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The 2016 ASAC conference, centering around the theme Building Communities, Changing Discourses, invited attendees to think deeply about various acts of care: key concepts relating to adoption and the provision of care, the politics and geographies of care, and scholarly care in the act of researching and writing.

In her keynote speech, Margaret Jacobs examined how Indigenous adoption challenges the liberal adoption paradigm that mobilizes an individualistic conceptualization of interests and rights. Indigenous adoption, she explained, expands the “adoption triad” to a many-pointed star, forcing us to acknowledge and honor collectivities of interests in the care of indigenous children. Examining the case of Jeremiah Halloway and ICWA, Jacobs noted how related concepts in the provision of care were also at stake: who gets to decide the “best interest of the child” and whether “love” is performed solely between parents and child or is bound to history and culture.

A roundtable devoted to Kay Johnson’s work *China’s Hidden Children* explored the conditions that structure who gets to care for a child in the first place and who they can care for. Roundtable panelists argued, for instance, that Johnson’s work pushes against the myth of the win-win narrative in international adoption to show how Chinese birth-planning policies forced birth parents to engage in a “coerced choice” of relinquishment, often based upon fear of punishment for violating such policies. In this way, Johnson shows that state coercion shaped behavior in a quotidian way. Her work details the state’s role in producing a pool of healthy girls in the 1990s and early 2000’s for international adoption and the consequences it has had upon Chinese families.

Two sessions reminded audience members of the kind of delicate care we must give to our sources and to our subjects. Archivist Linnea Anderson, in the plenary on the Social Welfare History Archive, spoke about adoption’s past as a highly contested space, therefore demanding scholars’ thoughtful deliberation and interpretation. Although documents are “raw material of the past for reuse,” she remarked, they are not unmediated. We should therefore use the archive’s sources in conversation with other sources, like oral histories of adoptees and parents, to capture the complex, lived experiences of these actors. Similarly, a fascinating panel on adoption memoirs generated discussion around the ethics of writing about adoptive children, their lives and challenges. Panelists and audience members debated issues around ownership of the narrative, parental responsibility toward their children in writing, privacy, and disclosure.

In all, conference attendees reiterated the message that adoption, and our work on it, is a profoundly relational act. In future years, we might consider engaging with the growing literature on the ethics of care to think not just about the nature of kinship but also about

intimate dependencies and inter-dependencies, the performance of caregiving itself, the types of bodies that are cared for, and how we, as scholars/writers/activists should think and act purposefully and reflectively as interpreters of these dynamics.