from the notion of adoption as salvation and from simultaneous attachments to the Old and the New Worlds. In popular domestic fiction, adoption reflects a focus on nurturing in child rearing, increased mobility in the nation, and middle-class concerns over immigration and urbanization, assuaged when the orphan finds a proper, loving home. Adoption signals fresh starts and the opportunity for success without genealogical constraints, especially for White males. Affected by gender and racial biases, it often entails dependency for girls and children of color.

A complex signifier of difference, adoption gives voice to the sometimes contradictory calls of origins and fresh beginnings, and to feelings of worthiness and unworthiness. In writings from Cotton Mather to Edith Wharton, it both imitates and offers an alternative to the genealogical norm, evoking ambivalence as it shapes national mythologies.

JAMES SMITH continues to work with Justice for Magdalenes, the survivor advocacy group, and reports that their case against the past behavior of the Irish government has received international and national recognition. On 7 June 2011, the UN Committee Against Torture published its recommendations:

“The Committee is gravely concerned at the failure by the State party to protect girls and women who were involuntarily confined between 1922 and 1996 in the Magdalene Laundries, by failing to regulate their operations and inspect them, where it is alleged that physical, emotional abuses and other ill-treatment were committed amounting to breaches of the Convention.

The Committee is also expresses grave concern at the failure by the State party to institute prompt, independent and thorough investigation into the allegations of ill-treatment perpetrated on girls and women in the Magdalene Laundries. (articles 2, 12, 13, 14 and 16).

The Committee recommends that the State party should institute prompt, independent, and thorough investigations into all allegations of torture, and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment that were allegedly committed in the Magdalene Laundries, and, in appropriate cases, prosecute and punish the perpetrators with penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offences committed, and ensure that all victims obtain redress and have an enforceable right to compensation including the means for as full rehabilitation as possible.”

Within a week, the Irish government decided “to establish an Inter-departmental Committee, chaired by an independent person, to fully establish the true facts and circumstances relating to the Magdalene Laundries as a first step... to clarify any State interaction with the Magdalene Laundries and to produce a narrative detailing such interaction.”

JFM looks forward to working with both the State and the religious congregations in the coming weeks and months to bring about a prompt and timely resolution to this “restorative and reconciliation process”. JFM has already proposed a structure that might be utilized to facilitate this process, which the UN Committee Against Torture has recommended that the government examine more closely.

For more information, see

<http://www.magdalenelaundries.com/news.htm>

ROSEMARY STARACE has poems and also an essay, “Adoption Experience and the Poetics of Adoption,” in the blog/journal “Poets on Adoption.” (<http://poetsonadoption.blogspot.com/2011/03/rosemary-starace.html>)

OPPORTUNITIES: CONFERENCES, COLLECTIONS, AND WEBSITES

“POETS ON ADOPTION”

For more info, email GalateaTen@aol.com

Poetry: it inevitably relates to—among others—identity, history, culture, class, race, community, economics, politics, power, loss, health, desire, regret, language, form and genre disruption, love...as well as the absences thereof.

The same may be said about adoption.

You are invited to visit POETS ON ADOPTION (<http://poetsonadoption.blogspot.com>) to see how poets with adoption experiences mine the intersections of poetry and adoption. Their varied experiences, meditations and poems powerfully bring forth a truly urgent poetics in an educational context.

POETS ON ADOPTION will be updated over time as more poets send in their contributions.

You are invited to peruse and spread the word about the blog's Call for Participation at <http://poetsonadoption.blogspot.com/2011/03/call-for-participation.html>.

Eileen R. Tabios
Curator, Poets on Adoption

AFIN (The Adoptions, Families, and Childhoods Research Group) is organising its 5th International Congress. This year's edition "The triad in adoption and fosterage: the birth mother's place" will be on November, 25th and 26th in Barcelona. For more information please contact: info.afin@afin.org.es.

Demeter Press is seeking submissions for an edited collection on:

Other Mothers/Other Mothering

Editor: Angelita Reyes
Publication Date: 2013

Deadline for abstracts: October 12, 2011

Other mothers and other mothering roles may be found throughout history and across diverse cultures. Other mothers may be the paradigmatic first responders, the first-teachers of informal and formal learnings, or first care-givers for the formative triage years of children and youth. Other mothering denotes the continuity and contemporary practices of shared, communal, or assumed mothering responsibilities that are empowering and inclusive of social transformation. Despite the prevalence of this practice and increasing scholarship about other mothering, an edited collection on this important and central cultural paradigm does not yet exist. The aim of the present collection is to investigate the history, possibilities, differences, continuities, transformations, or advancements of other mothering, paying particular attention to liberating potentials of destabilizing patriarchal representations of motherhood and family structures.

As interconnected and transnational cultures are in full swing into the 21st century, both men and women can perform and enable diverse and holistic roles of other mothering. How does other mothering transform the language implications of gender? How do we interrogate the roles of mothering for both women and men? This collection will explore the fluid, empowering and diversified roles of other mothering across cultures. Thus, of particular interest are submissions that interrogate other mothering from global perspectives, comparative ethnicities and historical contexts.

The editor of this collection seeks article-length contributions in the humanities, cultural studies and social sciences that may include, but are not limited to the following topics:

- foster mothering · queer co-mothering · gay mothering and the "modern family" · open adoption mothering · closed adoption mothering · grandmothering · non-residential mothers · non-custodial mothers · men and mothering · co-mothering · fictive kin mothers · community mothers · African American, African, Caribbean, Latin American, and Native American other mothers · other mothering in religious practices · Godmothers across cultures · tiger mothering · single mothers · representations of other mothers/other mothering in literature, popular culture, the arts ·

Abstracts should be 250 words. Please also include a CV. Accepted papers of 4000-5000 words (15-18 pages) will be due on April 2, 2012 and will conform to MLA style format

Please send submissions directly to:
othermothers2013@gmail.com

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FAB 2012 CONGRESS: CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANELS*

ROTTERDAM, JUNE 25-27, 2012

The International Network on Feminist Approaches to Bioethics invites proposals for panels and papers for presentation at the 2012 Congress. The Congress theme is *Generations: Imagining the Future to Promote Health and Justice*. Submissions on any topic in feminist bioethics are welcome.

Paper abstracts should be 300 words, accompanied by both a descriptive title for the paper proposed and 2-3 keywords. Proposed panels should include a 300-word description of the overall topic and objectives of the panel, as well as a panel title and the titles of all the papers to be included in the panel. All submissions should include the names, e-mail addresses, and full affiliations of all authors. In cases of panels and co-authored papers, please identify a corresponding author. One or two submitted papers may be selected for plenary presentations. If you wish your paper to be considered for a plenary, please submit the *full paper* and indicate that you seek review for a plenary.

The conference organizers welcome submissions from a wide range of disciplines, including philosophy, the social sciences, critical cultural studies (gender and sexuality studies, disability studies, race studies, etc.), law, public health, and others.

We particularly encourage submissions from early career researchers. Please provide enough detail for reviewers to be able to assess your proposal for a paper or panel from the abstract.

The abstract should include a clear statement of method, thesis, and conclusion, and indicate what participants will learn from your presentation.

The theme of Generations should be interpreted broadly. Topics may include, but should not be limited to,

- Intergenerational justice
- New social patterns in reproduction (reproductive tourism, assisted reproductive technologies, surrogacy, etc.)
- The distinctive moral status and needs of children
- Caregiving across generations (eldercare, child care)
- Intergenerational justice
- Reproductive rights and justice
- Access to maternal and child health care
- Re-imagining the family and familial responsibilities
- Environmental justice across generations
- Re-imagining the future
- Adoption and the creation of families
- The value and social meaning of biological ties between generations
- Prolonging life
- The next generation of feminist bioethics
- Sustaining and shaping communities over time

Submissions (in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format) should be e-mailed to FAB.Rotterdam2012@gmail.com by *December 1, 2011*. This e-mail address should only be used for communications concerning submissions, and not for general conference or FAB inquiries.

Vol 6, no.2 of the *International Journal for Feminist Approaches to Bioethics* (IJFAB) will be based on the proceedings of the 2012 FAB Conference. All papers presented at the conference, or whose abstracts were accepted, will be eligible for inclusion in this issue of IJFAB. Once abstracts are accepted, they will be forwarded to the Editorial Office of IJFAB, which will follow up with instructions to authors about submission and review processes. To be included in the conference issue papers must be submitted in IJFAB style to the Editorial Office no later than August 15, 2012. The issue will appear in November 2013. FAB encourages all conference presenters to submit their papers to IJFAB for review. Authors who do not wish to have their papers reviewed for inclusion in IJFAB should indicate this when submitting an abstract.

Intercountry Adoption Summit

Mark Jerng

An ambitious, unique conference titled the “Intercountry Adoption Summit” was held in Stratford, Ontario on September 23-26, 2010. The conference was organized by the Faculty of Arts and the Communication, Leadership and Social Innovation Unit at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, and co-chaired by Robert Ballard, an assistant professor in Communication, Leadership and Social Innovation and Ken Coates, Dean of Faculty of Arts. The goals of the conference were twofold: 1) it brought together policymakers and stakeholders at various levels of intercountry adoption governance and practice in order to brainstorm and create guidelines and recommendations for intercountry adoption moving forward. Those attending included governmental representatives from Belgium, Ethiopia, India, Ontario, and the United States; representatives from various NGO’s, including Across Japan, Adoption Canada, CORA, Kidsave International, Nordic Adoption Council, International Adoption Association, Joint Council on International Children’s Services, among many others; 2) it brought together researchers and scholars of intercountry adoption in order to present the latest research, and share findings and concerns across the disciplines.

As such, this conference was one of the first such venues to bring together in the same space a wide variety of interests across public policy, practitioners of adoption services, and scholarship all concentrated on addressing the question of intercountry adoption. Impeccably organized and mediated by Robert Ballard, this conference proved to be, as many attendees attested, extremely productive in fostering dialogues across persons who, though aware of each other, are not necessarily in direct contact.

The format of the conference followed its stated goals. The first two days of the conference were devoted to roundtable discussions and break-out sessions in which various stakeholders worked on constructing recommendations and guidelines for intercountry adoption policy. These sessions responded to seven main questions: 1) What are the major problems your country faces in regards to intercountry adoption? 2) What is the immediate future trend of intercountry adoption in your country? 3) In what direction would you like to see intercountry adoption move in your country? 4) What are the barriers to moving in the desired direction for intercountry adoption in your country? 5) What recommendations do you and your government have for intercountry adoption in your country? 6) How can other countries help your country accomplish these recommendations? 7) How can researchers, scholars, and the international academic community help your country accomplish these recommendations?

These questions spearheaded various debates about the differential application of the Hague Convention by different countries; the reliability of documentation for the children being adopted; post-adoption resources; quality of social welfare alternatives in countries of origin; the relationships among government, social service agencies, media, and other forms of representation, among many others. These were heated debates to be sure, but at the very least the conversations worked across different countries’ representatives’ understandings and across practice, media, and scholarship. The end result of these sessions was a document that includes forty-six “recommended action items” that address various categories including “transparency and accountability,” “subsidiarity and sovereignty,” “Hague Compliance and Support,” “Support for Birth Families,” and “Child Histories,” among many others. Punctuating these sessions were talks given by Peter Selman, Jennifer Degeling on the Hague Special Commission, Tom DiFilipo on the “Global Orphan Crisis,” E.J. Graff on ending corruption in international adoption, and Trish Maskew on putting ideas into law.

The following two days of the conference included panels organized around various research disciplines that aimed to review findings within each discipline, point toward further scholarship, and discuss more broadly how social practice and scholarship could help each other out.

Some of the research areas represented included anthropology, cultural studies, psychology, communication, literary studies, health/medicine, sociology, legal studies, history, and counseling, among others. Each of the panelists presented some of his/her own research at the same time that the panels as a whole addressed disciplinary questions about major contributions to intercountry adoption research, new perspectives, and where to go from here.

For example, the sociology panel raised various questions about methodology, the ethics and practice of interviewing and ethnography, the problems and the opportunities raised when doing research as an adoptee. The anthropology panel raised some important critiques of “attachment therapy” often used in the cases of adoptions from Russia, and some powerful counter-representations to various myths about adoptions from China.

A set of panels on various topics including “Voices of International Adoptees,” “International Adoptive Family Perspectives,” and “Art, Literature, and the Web,” among others, rounded out the conference. The last two days of the conference were punctuated by a talk by Marianne Novy on adoption in Shakespeare’s play, *The Winter’s Tale*, and a book launch event for Barbara Yngvesson’s, Karen Dubinsky’s, and Rachael Stryker’s recent books.

What was most powerful about this conference was arguably the spirited but respectful debate that occurred across all four days.

For example, the differing orientations toward intercountry adoption across different countries often came into full view. The desires for greater support of birth families and intra-national solutions to poverty and social welfare sometimes met with resistance. There was debate over the efficacy and the implementation of the Hague guidelines. What hung over a great many sessions and debates were recent events in the past year including the earthquake in Haiti and the highly publicized scandal of the returned Russian orphan in April 2010. Various findings on differing understandings of kinship or parenting spilled over into debates about the actions taken in Haiti. Presentations on the various histories of adoption from Korea and China raised questions about positionality and the ethics of research work. Overall, and precisely because of the committed debate, crucial questions at the intersections of theory and practice were asked and staged. Importantly, the aforementioned list of recommendations, summaries of the roundtable discussions, as well as videos of the presentations are available at the following url: <http://adoptionsummit.uwaterloo.ca/outcomes.html>. Hopefully, the website and other ventures will continue to foster dialogue and the sharing of ideas, which was the main goal of the summit as conceived by Robert Ballard.

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