

ASAC 2024 Program Draft
Subject to Change
 April 4-6, 2024
 Brown University, Providence, RI USA

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Thursday, April 4, 2024

5:15-6:30	Lemn Sissay: Poetry Reading	Smith-Buonanno	Rm. 106	Book sales, 5-6:30
6:45-8:45	Reception	70 Brown	Second floor, Lounge	

Friday, April 5, 2024

Book Sales: Second Floor, 70 Brown St: 9:30-5:30			
8:30-9:00	Breakfast	70 Brown St.	Second floor, Lounge
9:00-10:15			
Session 1	Adoption Conceptions	Page-Robinson	Rm. 302

	Moderator: Joyce Maguire Pavao Zoom Moderator: TBA		
	Alice (Ah-Mei) Conroy	Claiming the ‘I’ in Adoption Literature: A Phenomenological Approach to Academic Style in the Budding Field of Chinese Adoption Literary Theory	
	Kim Park Nelson	Resolving Adoptee Multiversity: Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing as a Proxy for Birth Family Search among Adopted Adults	
Zoom	Jane Pilcher	Surnames and Identities of Belonging in Families Formed Through Adoption	
Session 2	Literature I	Page-Robinson	Rm. 501
	Moderator: Eric Walker Zoom Moderator: Marina Fedosik		
Zoom	Claudia Nelson, Anne Morey	Placement and Displacement in Margaret Peterson Haddix’s <i>The Missing</i>	
	Marianne Novy	Belonging and Discomfort in Adoptee Memoirs	
	Alice Diver	Preventing Statelessness—and Protecting the Best Interests of the “Abandoned” Child—via the War Crime of Adoption	
10:30-11:45			
Session 3	Theater and Drama	Page-Robinson	Rm. 302
	Moderator: Marianne Novy		
	Virginia Anderson	Belonging on Stage: Challenging Adoption Narratives in American Theater	
	Jieun Lee	Performing Dis/Remembrance: Omma Poom Park, Paju, South Korea	

	Sayres Rudy	Is Adoption a Play? (and should we walk out?)	
Session 4	Adoption Outside a US Context	Page-Robinson	Rm. 501
	Moderator: Lucy Curzon Zoom Moderator: Marina Fedosik		
Zoom	Theresa W. Devasahayam	“Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, I am my Mother after All”: Cross-Cultural Adoptions and Belonging in Malaysia and Singapore	
	Tsung-Chieh Ma	Adoption Disclosure and Self-identity	
Zoom	Bastiaan Flikweert (Zoom) Oh Myo Kim (present in the room)	Adult Children of Korean Adoptees: Narratives of Belonging and the Intergenerational Impact of Adoption	
11:45-1:00	Lunch		
12:00-1:00	Lemn Sissay A Reading from <i>Something Dark</i>	70 Brown St.	McCormack Family Theater
1:15-2:30			
Session 5	Kinship and Visual Narratives I	70 Brown St.	McCormack Family Theater
	Moderator: Joyce Maguire Pavao		
	Maria Forjaz de Sampaio Sequeira Mendes	“Multiple belongings” and “Ambivalence” in Adoption	
	Matthew Pateman	Adoption and Belonging in Impossible Families in <i>Angel</i>	
	Jan Schroeder	Adoption Under the Influence: Adoptive Family YouTube Channels	
Session 6	Dysphorias	70 Brown St.	Rm. 130
	Moderator: Frances Latchford		

	Kim Potowski	Trans(acted): Adoptee Bioethnic Dysphoria	
	Gabrielle Glaser	New Forms of Baby Brokering in the post- <i>Roe</i> US	
	Frances Latchford	Daphne's Dilemma: Baby Swapping, Dissociation and Disavowal	
2:45-4:00			
Session 7	Fatherhood	Page-Robinson	Rm. 501
	Moderator: Alice Diver		
	Deanna MacNeil	The Impact of Fantasy, Duplication and Substitution on Adoptee Identity and Belonging Narratives	
	Tamar Neumann	Fatherhood Erased: Exploring (Un)Belonging in Theatrical Adoption Narratives	
Session 8	Roundtable: Adoptees and Aging – How We Got to Where We Are	70 Brown St.	McCormack Family Theater
	Moderator: Susan Harness		
	Susan Harness	Roundtable	
	Mark Hagland	Roundtable	
	Susan Ito	Roundtable	
	Susan Harris-O'Connor	Roundtable	
4:15-5:30			
Session 9	Transracial Adoption and Alternative Kinships: Realities, Possibilities, and Longings, Part 2	Page-Robinson	Rm. 501
Zoom	Moderator: Eric Walker		

	Zoom Moderator: Marina Fedosik		
	Shannon Gibney	Redefining Belonging: A New Era of Adoptee-Authored Cultural Production?	
	Kim McKee	Disruptions of Return: The Aberrant Korean Adoptee Subject	
	Kit Myers	Love, Care, and Imagining Otherwise	
	LM Brimmer	Anchors Beyond Our Wakes: Possibilities in Transracial and Transnational Adoptee Poetics	
Session 10	Art and Literature	70 Brown St.	McCormack Family Theater
	Moderator: Stephanie Flores-Koulish		
	Teresa Fiore	Longing for Identity, Belonging through/to Words: Stories of Adoption in Contemporary Italian Literature	
	Lisa Tremaine	Dis-placement and the Kantian influence on Adrian Piper	
5:30-6:45	Dinner on your own		
7:00-8:15	Lemn Sissay: Keynote and Q&A <i>My Name is Why</i>	LIST Hall	Rm. 120
8:30-10pm	Artists on Adoption Moderator: Kit Myers Including: Sarah Audsley Paul Bonnell Shannon Gibney Michele Kriegman Wonderlust Productions (Leah Cooper) Kim Potowski Lisa Wool-Rim Sjöblom	70 Brown St.	McCormack Family Theater

Saturday, April 6, 2024

Book sales: Petteruti Lounge, 11:30-1:00			
8:30-9:00	Breakfast	Page-Robinson	Fourth Floor
9:00-10:15			
Session 11	Kinship and Visual Narratives II	Page-Robinson	Rm. 401
	Moderator: Alice Diver		
Zoom	Sarah M. Williams	Recycling and Refurbishing Care: De/Composing Kinship in Koganda's <i>After Yang</i>	
	Marina Fedosik	Adoptee as an Outcome of Technogenesis: Children Substitutes in Science Fiction Narratives	
	Eric Walker	Trying to talk about <i>Trying</i>	
Session 12	Roundtable: Carving Out Space: Chinese Adoption Studies	Page-Robinson	Rm. 402
	Grace Shu Gerloff	Roundtable	
	Kit Myers	Roundtable	
	Hannah Ku	Roundtable	
	Yilan Hu	Roundtable	
	Grace Newton	Roundtable	
	Nicolette Lecy	Roundtable	
10:30-11:45			
Session 13	The Law	Page-Robinson	Rm. 401
	Moderator: Stephanie Flores-Koulish		

	Zoom Moderator: Marina		
Zoom	Karen Balcom	“Take to the heart of America this girl”: Italian Parents Petition the US Congress on Behalf of the Child They Relinquished for Adoption by an American Family	
	Gregory Luce	What’s Wrong with “Un-Belonging?” The Legal Right to Rescind your own Adoption	
Session 14	Unbelonging	Page-Robinson	Rm. 402
	Moderator: Eric Walker		
	Michele Meritt	(Un)Met: Reunion and the False Promise of Belonging	
	Veronica Lockyer	Forced Unbelonging as Cultural Genocide	
	Michele Kriegman	Unbelonging/Belonging, Decolonization, and Appropriation in the Phenomena of the “Cherokee Princess Ancestor”	
Session 15	Adoption Narratives, Literary Belongings	Page-Robinson	Rm. 403
	Moderator: Kit Myers		
	Catherine Nguyen	Threads of Kinship in Kim Thúy's <i>Em</i>	
	Kelly Rich	Adoption Archives and Literary Form	
11:45-1:00	Banquet Lunch (Reservations required)	Petteruti Lounge	Second floor, Campus Center

Authors/Abstracts

Author/s	Abstract
Virginia Anderson	Belonging on Stage: Challenging Adoption Narratives in American Theater

	<p>How can theater defy reinforcement of deeply rooted narrative tropes concerning adoption to generate critical compassion and motivate civic engagement? In her landmark work <i>Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater</i>, performance theorist Jill Dolan “argues that live performance provides a place where people come together, embodied and passionate, to share experiences of meaning making and imagination that can describe or capture fleeting intimations of a better world (2)”. This presentation provides an overview of a course in development, housed in Theater and American Studies at Connecticut College, entitled “Adoption on Stage.” After a brief overview of case studies, I probe Hansol Jung’s 2022 <i>Wolf Play</i> to emphasize how theatrical conventions such as puppetry may prompt nuanced audience engagement with the precarity of “belonging” in the ways Dolan describes. As Jieun Lee writes, <i>Wolf Play</i>, “raises issues regarding transnational adoption, custody rights, LGBTQ+ parenting, and especially an adopted child’s sense of belonging as it is continuously and violently stripped away during his adoption process.” Based on a 2013 Reuters investigation on rehoming, the play questions ideals held within the construction of “normative belonging.” Counting on a live audience, such theatrical representations of abjection/non-belonging influence adoption identities and/or cultures beyond the stage’s physical boundaries.</p>
<p>Karen Balcom</p>	<p>“Take to the heart of America this girl”: Italian Parents Petition the US Congress on Behalf of the Child They Relinquished for Adoption by an American Family</p> <p>In the immediate aftermath of the WWII, hundreds of American families adopted children from other countries and then discovered that – due to the vagaries, restrictions and ever-shifting requirements of the US immigration system – the adopted children did not qualify for immigration to the US. One remedy or workaround in this system was for the adoptive families to petition the Congress to pass a private law granting access to a specific child. In this paper, I look at a specific case from Italy in 1948, where the case file for one private law contains a heart-rending letter from the parents who made the wrenching decision to “give up and send away the daughter if one’s flesh and blood” on the understanding that she would live a “healthy and happy life overseas.” The letter - a singular example among 800+ cases I have examined – explains why it was so difficult to place their daughter in another family, and how they understood this choice in relation to the child’s place – her belonging – in the family and community in Italy and in the potential new family in America. I use this letter (complex, fraught, greatly in need of counter-reading) alongside other documents and context to look explore how this family expressed there wishes for a daughter taken “to the heart of America.”</p>
<p>Alice (Ah-Mei)</p>	<p>Claiming the ‘I’ in adoption literature: a phenomenological approach</p>

<p>Conroy</p>	<p>to academic style in the budding field of Chinese adoption literary theory</p> <p>This paper identifies a gap in literary scholarship that theorizes Chinese adoptee narrativity. I consider the following research questions: how can transnational and transracial adoptee identities find grounding in academic fields that have not yet been expanded to account for their experiences and subjectivities? How might we begin to make room for alternative academic styles (in relation to the Western ‘objective’ academic voice) in the arts while maintaining the ‘spirit’ of scholarly rigor and research? How do feelings of adoptee ‘otherness’ impact feelings of belonging within the academic community? I propose the following intervention and methodology: to accommodate specificity at the same time as solidarity among adoptees, we as literary scholars must hold space for the ‘personal’. Through a phenomenological exploration of adoptee ‘in-between-ness’ in creative/scholarly works by Chinese adoptees such as Ryanne Capp, Caitlin Jiao Alexander, and Josephine Jay et al, I outline how intellectual power and cogency is enhanced by acknowledging and claiming our positionalities – an act that is crucial to establishing the genre of (Chinese) adoption literature. This paper is inspired by my own experience as a Chinese adoptee. A gap in adoption literature asks me to justify and defend why the adoptee perspective matters thus emphasizing the privilege of other bodies of literary scholarship whose significance is presupposed based on Western literary tradition. While this paper recognizes the existing literary canon comprised of narratives about the biological parents or adoptive parents, I seek to center the absent yet vital Chinese adoptee perspective.</p>
<p>Theresa W. Devasahayam</p>	<p>“Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, I am my Mother after All”: Cross-Cultural Adoptions and Belonging in Malaysia and Singapore</p> <p>Of the cross-cultural adoptions in Malaysia and Singapore, belonging is culturally derived. This paper examines the influence of specific cultural processes, modes, and materialities of the adoptive family on family and belonging. Cross-cultural adoptions were common in the 1930s to 1960s, driven by poverty, large family sizes, and the ravages of war. The Chinese were quick to give up their girl children as culturally they had little value to their birth family; while these same girls were received into Malay and Indian families. Narratives with eighteen female adoptees, all now adults, received into Indian families show how they shared a common experience of grappling with their ethnic identity since their physical appearance was distinct from their adoptive parents. Yet they did not struggle between two cultural worlds: they almost always had a firm sense of belonging to the ethnic community of their adoptive families instead of their families of origin, embracing the everyday cultural practices of speaking the Tamil language, wearing the traditional Indian dress code, adopting Indian day-to-</p>

	<p>day social habits, and finally marrying an Indian man. In the Indian community, they are perceived as Indian in every respect and never Chinese, reflecting the success of their integration.</p>
<p>Alice Diver</p>	<p>Preventing Statelessness—and Protecting the Best Interests of the “Abandoned” Child—via the War Crime of Adoption</p> <p>The non-consensual relinquishments depicted within certain works of dystopian fiction (for example, Margaret Atwood’s <i>The Handmaid’s Tale</i>, <i>The Testaments</i>, and Lois Lowry’s <i>The Giver, Son</i>) often call to mind the forced adoptions seen during periods of armed conflict. Such displacements can have permanent socio-cultural and political consequences: attempts to justify trafficking of the vulnerable are often tied however to a perceived need to prevent statelessness or orphanhood, and to best interests arguments. These can potentially influence the outcome of revolution or war by changing the demographics of a population’s identity, altering ethnicities, nationalities, or religions. The situation in Ukraine is especially worrying (Ilze Brands Kehris, 2022) with forced adoption now deemed a war crime. Moreover, such atrocities can demand dehumanisation of the so-called foundling to justify rights violations. These may in turn be framed as necessary to achieve some greater good: population control, a fragile peace, or protection of the child deemed abandoned (Kaneko-Iwase, 2021:78). Orphanisation of children with still-living kinfolk should likewise not be a device to facilitate sociopolitical aims. In law as in literature, distortions of the concept of belongingness – to wrongfully exclude or include ‘others’ - can spark or worsen intergenerational harms and human rights abuses.</p>
<p>Marina Fedosik</p>	<p>Adoptee as an Outcome of Technogenesis: Children Substitutes in Science Fiction Narratives</p> <p>My presentation is exploring the cultural idea of adoption as “substitution” for biogenetic reproduction, a “second best,” and, with the advent of assisted reproductive technologies, a “third best” option. While the reason for thinking about adoption in this way (as well as for strong reactions against it) is somewhat obvious and well-examined in adoption scholarship—within the heterocoital reproductive order, nontraditional family forms are understood as less desirable imitations of the heterocoital nuclear family—the answer to the question of why imitation is less desirable may prove interesting. My analysis of representations of artificial (robotic) children who serve as substitutes in such films as <i>After Yang</i> (2021) and <i>The Trouble with Being Born</i> (2020) as well as Kazuo Ishiguro’s novel <i>Klara and the Sun</i> (2021) concludes that such substitution is <i>not</i> devalued due to the failure of the copy to live up to the authenticity of the original. Robotic children in these texts serve as grief objects to their parental figures, arrested in the past without a clear path to futurity, and</p>

	<p>tasked with reproducing their parental figures' experiences with the lost thing. Such children cannot grow up, and their narrative telos is death. I connect this analysis to cultural perceptions of adoption as substitution for the loss of a possibility to have one's own biogenetic child and anxieties about one's own futurity associated with it to discuss adoptees as technological subjects/objects, or, in other words, products of technogenesis.</p>
<p>Theresa Fiore</p>	<p>Longing for Identity, Belonging Through/To Words: Stories of Adoption in Contemporary Italian Literature</p> <p>Adoption Studies has yet to find a dedicated space within Italian Studies despite its unique ability to fruitfully reread the notion of the normative family and thus reveal (post-)colonial racial entanglements, social class fractures, and religion-infused beliefs about the female body, reproduction, and parenthood. The paper introduces recent books about adoption in which the painful longing for identity is the result of a dissolved intra-family adoption (<i>The Girl Returned</i> by Donatella Di Pietrantonio); a forcibly silenced transracial experience (<i>E poi basta. Manifesto di una donna nera italiana</i> by Esperance Hakuzwimana Ripanti); and the mysterious disappearance of an exploited and ostracized birth mother (<i>Dove non mi hai portata</i> by Maria Grazia Calandrone). The main focus is on <i>Dasvidania</i> by Nikolai Prestia (2021), an autobiographical novel about the longing for a lost childhood/mother/family, which turns, like the other texts but in more intense and lyrical ways, into a belonging to words. The experience of the Russian author/protagonist first in a violent dysfunctional family and later in orphanages, before being adopted in Sicily, is at the center of a book that ultimately underlines the power of storytelling and its ability to explore the national and transnational entanglements of adoption and the creative energy it can foster.</p>
<p>Bastiaan Flikweert</p>	<p>Adult Children of Korean Adoptees: Narratives of Belonging and the Intergenerational Impact of Adoption</p> <p>There are over 170,000 South Korean international adoptees. These adoptees are now adults and have formed their own families. Previous research has explored how they have understood their adoption, identity and belonging. This study is the natural next step, as we currently have no data on the adult children of Korean adoptees. We explore how adult children of Korean adoptees were socialized regarding their ethnic and racial identity, how they have internalized narratives around adoption, and how their parent's adoption from South Korea impacted their upbringing and identity. This provides an inroad to the politics and negotiations of belonging to both Korean and adoptee spaces. We will interview approximately ~35 adult children of Korean adoptees in the US and Europe</p>

	<p>and present a brief overview of demographic information on adult children of Korean adoptees and emerging themes specifically around belonging in the adoption community and Korean diaspora. Recognizing the need to investigate the intergenerational transmission of adoption narratives, this presentation emphasizes the importance of understanding that adoption is not a one-time event and that it impacts future generations’ distinct sense of belonging as children of adoptees.</p>
<p>Maria Forjaz de Sampaio Sequeira Mendes</p>	<p>‘Multiple belongings’ and ‘ambivalence’ in adoption</p> <p>“Is it a gift—or a shattering cruelty—to expose a child to a better life, when that life may only be temporary?”, asks Maureen Corrigan in an interview with Claire Keegan (NPR, 2022). Foster (2010) depicts a nameless young girl who is sent to live with distant relatives while her overworked mother has another baby. In the foster home, the girl is filled with attention and seems to come to life, longing to belong to her newfound family. A different adoption journey is portrayed in <i>Little Bird</i> (2023), a Canadian tv show which depicts an indigenous woman who, after having been adopted by a Jewish family, is now trying to find her origins. Both representations of fostering / adoption are, as Laurent Berlant puts it, “structured by ambivalence” (<i>On the Inconvenience of Other People</i>, 2022). Even though the term has been judged through negative lenses, over the few past years queer and feminist critics have reevaluated it and increasingly consider it more positively as an affective capacity. Taking Foster and <i>Little Bird</i> as its focus, this paper explores the idea that in adoption there can never be merely one form of belonging but rather, as Amin Maalouf’s posits, ‘multiple belongings’ (<i>Les Identités Meurtrières</i>, 1999). I will argue that both ‘ambivalence’ and ‘multiple belongings’ should be considered conceptual categories in adoption, which help to explain the triad’s feelings of deep ambivalence that, if acknowledged, can help define the adopted condition as not a lack.</p>
<p>Grace Shu Gerloff, Kit Myers, Hannah Ku, Yilan Hu, Grace Newton, Nicolette Lecy</p>	<p>Carving Out Space: Chinese Adoption Studies</p> <p>The field of Critical Adoption Studies (CAS) has been an integral site to situate Asian transnational adoption within broader contexts of settler colonialism, citizenship, military imperialism, and white supremacy. For the last three decades, adoptees from Asia have advocated for their community within academia, arts, politics, and activism. Korean adoptees, as members of the largest cohort of transnationally adopted people, have led this charge and their contributions have provided a foundation for interrogating the Transnational Adoption Industrial Complex (McKee). As generations of transnational adoptees come of age, additional opportunities for critical interventions into the field of CAS emerge. This roundtable brings together interdisciplinary CAS scholars whose research is rooted in our identities as Chinese adoptees and interest in growing the field of</p>

	<p>Chinese Adoption Studies. Together we locate ourselves, and our work, within the legacy of Korean Adoption Studies and activism as well as explore the distinct conditions of Chinese adoption practices. We discuss the temporal and cultural processes that have shaped Chinese transnational adoption from the 1980s—2000s through geopolitical flows, the rise of the internet, and shifting rhetorics of race and multiculturalism. Finally, we share the ways Chinese adoptees continue to carve out new forms of belonging within the adoptee community and beyond.</p>
<p>Shannon Gibney, Kimberly McKee, Kit Myers, LM Brimmer</p>	<p>Transracial Adoption and Alternative Kinships: Realities, Possibilities, and Longings, Part 2</p> <p>In this panel, reenvisioned, reimaged, and updated from ASAC 2018, four Critical Adoption Studies scholars, themselves transracial and transnational adoptees, will explore the current discursive realities, as well as the conceptual and imaginative possibilities, of kinship formation within adoption. Adoptees, adoptee cultural production, adoptive families, birth families, intergenerational families, and representations of such will be the primary texts for this discussion. Using queer theory, feminist theory, Black feminist theory, and Critical Race Theory as analytical frameworks, we will begin to construct an incomplete picture of non-normative kinship structures that transracial adoption engenders.</p>
<p>Susan D. Harness, Mark Hagland, Susan Ito, Susan Harris O'Connor.</p>	<p>Adoptees and Aging – How we got to where we are</p> <p>This roundtable will be a discussion of Adoptees and Aging. The roundtable will explore the touchstones described in the Adoption Consciousness Model developed by Drs. Susan Branco, JaeRan Kim, Grace Newton, Stephanie Kripa Cooper-Lewter, and Paula O’Loughlin. Permission to use the model has been given by JaeRan Kim. The roundtable’s questions and conversations will delve into the topics of Status Quo (what our lives were like before awareness), Rupture (when we began to realize things weren’t as they seemed), Dissonance (the questioning of self and identity), Expansiveness (an awareness of adoption within the context of a larger world), and Forgiveness & Activism (the act of healing and helping others to heal). The purpose of the roundtable is to explore the arcs of our lives, our experiences, our awareness, and a search for healing.</p>
<p>Michele Kriegman</p>	<p>Unbelonging/Belonging, Decolonization, and Appropriation Reflected in the Phenomena of the “Cherokee Princess Ancestor”</p> <p>Yale historian Jonathan Boswell asked in <i>The Kindness of Strangers</i>, his study of classical and medieval European adoption: Is the appearance of adoptees throughout literature like the phenomenon of quicksand? Quicksand was familiar to everyone but was never encountered. Boswell’s exhaustive research concluded adoptees’ prevalence in fiction reflected</p>

	<p>adoptees’ historical prevalence, unlike quicksand. I pose a similar question, as a pre-ICWA adoptee journalist, about the “Cherokee princess ancestor” phenomena and its history. Tribal members, NAIS directors, and other “insiders” often raise the issue of non-indigenous people claiming a fictitious “Cherokee princess ancestor”. Yet in my legislative, child welfare, and searcher roles I have not once encountered that claim nor known anyone who has. To what extent is this a defense against the uncanny realism of “Pretendians” in academia and the arts? When leveled against returning pre-ICWA adoptees is it an erasure of the historical trauma adoptees embody, a variation on the monstrous changeling? Why is it appropriated in legislative and state battles over ICWA, land trusts, and gaming? On the other hand, what is the realistic threat of the “Cherokee princess ancestor” to indigenous community decolonization, indigenous adoptee/DCP belonging, and even the un-enrolled percentage who authentically claim indigenous heritage?</p>
<p>Frances Latchford</p>	<p>Daphne’s Dilemma: Baby Swapping, Dissociation and Disavowal</p> <p>An accident in an IVF clinic results in a post-birth baby swap. The legal and popular narrative surrounding events like these is uniform: a terrible psychic drama awaits families that are unable to recognize their children racially and genetically. This paper challenges the uncritical belief that family bonds and the best interests of the child should line-up with geneticism and monoracialism. It reroutes your attention toward the swap as a eugenic tragedy. Based on Daphne Cardinale’s reported experience, it critically examines the reiteration of normative understandings of the family bond as existential racism and geneticism. It argues that the swap illustrates, not the best interests of the child, but the family’s primary attachment to race and genetics.</p>
<p>Jieun Lee</p>	<p>Performing Dis/Remembrance: Omma Poom Park, Paju, South Korea</p> <p>This paper is about my ethnographic observation of Omma Poom Park in Paju, South Korea, a public site designated and designed for <i>gijichon</i> (a town near a US army base) birth mothers and returning Korean overseas adoptees to experience a feeling of reunion with their birth land and engender a sense of belonging. In this paper, by examining the locational and curatorial choices surrounding the park, I argue that this space institutionally inscribes Korean transnational adoption as part of post-Korean War memory while simultaneously forgetting the lived experiences of adoptees and <i>gijichon</i> birth mothers.</p>
<p>Veronica Lockyer</p>	<p>Forced Unbelonging as Cultural Genocide</p>

	<p>My proposed paper discusses an analysis of foster care as a continuation of RESidential schools in Canada. I "walk with" published INdigenous stories of being taken through the RESidential school system, the sixty's scoop, and foster care compare and contrast as subaltern cultural and political resistance to ongoing systemic genocide of INdigenous peoples; the generational culture of being taken. The RESidential school system was created to disintegrate INdigenous culture by segregating children from their families and communities. This created generations of unbelonging to anywhere and longing for cultural shadows of the segregated unknown. The work of this dissertation of which this paper is a section of, encourages next generations to not replicate the racism that overpopulates the Canadian foster care system with INdigenous children and instead occupy a stance of underpopulating through addressing systemic practices that conflate the kinds of changes required. It also addresses the "going forward" of Indigenous sovereignty in the recollecting of community in healing generational unbelonging. There are several colonial works I reference, Foucault, Bourdieu, Dirks, Ornter, as well as Indigenous works of Brown, Cardinal, Justice, King, Manuel, Miller and Marshall III, however my aim is to turn them (the intended audience) towards understanding the colonized gaze upon Indigenous children and returning the gaze of Indigenous peoples upon the colonizer.</p>
<p>Gregory Luce</p>	<p>What's Wrong with "Un-Belonging?": The legal right to rescind your own adoption</p> <p>Adult adopted people today can choose nearly any other adult in the world to adopt them---and by doing so end a prior adoption. Yet nearly every state in the United States denies a more meaningful remedy of "un-belonging;" that is, to rescind your own adoption as an adult and to live without a legal parent. Even in the two states that allow some form of rescission rights, those rights are limited by unrealistic timelines or apply only to step-parent adoptions, which also require the restoration of prior biological parent rights. So what's wrong with "un-belonging," to reclaim a form of autonomy over your own legally constructed relationships? Attorney, adoptee, and adoptee rights activist Gregory Luce will discuss the legal history of ending adoptions, which has exclusively favored adoptive parents, who have long been able---formally or informally---to un-belong a child, particularly if it was "unfit," "feeble-minded", or had a "different ethnological ancestry" than what was initially expected. He will also share and discuss the results of a collaborative drafting process that has led to the development of model rescission rights legislation.</p>
<p>Tsung-Chieh Ma</p>	<p>Adoption Disclosure and Self-identity</p> <p>Adoption disclosure is a complex issue. Adoption disclosures are encouraged by the Taiwanese government; however, many adoptive parents</p>

	<p>are still hesitant to do so, as they are afraid it may harm the parent-child relationship. A qualitative research study examined the relationship between adoption disclosures and parent-child relationships. Since the research did not know the disclosure situation in the family, researchers contacted the adoptive parents first. A total 40 interview invitations were extended; however, only 6 adoptees accepted the invitation, and 5 of them were female. Among the other 34, 18 were unreachable, 7 had not yet disclosed, and 9 refused. The numbers show that some families do not keep in contact with the adoption agency, and gender is an issue for adoption disclosure. Findings of the research are centered around the experience of disclosure, the process of disclosure, and the impact of disclosure on identity and parent-child relationships. Five participants were disclosed around preschool or school age, and one was experiencing delayed disclosure and discovered it accidentally, thus impeding her pursuit of adoption identity. However, all research participants believed that when the foundation of the parent-child relationship is stable, disclosure will not hamper the relationship.</p>
<p>Deanna MacNeil</p>	<p>The Impact of Fantasy, Duplication and Substitution on Adoptee Identity and Belonging Narratives</p> <p>Adoption as a practice and field of study helps us understand how our emotional and social worlds are shaped by the concept of fantasy and the psychological process of fantasizing as a means to reconstruct and ground familial relationships. Magical thinking, fairy tales, and other fantasy-based ways of psychological processing are frequently assumed to be the primary approaches through which children and adoptees make sense of their immediate worlds. This paper argues that familial fantasies are not limited to fairy tale or fictional worlds but also include fantasies that specifically address the challenges experienced by adoptees during their search for biological origins. I suggest duplicates and substitutes for lost familial relations, including parents and siblings, that can be created by the adoptee and influenced by legal and circumstantial aspects of adoption and language used in adoption literature (Margaret Homans, 2006). The shifts in psychological literature from the 1990s have popularized the use of fantasy to define adoptee identity development and belonging, in essence constructing identity as an ongoing sense of lack and the adoptee’s use of fantasy as a pathology (Betty Jean Lifton, 1994; David Brodzinsky, 1990; David Howe, 1997; David Kirschner, 1992).</p>
<p>Michele Merritt</p>	<p>(Un)Met: Reunion and the False Promise of Belonging</p> <p>Belonging is not a concept often examined by philosophers; however, there are many rich phenomenologies of un-belonging and related emotions. Matthew Ratcliffe, e.g., connects loneliness with un-belonging, insofar as to be lonely, he argues, is to experience the world as lacking in possibilities</p>

for belonging. This paper uses Ratcliffe’s framework as a starting point for thinking about un-belonging as experienced by adoptees in order to indirectly approach the question: what might belonging be for an adopted person? To this end, I focus on reunion, which is often the site of unmet expectations for belonging. I argue that the concept of “reunion” itself forecloses the potential for belonging, precisely because it is not a reuniting at all. Whereas for many non-adopted persons, reunion is an experience of “picking back up where we left off,” for adoptees, there never was a “we” to begin with, and it is this lack of primary we-experiences many philosophers and cognitive scientists have argued is at the core of un-belonging, loneliness, and mental distress. I examine we-experiences, particularly those experienced in early infancy, and argue that their absence constitutes the sense of un-belonging so many adoptees feel, despite, or perhaps because of reunion.

[Claudia Nelson and Anne Morey](#)

Placement and Displacement in Margaret Peterson Haddix’s *The Missing*

Tween author Margaret Peterson Haddix’s *The Missing* (8 vols., 2008-15) follows a group of adoptees plucked from the past by unscrupulous time-traveling adoption brokers who seek to salvage famous children from peril, return them to babyhood, and market them to adults eager to brag that they are now rearing (say) the Princes in the Tower, the Grand Duchess Anastasia, the Lindbergh baby, or the secret daughter of Albert Einstein. The scheme goes awry, however, and the trafficked infants are accidentally diverted to the late twentieth century and placed with adoptive parents unaware of their children’s origins. The series thus presents adoptees as severed in a particularly dramatic way from their history—while simultaneously noting that many of these children identify strongly as belonging to their adoptive environments even after they discover and revisit their origins, a circumstance that complicates a narrative that begins with displacement. But another noteworthy facet of the series is the attention directed toward the mechanisms and personnel through which adoptions are accomplished. Moreover, the series gradually erases the barrier between adoption facilitator and adoptee, reconfiguring the adoption constellation to highlight the often shadowy figure of the broker and asking readers to understand this potentially erased or “missing” element as indispensably belonging—for good or for ill.

[Tamar Neumann](#)

Fatherhood Erased: Exploring (Un)Belonging in Theatrical Adoption Narratives

Adoption stories have been a part of theatrical narratives since *Oedipus Rex*, yet they remain generally unexamined by theatre scholars. A few scholars have examined the history of adoption in theatre (Novy) or adoption in the plays of Edward Albee (Leonard), but there remains little

	<p>scholarship on the role and identity of fathers within adoption. Much of the literature found in critical adoption studies focuses on the role of the mother (Berebitsky; Latchford; March; Solinger). It has only been in the last 25 years that scholars have begun to explore the role of the father in adoption (Clapton; Clifton; Coles), and only a few scholars have studied the adoptive father separate from the adoptive mother (Baumann; Flynn; Hinojosa). This presentation aims to answer the following questions: Where do fathers belong in the theatrical stories of adoption? How do these portrayals culturally construct our understanding of fatherhood within adoption? I will argue that adoption narratives often erase the birth father in favor of the birth mother reinforcing a lack of belonging for birth fathers. In addition, these stories often perpetuate the idea that the adoptive father is only an appendage to the adoptive mother’s wants and needs and remains the sole father of the adoptee.</p>
<p>Catherine H. Nguyen, Kelly M. Rich</p>	<p>Adoption Narratives, Literary Belongings</p> <p>Invested in literature as a site providing new forms of expression and critique, these papers attend to intertextuality, the counterfactual, and culture’s reparative potential within the narratives that speak to the transhistoricity and duration of Vietnamese mixed-race adoption and adoption archives of Korean adoptees. Catherine H. Nguyen examines how the American Vietnam War military-humanitarian Operation Babylift is relocated to and within the <i>longue durée</i> of French colonialism within Vietnamese French Canadian Kim Thúy’s novel <i>Em</i> (2020). Kelly M. Rich turns to the archive as a key site for investigating the epistemology of the transnational adoptee, studying how literary engagements with adoption archives bring their interpretive aporias to light.</p>
<p>Marianne Novy</p>	<p>Belonging and Discomfort in Adoptee Memoirs</p> <p>While some adoptee memoirs put their main emphasis on a consistent feeling of discomfort, lack of fit or lack of acceptance by their adoptive parents and perhaps their community, others present a more complex picture. Most recently, Angela Tucker writes, “I always knew I belonged in my adoptive family, and I’ve always longed for a genetic sense of belonging.” (79) Mei-ling Hopgood feels very similar to her adoptive father and remembers from early on feeling secure in a close family—though in fifth grade she starts to wonder “if a boy could ever like a Chinese girl “(73) White same-race adoptee Jean Strauss feels very close to her parents but worries about whether her grandfather accepts her until they successfully go fishing together. (29) Her memoir includes other moments during her fourth grade year connected with her father’s death that strengthen her feelings of belonging to him and her mother, but issues of</p>

	<p>belonging, whether racial or familial, continue to surface throughout their memoirs. After meeting their birth parents, these memoirists, and others such as Jackie Kay, still have much to work out, rather than a consistent sense of belonging with their biological families. They end their memoirs with images that express their complex identities.</p>
<p>Kim Park Nelson</p>	<p>Resolving Adoptee Multiversity: Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Testing as a Proxy for Birth Family Search among Adopted Adults</p> <p>The concept of a multiverse, where infinite parallel realities operate simultaneously, has taken hold of both scientific inquiry and popular imagination coming into common parlance as the idea has become central recently in blockbuster fantasy films, television series and novels. I borrow this concept as “adoptee multiversity” to apply to adoptee existence and experience in order to address the pervasive query “what if...” in adoptee experiences, including but not limited to iterations such as “What if I had stayed in my birth family?”, “What if I had stayed in my birth country?”, “What if I was adopted into a different family?” and/or “What if I was adopted into a different country?” Adoptee multiversity, then, describes the tendency among adoptees to sort through these questions (and others like them) about other very possible lives that adoptees know they could have lived, lives that other adoptees are living that could any of us could have ended up in, and our birth families are currently living without us. In popular culture, multiversity is a source of infinite creative possibilities; in my rendering of adoptee multiversity, however, I consider the other possible lives of adoptees as instead a potential source of anxiety and a reminder of loss. This presentation builds on previous research theorizing disadvantageous social conditions for adoptees in which easy access to genealogical identity is highly normalized in society while many adoptees, especially transnational adoptees, are routinely denied access to their birth family histories and other personal information (Park Nelson, 2018).</p>
<p>Matthew Pateman</p>	<p>Adoption and Belonging in Impossible Families in <i>Angel</i></p> <p>The television series, <i>Angel</i> (WB / FOX 1999 – 2004) was the spin-off from <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i> (WB/ UPN / FOX 1997 – 2001). Both shows have formats that are heavily supernatural. As such, they can present characters and storylines whose actions and responses would be impossible in more realist formats. This, in turn, means that real world issues such as</p>

adoption can be part of storylines that are mystical, mythical, and multi-dimensional.

The character of Connor is introduced in season three. The unlikely (indeed, impossible) result of sex between two vampires, his story is an extraordinarily exaggerated and accelerated version of an adoption narrative where ‘belonging’ and ‘origin’ are deeply problematised as well as curiously valorised. He is a member of at least four different ‘families’ either as ‘real’ son, adopted son, or chosen one; he has three fathers, two mothers, but no birth; and his story in the show ends recognising his birth-father while returning to his ‘real’ natal family.

Connor’s story provides a fantasy setting for issues pertaining to ‘belonging’ as it intersects with the absent (dead) ‘birth’ mother; adoption as violence / abduction / salvation; found or adopted family; birth-father guilt / retribution; adoptee anger / resentment, and questions (this being a vampire show) of blood, lineage, kin and origins.

By locating intractable questions from the world of critical adoption studies in the impossible worlds of fantasy television, the paper hopes to create a speculative - but grounded - space for debating some of the key terms and issues of the discipline.

[Jane Pilcher](#)

Surnames and Identities of Belonging in Families Formed through Adoption

Names are increasingly recognised in sociology as important routes for understanding family relationships, familial identities and individual identities. With the exception of a few studies, though, experiences of surnames in families formed through adoption remains underexplored. In this presentation, we use qualitative ‘name story’ data from a study in England and Wales to explore the meanings surnames have for identities of belonging of (now adult) adoptees and of adults who had adopted a child. Especially for adopters, sharing of surnames in adoptive families is understood to be fundamentally important family practice, creating and displaying familial ‘belonging together’. Adult adoptees’ feelings about belonging, birth surnames and adoptive surnames appeared more complicated and often changed over time. For some, their adoption had enabled a flexibility in the choice and contextual use of different surnames. Yet, women adoptees and women adopters otherwise shared a similar

	<p>experience. Cultures of patriarchal surnaming meant that women adoptees or adopters faced an additional layer of complexity which shaped their feelings about surnames and how they used surnames to display identities of belonging. Through examining experiences of and feelings about surnames in adoption, our presentation highlights the complexities – especially for women - of belonging in adoptive family life.</p>
<p>Kim Potowski</p>	<p>Trans(Acted): Adoptee Bioethnic Dysphoria</p> <p>Although the 21st century has moved towards varying degrees of openness in adoption, this turn has resulted in adoptee status frequently being framed as comparable to a disability. I agree with Frances Latchford (2019) and others that bioessentialism is unfounded. However, the arguments that the meaning of bioethnic information is arbitrary, that seeking it denigrates adoptive family ties, or that adoptees feel genetic bewilderment solely because they have fallen victim to discourse all risk pathologizing adoptees in ways adjacent to prior accusations of ungratefulness. Although biological information is not superior, it is not irrelevant, either.</p> <p>I acknowledge genetic bewilderment by putting it in conversation with gender dysphoria, understood as the sense of being in the wrong gendered body. In this conceptualization, adoptees who do not feel a need for bioethnic knowledge are akin to cis persons in agreement with the gender they were assigned at birth, while adoptees who seek it do so due to a kind of “bioethnic dysphoria”. To some extent, then, I position as analogous seeking bioethnic information and gender transitioning, although the role of biology occupies opposite positions: curious adoptees seek knowledge that is in part biological, while transitioning individuals ignore the biological “knowledge” imparted by their gametes for genital and other sexual development. What do these seemingly contradictory positions regarding the role of biology in conceptualizations of the “real” self tell us about either position?</p>
<p>Sayres Rudy</p>	<p>Is Adoption a Play? (and should we walk out?)</p> <p>I propose to analyze three concepts in adoption discourse ~ narrative, trauma, abolition ~ as a dialectical dramaturgy of ambivalent adoptee belonging. I would present five integrated sections of a current work in progress, which I would submit before the conference: namely, adoption as:</p> <p>I scripted narrative;</p>

	<p>II rehearsed trauma; III so, a performed play; IV. abolition campaign(s); V. cathected belonging.</p> <p>The argument: Adoption narratives are consistently scripted: familial alienation, personal detachment, haunting origins, liminal membership are tied to familial and cultural misrecognition (I). These experiences have inspired a near-hegemonic view of adoption as inherently traumatic, an unstable depiction shared by “activist” voices in academia and social media (II). Adoption discourse – as the scripted narrative of persons self-identified as traumatized – may be helpfully analyzed as a play, drawing on diverse scholarly and artistic portrayals of dramaturgical performance (III). Two campaigns to abolish adoption, directly or indirectly via the family, aspire to destroy this play, to eradicate the “industry” that guarantees our traumatically scripted narrative of adoption (IV). Dramatizing or destroying the play of adoption, as rival compensations, both suggest that belonging to adoption precedes adoptee belonging elsewhere, signifying the kernel of adoptee cathexis (V).</p>
<p>Jan Schroeder</p>	<p>Adoption Under the Influence: Adoptive Family YouTube Channels</p> <p>“What representations of family-making belong in our field?” My paper takes up this question posed in ASAC’s Call for Papers with an examination of several adoptive family YouTube channels. Within the past decade, video sharing platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have arguably become the most common outlet for storytelling about adoption, as they have for almost every other form of human experience, yet there is very little scholarship on them. With millions of followers and subscribers across multiple platforms, YouTubers such as the Nelsons, the Doughertys, and the Millers post adoption-specific content, such as Gotcha videos, birth family reunions, and heritage trip tours, thereby creating an adoption influencer culture. As digital labourers for these channels, adoptees’ experiences, histories, and feelings are parlayed into capital for their parents and emotional gratification for their audiences, who are invited to view the internet-famous adoptive family as both ordinary and extraordinary. “The Stauffer Life” re-homing controversy (2020) will be examined in this paper in connection with a selection of adoptive family channels that continue to draw huge audiences. Much of the content on adoptive family channels is repetitive and formulaic; narrative complexity is not the goal. What keeps audiences invested? Should critical adoption scholars pay attention, and to what end?</p>
<p>Lisa C. Tremaine</p>	<p>Dis-placement and the Kantian influence on Adrian Piper</p> <p>This paper introduces dis-placement as a connective and restorative term in</p>

	<p>relationship to ideas of place and home. Through the work of artist Adrian Piper, and her seminal “Everything” series, I look at the contextual circumstances surrounding the creation of this work, arguing that dis-placement inspires a restorative connection that negates the implied isolation and finality of being dislocated or removed. While dis-placement can be physical, emotional, or spiritual, in all cases, dis-placement provides the connection from one form of knowledge to another. Dis-placement is freeing and ultimately allows for recreation as a necessary basis for belonging.</p> <p>By intertextualizing Immanuel Kant’s Critique of Pure Reason and Piper’s prolific theoretical writings, I argue further that dis-placement is intuitive and synthesis is the restorative act supporting the apperception of intuitions. Kant’s theory of the synthesis of intuitions, therefore, can be seen as the main influence on Piper’s artistic and philosophical inquiries. Both are urging us to experience artworks in an unguarded state, open to the intuitive presence of the artist and her work in a space that cannot be verbalized. Piper finds belonging here, in what she references as the “deep blankness,” the connective tissue which is dis-placement—restorative, freeing, and excessive.</p>
<p>Eric C. Walker</p>	<p>“Trying to talk about <i>Trying</i>”</p> <p>The British sitcom <i>Trying</i> ran for three seasons on Apple TV+ from 2020 to 2022 (a fourth season is forthcoming). <i>Trying</i> is to adoption what <i>Ted Lasso</i> is to soccer: generally hailed as “heart-warming” and “feel good TV,” the series follows a pair of thirty-something Londoners trying to adopt. Critical adoption studies has well-demonstrated the perils of privileging narratives of adoptive parents in adoption discourse. <i>Trying</i> supplies a new pop culture example of the collateral damage inflicted narratively on adoptees and birth relatives by foregrounding adoptive parents as the primary human interest in adoption.</p>
<p>Sarah M. Williams</p>	<p>Recycling and Refurbishing Care: De/Composing Kinship in Kogonada’s <i>After Yang</i></p> <p>Kogonada’s <i>After Yang</i> is a science fiction film that draws upon themes of disability, AI, kinship, and race in ways that challenge notions of the human and investigates the role of the family and technology in creating collective futures. The film raises the question: What bodyminds are being repaired, rehabilitated, or ultimately rejected from sociality? I suggest that Yang’s malfunctioning bodymind and death highlight anxieties that circulate de/composing kinship formations that disrupt chrononormative myths of kinship. Analyzing Yang’s memory core reveals that he has been a “second sibling” to another adopted child and family, suggesting that he may have been cycled through various adoptive families to provide affective care and</p>

	<p>material labor numerous times throughout his life. Reading narratives of “rehomeing” into the film, I argue that Yang offers an epistemological treatise for kinning for the future through practices of recycling, refurbishing, and regeneration that challenge, but at times, affirm anthropocentric constructions of familial belonging.</p>
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