2024 ASAC Biennial Conference CFP

Conference Theme: Adoption Belonging

Place and Date: Brown University, April 4–6, 2024

Belonging—to whom, where, why, how, in what sense—underpins every conversation we in adoption studies have about our field. Dysregulated belonging has been framed as the source of trauma, from genealogical bewilderment to origins deprivation to a-doption disease to reactive attachment disorder for adoptees; for adoptive parents, belonging (to the category *parent*, as well as to other categories like *nation* and *human*) is contingent and fraught; for birthparents, belonging intersects the familial and social, the cultural shiftiness of meaning over time and between forms of adoption particularly challenging to negotiate. Dysregulated belonging has been used as an identity source for some; for others, dysregulation has been widely rejected in assimilationist stories, stories of adoption salvation, or through the abjection of the unkin(ne)d into monsters/the unhuman.

Belonging also houses the word *longing* with its etymological relatives (OE *langian*: to pine, to grieve; the prefix *be-*, which indicates relation by ME – *belongen*: to be fitting, suitable). Our field frequently looks to ideas of longing, grieving, pining, suitability, fittingness in representations of adoption. Thus *belonging* has the capacity to incorporate the many perspectives of our current conversations, including those around the recent SCOTUS decisions, particularly around Indian Child Welfare Act; re-homing controversies (such as that delineated by the Reuters' report in 2013); the abolition of foster care (as in the mission of the upEND movement); and so forth.

Potential topics may include but are not limited to:

- How do we define adoption and other forms of nonnormative reproduction in their own right, not as "the other" of normative belonging?
- What does it mean to belong adoptively?
- Belonging as different from/like ownership of children;
- New forms of belonging;
- What secures belonging? (e.g. race, resemblance, care, blood kinship, law, etc.);
- What ways do understanding belonging intersect representations of adoption including and beyond nation, history, race, citizenship, gender, sexuality, etc.?;
- What does it mean to belong in an adoption context?;
- What representations/forms of family making belong in our field?

- How do representations of abjection/non-belonging create adoption identities or adoption cultures?
- How can we define "adopted condition" as not a lack?
- What is the foundation of adoption *longing*?
- Belonging vs. care as the basis of kinning;
- How is belonging culturally constructed? What are the forms of belonging in our field?
- Belonging and the meaning of origins?
- How do we define "belonging" as a category central to our field specifically?
- What can other fields learn through our understanding of belonging?
- How do new technologies revise and/or reinforce the meaning of belonging?
- What can belonging mean, if belonging "everywhere" means belonging "nowhere," as some discourses on the adoptee condition suggest?

For *individual submissions*, please send a 200-word proposal and a 1-page CV in a single PDF file to conference@adoptionandculture.org. To submit a *panel proposal* of three or four speakers, submit a single PDF file that includes a 200-word panel title and abstract along with 200-word abstracts for each individual presentation and a 1-page CV for each presenter. Please use your surname or other identifier in the file name of your combined PDF file (proposal, cv, and/or writing sample) and other supplementary files.

This conference will include a combination of on-site (at Brown University) and recorded materials and events. All presenters will pre-record their talks with the help of media services, a representative of which will contact each attendant to arrange to record their presentation. All recordings will be made prior to March 15, 2024. No talk may exceed 15 minutes. Recordings will be made available to registrants as soon as they are processed. All presenters must be available for presentation/discussion on Apr. 4–6, 2024, either virtually through Zoom or at Brown.

We also invite *creative presentations* (writing, film, drama, graphic arts, other media, etc.) of 10 minutes or fewer on the conference theme. Please send short samples of creative work along with a 1-page CV or resume and links if you are working in visual or multimedia, to conference@adoptionandculture.org with the subject "Creative Presentation."

Proposal deadline: December 1, 2023

A conference website is under development, and we will soon post information about registration: **http://www.adoptionandculture.org**. For additional information, send email queries to conference@adoptionandculture.org.