



# ASAC News

THE ALLIANCE FOR THE STUDY OF ADOPTION AND CULTURE

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## ASAC ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Executive Committee

At ASAC's business meeting at our Scripps conference,



**Margaret Homans**, Professor of English, Yale, (pictured left) and **Cynthia Callahan**, Associate Professor of English, Ohio State University-Mansfield, (pictured right) were elected the new co-chairs, as Marianne Novy and Carol Singley ended their terms of office.

In addition to Cynthia, two other new members were elected to the executive committee: **Claudia Nelson**, Professor of English, Texas A & M, and **Lisa Marie Rollins**, doctoral student in African Diaspora Studies, University of California at Berkeley.

The executive committee passed three amendments to the constitution, one increasing its size from seven to eight, one saying that one member of the committee will be a graduate student when elected, and

*continued, page 3*

## SESSION ON ADOPTION AT MLA IN JANUARY

### **Carol Singley**

This winter ASAC will have its first session as an allied organization at the annual convention of the Modern Language Association, to be held from January 3-6, in Boston, on the topic "What's Adoption Got To Do With It? New Directions in Studies of Kinship and Literature." Scholars working across a range of fields, including American literature, cultural studies, global studies, and African American literature will respond to the question in the title by analyzing how attention to the myths, fantasies, and material and affective realities of adoption lead us to rethink the history and formation of concepts such as class, genealogy, and familial and

racial formation.

The date and time and exact location of the session will be announced by the MLA, probably in mid-July. Contact session chair Carol Singley, [singley@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:singley@camden.rutgers.edu), for this information. Our required annual business meeting will take place in the same room fifteen minutes before the session.

**Caroline Levander's** presentation on "Fictionalizing Children/Children's Fiction" focuses on fictional representations of children's desire not to be adopted but rather to escape from communities that try but fail to protect them. Levander revisits an assumption often implicit in adoption

narratives – that bereft children want to be incorporated into or claimed as a member of a national, community, or nuclear family. Across such works as Twain's *Huck Finn*, Griggs's *Imperium in Imperio* and the writings of Louisa May Alcott, she explores instead the corollary narrative with which American literature is equally interested in wrestling: that children resist or avoid the lure of adult's adoptive impulses and that adults are actually more in need of adoptive ties with children.

Other panelists complement this discussion of the boundaries of adoption by working to further understand how imaginings of adoption have been used

*continued, page 2*

## MLA (continued from Page 1)

to construct certain formations of genealogy, blood, class, or race, and negated others.

**Cynthia Callahan's** presentation, "Related by Blood," notes that regulating the family became an important aspect of maintaining racial hierarchies, and as a consequence, mutually dependent concerns about the purity of familial and racial blood manifested widely in the literature of the period. George Washington Cable, Mark Twain, and Charles W. Chesnut linked familial constructions of "blood" and racial constructions of "blood" to show how white privilege was protected through falsified family documents and stolen inheritances, while Pauline E. Hopkins and William Faulkner used incest to demonstrate the extreme consequences of denying shared familial blood across racial lines. Using the lens of adoption helps us to see that these authors challenge conventional interpretations of family, blood, and race.

**Carol Singley's** presentation, "What Representations of Adoption Reveal about the Importance of Genealogy," observes that the importance of genetic ties oddly seems to go hand-in-hand with the increased visibility of adoption in the current media. Reflecting on the question – is adoption accepted in part because recourse to genetic identity remains strong? – Singley notes ways that adoption not only reflects but also supports the primacy of genealogy even as it poses an alternative to blood ties.

**Emily Hipchen's** paper, "Imagining a Poetics of Adoption Identity," argues that in the works of Ned Balbo, Jackie Kay, and Lynn Thompson—three adoptees—the poetics of the adopted self focus on the adopted body.

These adoptee poets limn the adopted body as wounded and gifted simultaneously, as disabled and heroic all at once, as a way of envisioning the cultural dissonance of adoption. That is, in these poets' work, adoption gets written on the body paradoxically to enact the contradictions of desire and disgust, gain and loss, and love and commodification inherent in adoption as we practice it.

**Nancy Bentley** will respond to the presentations, and discussion will follow.

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**Nancy Bentley** is Professor and Chair of the Department of English at University of Pennsylvania. Her writings most relevant to this session include "The Fourth Dimension: Kinlessness and African American Narrative" (Critical Inquiry, 2007), and "Creole Kinship: Privacy, Politics, and the Novel in the New World," in *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (forthcoming). Bentley is currently completing a book *New World Kinship and the American Novel, 1850-1920*, a study of the way the novel has mediated the multiple forms of kinship coexisting in the Americas.

**Cynthia Callahan** is Associate Professor of English at Ohio State University—Mansfield, where she teaches American and multi-ethnic American literatures as well as adoption and family in literature. She is the author of *Kin of Another Kind: Transracial Adoption in American Literature*, recently published by the University of Michigan Press. She is Book Review Editor of *Adoption and Culture* and is currently working on a new edition of Robert E. Boles' transracial adoption novel, *Curling*.

**Caroline Levander** is the Carlson Professor of Humanities, Professor of English, and Director of the Humanities Research Center at Rice University. She is currently writing *Laying Claim: Imagining Empire on the U.S. Mexico Border* (under contract, Oxford UP). Recent books include *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W.E.B. Du Bois* (Duke UP, 2006) and co-edited volumes *Hemispheric American Studies* (Rutgers UP, 2008) and *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader* (Rutgers UP, 2003).

**Emily Hipchen** is Associate Professor of English at West Georgia State University. The author of *Coming Apart Together: Fragments from an Adoption* (Literate Chigger Press, 2005), a memoir, she edits *Adoption & Culture* and is ASAC's treasurer. She has published a number of articles on adoption life writing.

**Carol Singley**, Professor of English at Rutgers University-Camden, recently published *Adopting America: Childhood, Kinship, and National Identity in Literature* (Oxford UP, 2011), the first full-length study of literary adoption from the Puritan era through the early twentieth century. She is co-editor of the critical anthology, *The American Child: A Cultural Studies Reader* (Rutgers UP, 2003), author of *Edith Wharton: Matters of Mind and Spirit* (Cambridge UP, 1995), and editor of five volumes on Wharton and other American literary topics. She is co-founder and charter member of the Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture and serves on its executive committee.

## ASAC Announcements (continued from Page 1)

one saying that “The chair or at least one co-chair will be in the field of literature or creative writing.”

Karen Balcom, Emily Hipchen, Mark Jerng, and Carol Singley are continuing members of the executive committee.

### Suggestions Wanted

Please contact our new co-chairs at [margaret.homans@yale.edu](mailto:margaret.homans@yale.edu) and [callahan138@gmail.com](mailto:callahan138@gmail.com) if you have ideas for our 2014 MLA session (the convention will be in Chicago, 9-12 January) or if you would like to nominate someone for the executive committee.

### Next Conference

We expect to have our next conference in spring 2014 and are working with a few people at a university in a Midwestern city. Since it is too soon to know definitely, others interested in hosting are welcome to contact co-chair Margaret Homans.

### Adoption & Culture

Copies of Vol. 3 of our journal *Adoption and Culture* will be mailed out by June 1. If you have not received them by June 15 this probably means that you have not paid your dues for 2012. Please email Emily Hipchen, [emily@hipbo.org](mailto:emily@hipbo.org), to check on this if you think you have paid; otherwise send \$20 made out to ASAC to:

#### **Emily Hipchen**

Dept of English and Philosophy  
University of West Georgia  
Carrollton, GA 30118.

The journal's website is <http://www.pitt.edu/~asac/adoption&culture/Home.html>. The table of contents of Vol 3 appears on p. 11 of this newsletter.

Please consider submitting developed contributions for Vol. 4.

### ASAC Newsletter

After formatting the newsletters of 2009, 2010, and 2011, Mariann Grantham has had a promotion and taken on a second job, and no longer has the time. Thank you for your work on this, Mariann! And thanks to Emily Costantinou, a University of Pittsburgh rising senior English major, who formatted this one!

### Listserv and Website

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](mailto:asac@mit.edu).

Sue Castagnetto has created an online site for sharing presentations from the ASAC conference (or other adoption-related papers), if anyone would like to do that. The site also has the conference program and other materials.



She has added everyone whose proposal was accepted to this account, whether or not they attended. Once you have your account, you can log in to Sakai:

1. Open Sakai:  
<https://sakai.claremont.edu:8443>
2. Click the Login button in the upper right corner.
3. Type your account login and password, and click Login.

4. Go to the site by clicking on the site tab. (You will see two or more tabs in a row across the upper part of the screen.) Sue's address is:

[scastagn@scrippscollege.edu](mailto:scastagn@scrippscollege.edu)  
in case you need more help.

The conference schedule in almost final form--Christine Gailey was ill and unable to come at the last minute--can be found at this website: <http://pages.scrippscollege.edu/~scastagn/ASAC-2012/Schedule.html>



## TWO VIEWS OF THE 4TH ASAC CONFERENCE: MAPPING ADOPTION HISTORIES, GEOGRAPHIES, LITERATURES, POLITICS



### **Conference View 1: John McLeod**

once again proved itself truly to be an 'alliance' in the fullest sense of the word, in recognising the intellectual, ethical and political necessity of forging relations across the whole spectrum of adoption activism, from philosophical considerations of adoption and being to the often challenging emotional, legal and material realities of surrendering, tracings and reunions.

The conference's stimulating commitment to interdisciplinary transit within, as well as between, delegates' contributions was clearly visible in the plenary sessions. The writer Dan Chaon blended fiction with memoir in reading, first, an essay concerning his meeting his birthfather, and later an extract from his superb novel *You Remind Me of Me* (2004). His responses to questions revealed the alliances in his own life between adoptee activism and fiction-making, and the candour and intelligence of remarks exemplified the standard of debate at large in the conference as a whole. (I also found it ironic that on my arrival at Scripps I was twice mistaken for Chaon – an amusing and unnerving experience for an adoptee such as myself.) Catherine Ceniza Choy's discussion of Asian international adoption history uncovered both the centrality and persistence of race in transnational adoption practices, as a way of challenging the uncritical cheerleading of transnational adoptions as evidence of our allegedly post-racial contemporaneity.

Two plenary panels transacted lively critical conversations across

the cultural and social practices of adoption. The first, 'Race, Class and Culture in Adoption Practices,' called into question the disavowal of matters of race and culture in the social administration of adoption. As Gina M. Samuels argued, the liberal commitment to 'colour-blindness' on the part of transracially-adopting parents may not meet the needs of their children.



Raven Sinclair's penetrating discussion of the often involuntary transracial adoption of First Nations children in Canada exposed those attitudes that hold cultural identity as soluble to be historically complicit with imperious modes of social governance and disenfranchisement. The second panel, 'The State and Family Separation,' explored adoption activism in legal and judicial frames, where the material consequences of semantics were powerfully brought home. Jacqueline Stevens uncovered the minutiae of paternity definitions in federal law as impacting on adoption, citizenship and deportation, while Yali Lincroft brought to light the impact on child welfare when migrant parents are legally designated as deportees. David Smolin's insistence on articulating the forceful appropriation of children for adoption as 'child laundering' foregrounded both the political and ethical violations of trafficking children across countries and continents.

In addition to the plenary sessions, the conference featured a wealth of

subpanels which blended academic papers, readings and performance pieces. As someone who works in literary studies, I was drawn in particular to those panels concerning cultural representations of adoption, and I was struck time and again by the alliances forged across creative and critical discussions of adoption's representation. In one panel concerning 'Adoption Memoirs, Poetry and Performance', Liz Latty, Susan Harris O'Connor and Susan Ito creatively fashioned their own vocabularies of adoption experience through reading and performance, and in their different modes each powerfully captured the ways in which adoption re-synopsates the unfolding of adoptees' selfhood. Another panel, 'Birthmothers and Adoptive Mothers in Adoption Narratives', opened a acutely critical perspective on contemporary adoption imaginings that ranged from Lorrie Moore's *A Gate at the Stairs* (2009) to Disney-Pixar's film *Tangled*. Indeed, I was struck by the frequency with which Moore's novel was discussed by delegates throughout the conference. In a panel concerning African American transracial adoptees, Marianne Novy offered an exemplary comparative reading of Moore's novel in relation to Ann Patchett's *Run* (2007) as part of a wider critique of American ideals of diversity and accommodation; while Margaret Homans pursued a brilliant reading of Catherine E. McKinley's work which both critiqued and captured with remarkable dexterity McKinley's suggestive figuration of adoptee identity.



In addition to



**Caption: (left to right) Marianne Novy, Susan Ito, Susan Harris O'Connor, Liz Latty.**  
*Photo Credit: Sheila Ganz*

these highlights, for me perhaps the most powerful event in the conference was provided by the writer and actor Brian Stanton, who performed his solo performance *Blank* which dramatises his own journey as an adoptee discovering his past. Stanton's play brought together myriad creative and critical modes, combining dramatic artistry, philosophical discourse, therapy, intimate memoir and physical theatre. In playing no less than twelve characters, drawn from professional colleagues, friends and family, Stanton gifted delegates a way of thinking about the singularity of adoption identity which many of us could inhabit, and in which the serrated edges of selfhood were explored as the source of both pain and possibility in equal measure – just as the blankness of being which Stanton articulated suggests both a lost story and a new leaf on which new selves might be fashioned. It was a brilliant, magnificent performance, and it made every one of the 5000 miles I had travelled from the UK to Claremont especially worthwhile.

The conference also afforded delegates the opportunity to pay tribute to Marianne Novy, one of

the co-founders of ASAC, who was stepping down from her role as co-chair. ASAC's long-standing commitment to confluent interdisciplinary activity very much reflects Marianne's intellectual character, and at the conference banquet she was applauded with much love and warmth by colleagues. As with all ASAC events, the conference at Claremont was an occasion to share intellectual energies and much human warmth – a fitting testimony, perhaps, to Marianne's intellectual rigour and inspiring generosity over many years.

**John McLeod** is Professor of Postcolonial and Diaspora Literatures at the University of Leeds, UK. He is currently completing a study of transcultural fictions of adoption.





## Conference View 2: *Kim Park Nelson*

focused on literature and history, this year's conference featured papers and panels on adoption ethics, law and society, religion, and economics. Though still primarily a "culture" conference, ASAC seems to be expanding beyond its humanities origins by embracing work grounded in the social sciences. For me, the cross-disciplinary conversations and intellectual engagement I consistently experience at ASAC make it one of my favorite academic conferences.

I was particularly interested in papers and panels this year that looked at immigration and transnational adoption. Issues of transnationalism and globalization continue to grow in relevance across many disciplines. In Adoption Studies, the continued popularity of transnational adoption has created a rich area of transnational inquiry. This year's ASAC conference featured a specific focus on countries and regions with high rates of transnational adoption such as China, Eastern Europe, and South Korea. As a Korean adoption researcher, I have been amazed and delighted to see how quickly my cohort of colleagues has grown. The community of Korean adoptee scholars was particularly well represented this year, with a wide variety of disciplinary perspectives.

I was also pleased to see that the Conference committee encouraged and welcomed work concerning surrogacy, foster care, and assisted reproductive technologies. While these areas of inquiry are distinct from the topic of adoption, significant linkages become apparent if we understand adoption to be embedded in the socio-cultural and economic issues of childlessness and child placement.

One change I was disappointed to see this year was a smaller presence of work by and about birth parents. Although birth parents continued to be a subject of research and discussion, I was struck by the general absence of the birth parents and advocates whose compelling research narratives have contributed greatly to past panels and presentations. The presence of these voices has always made me hopeful that ASAC could serve as a platform for the population I see as the most silenced in the adoption triad, and I hope ASAC continues to highlight work by and about this group in future conferences.

Each ASAC is different, due to the continuing growth of our scholarly community and the changing conference locations. Adoption Studies is built around a small community of scholars who have deep ties to each other and often to our communities of study. The 2010 conference at MIT capitalized on the presence of large adoption communities in the Boston area, and this led to a lively conference, but also to some conflict. These conflicts can be productive, and I suspect reaction to this conflict directly or indirectly led to the development of panels this year on adoption and teaching social justice pedagogies.

As an adoptee and scholar of color I am encouraged to see ASAC scholars as a group continuously moving towards higher race awareness and social consciousness. Though I felt very much welcomed at the inaugural conference in Tampa, I felt connected mainly to the few other presenters whose work included race-aware perspectives, and back then I wondered how much I could gain

The Alliance for the Study of Adoption and Culture held its fourth international conference March 22-25, 2012 at the Scripps College campus of the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, California. This was the third ASAC conference that I have attended (only having missed the Pittsburgh conference) and it has been compelling to see how the conference and its participants have grown and changed over the past ten years. This year's conference theme, "Mapping Adoption: Histories, Geographies, Literatures, Politics" covered a lot of ground, as the work presented at ASAC always does.

As at past ASAC gatherings, the core topics of adoption history and literature were well represented. Presentations in these areas were strong with many papers and panels focusing on memoir, poetry, film, and literature, as well as adoption after the Second World War and child welfare history. Also, as in past years, the conference included a compelling collection of adoption-themed films and performances in the evenings and during break-out session times.

Adoption Studies itself is necessarily interdisciplinary, and ASAC continues to become more multi-disciplined in its offerings each year. In addition to presentations

from ASAC if it remained primarily focused on White adoption histories and cultures. As Adoption Studies has progressed, it seems that more and more researchers include the inherent social, economic and racial divisions upon which adoption is often predicated and which it sometimes reinforces in their analyses. The worlds of adoption include and (sometimes prey upon) many minoritized groups, and ASAC does well to do all it can to grow and maintain its conferences as safe spaces for all.

As an adoptee who studies adoption I know I am part of a greater adoption community, whether I like it or not. As an academic, I am part of a tradition that has historically studied “down,” meaning we have had a tendency to position ourselves as academics either outside or above our research. Though I see this changing, I also see much evidence that these assumptions and practices are still very much in place. At ASAC, I am always struck by the fact that the small but growing community of adoption scholars seems to be heavily populated by researchers who are themselves either adoptees, adoptive parents, or less commonly, birth parents. For this reason, I have always seen parallels between Adoption Studies and interdisciplines such as Women’s Studies and Ethnic Studies, in which scholars treat advocacy for and education about people with identity connections within the group of study as central components of their scholarship. This “connection to adoption” is so assumed that adoption scholars with no personal connection to adoption need to develop a narrative of why they study adoption at all (or so I have

been told). Our positions relative to adoption do not prescribe our beliefs or determine our findings, though I think our relationship (or non-relationship) and positions relative to adoption practice are important both in our individual work and in our scholarly community.

The presence of large numbers of triad members within Adoption Studies should be acknowledged and discussed among adoption scholars, and I think ASAC is the perfect venue for an ongoing discussion on these topics. While I have witnessed these conversations happening at ASAC, sometimes this subject seems like the elephant in the room; it may be that we, as scholars, have been too socialized to understand ourselves as objectively outside our research (even though many of us are inside or influential to the groups we study). At future ASAC conferences, I hope we will be able to focus more intentionally on this topic in order that we might have more sustained conversations about positionality and reflexivity within our community of researchers.

**Kim Park Nelson** is Chair and Assistant Professor of American Multicultural Studies at Minnesota State University, Moorhead. Her primary research focuses on Korean American adoptees.



## Deporting Adoptees

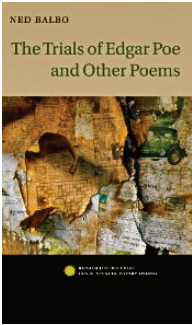
On May 8th, Kairi Shepherd, an Indian adoptee who has advanced multiple sclerosis, was issued what in effect was her death sentence: deportation to India—a country she has not seen or known since she was adopted at 3 months old—and consequent separation from her family and doctors. Her crimes were check fraud and controlled substance use for which she has served her time, but her punishment did not end there. Why? Under the Child Citizenship Act (CCA), Kairi is ineligible for automatic citizenship because she turned 18 before February 27, 2001. Her mother, Erlene, died of breast cancer before she could submit her daughter’s child naturalization application.

Presently, we are aware of 40 cases of deported or detained adult adoptees as reported in the media and to overseas post-adoption service NGOs. All 40 cases involve non-violent offenses and consist mostly of controlled substance use. They provide a chilling snapshot: deported adoptees have ended up homeless, unemployed, sick, starving, unable to access vital care, without family or community, and even murdered. If Kairi is removed to India—a country whose language and culture she doesn’t know and where she can’t get her medicine—she will die. We know of one adoptee who has already died: Joao Herbert’s body was found in the slums of Campinas, north of Sao Paulo, four years after his deportation.

These paragraphs come from Jennifer Dobbs. Jennifer and Bert Ballard are coordinating a letter-writing campaign about this issue. For more information, contact Jennifer, [jkwondobbs@gmail.com](mailto:jkwondobbs@gmail.com), and read Adam Pertman’s blog

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adam-pertman/an-unnerving-reality-were\\_b\\_1550747.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/adam-pertman/an-unnerving-reality-were_b_1550747.html).

## MEMBER NEWS



**NED BALBO's** adoption-centered third book, *The Trials of Edgar Poe and Other Poems* (Story Line Press/WCU Poetry Center, 2010), has been awarded the 2012 Poets' Prize.

The award, judged by a panel of 20 U.S. poets, includes a reading at the Nicholas Roerich Museum in New York City. In addition, an adoption-focused flash fiction, "Rollo and Apollo," is forthcoming in *Gargoyle*, and two magic realist ekphrastic poems on adoption appeared in the past year: "From a Son of Marco Polo in the Village of Blue People" (*Iowa Review*, Fall 2011, in print and on-line) and "Marco Polo Watches Blue People" at *The Common's* tumblr blog (11 July 2011). Ned was also featured poet in the Fall 2011/Winter 2012 issue of *Valparaiso Poetry Review*. For more background on the Poets' Prize: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poets'\\_Prize](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poets'_Prize)

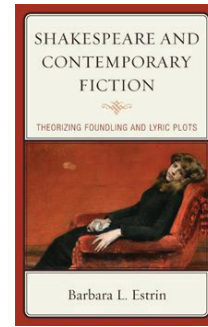
**KAREN BALCOM** has just been awarded two major book prizes for *The Traffic in Babies: Cross-Border Adoption and Baby-Selling Between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972* (University of Toronto Press, 2011). In late May, Karen will be awarded the Albert Corey Prize, jointly given by the American Historical Association and the Canadian Historical Association for the best booking the preceding two years on the history of Canadian-American relations or the history

of both countries. In June, Karen will be awarded the Bowling Green University/Institute for Political History Prize in Comparative and International Policy History given for the best booking the preceding two years in this area. Currently, this book is only available in hardcover from the major online book sellers in the US, but the University of Toronto Press will ship the softcover from Canada.

She also writes, "Histories of Adoption were well represented at the Canadian Historical Association Conference at the University of Waterloo in June. Karen Balcom (McMaster University) joined Lynne Taylor (University of Waterloo) and Claire Halstead (University of Western Ontario) on a panel discussing Children of War: World War II, Child Migration from Europe to North America. Elsewhere on the programme, Allyson Stephenson (University of Saskatchewan) spoke about the significance of Aboriginal transracial adoption in Canada.

**KELLY CONDIT-SHRESTHA** presented on "Korean Adoption and U.S. National Belonging: Model Minority Migration, Race, and Whiteness, 1953-1978," at the European Social Science History Conference, Glasgow, Scotland, UK, April 2012. In November 2011 she was an invited panelist in "Book Panel Discussion: Karen Dubinsky's *Babies Without Borders*," at the Social Science History Association, Boston, MA.

**BARBARA ESTRIN** has published *Shakespeare & Contemporary Fiction: Theorizing Foundling and Lyric Plots* with Rowman and Littlefield



and University of Delaware Press. Her book may be ordered through [www.rowmanlittlefield.com](http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com) and the promo code for a discount is LEX20DEC11. She finds an animus against foreign blood in Shakespeare's foundling plots and analyzes modern novels that change those plots.

**SHEILA GANZ's** documentary *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* is now airing on The Documentary Channel. 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 the filmmaker's story as a birthmother revealing the enormous complexities in their lives with illuminating historical background. As Sheila tells her story, she creates a sculpture of a mother holding her baby in a hospital bed. *Unlocking the Heart of Adoption* gives the viewer a powerful way to understand the lifelong process of adoption. The next broadcast will be on July 5, 2012 at 4pm EST. For info go to Screenings page at: [www.unlockingtheheart.com](http://www.unlockingtheheart.com).

Recently, **SUSAN HARRIS O'CONNOR** presented her autobiographical narratives at Rhode Island College School of Social Work as part of the continuing education series. Her narrative 'My Mind's Blueprint Inclusive of an Oppressed Identity Construct Model' is scheduled this fall as a



keynote/performance at the 7th Biennial Adoption Conference at St. John's University in New York and as a featured presentation for staff development at a domestic violence shelter in Massachusetts. The narrative "The Harris Racial Identity Theory" has been requested to be the featured presentation at the Northeastern Family Institute conference on "Diverse Family Structures."

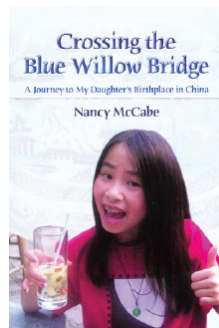
**SALLY HASLANGER** gave a talk at the December APA on a panel sponsored by the Asian and Asian-American Philosophy Association; it was focused on the importance of distinguishing race from culture, especially in the context of inter-country adoption.

**JEFF LEINAWEAVER** has a chapter in a 2012 anthology, *The Reflective, facilitative, and interpretive practice of the coordinated management of meaning: making lives and making meaning*, ed. C. Creede, B. Fisher-Yoshida, and P. Gallegos (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press). His chapter is "On Becoming a Global Human: CMM [see title of book], International Adoption and the Global Burden of Self."

On September 27, from 7-10 pm, in Seattle, Jeff will give a workshop, *Practicing Destiny: an introduction to Narrative Genealogy and its Role in International Adoption*. Designed for parents, professionals, and those internationally adopted, this workshop will show participants how this groundbreaking approach to international adoption helps to deconstruct oppressive, self-limiting narratives and breaks the cycle of victim-persecutor-rescuer stories that are created by the mainstream adoption triad/triangle model.

All proceeds of this workshop will be donated to support the Global Generations - Chinese Adoptee Links (CAL) Organization. Contact: [jeff@global-zen.com](mailto:jeff@global-zen.com) or get more information via [www.chineseadoptee.com](http://www.chineseadoptee.com)

**YALI LINCROFT**, one of the plenary speakers at our Scripps conference, is concerned about the fact that the adoption tax credit is due to "sunset" at the end of this year. She is trying to promote its continuance through the Adoption Tax Credit Working Group, which can be contacted at [info@adoptiontaxcredit.org](mailto:info@adoptiontaxcredit.org). Its Facebook address is <http://www.facebook.com/AdoptionTaxCredit>.



**NANCY MCCABE** has published *Crossing the Blue Willow Bridge: A Journey to My Daughter's Birthplace in China* with the University of Missouri Press.

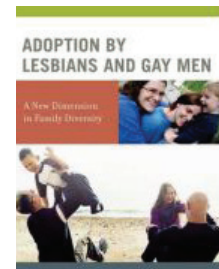
**CAROLYN MCLEOD** and Francoise Baylis are co-editing a book with Oxford UP called *Family-Making: Contemporary Ethical Challenges*. They focus on the ethics of choosing between adoption and technologically assisted reproduction as means of having children. The book should be out in 2013. The contributors include Kim Leighton, Mianna Lotz, Charlotte Witt, Christine Overall, Heath Fogg-Davis, and many others.

**MARIANNE NOVY** was interviewed by Livia Montana for the Fall 2011 issue of *Adoption Constellation*.

**BESS O'BRIEN's** documentary film *Ask Us Who We Are*, which played

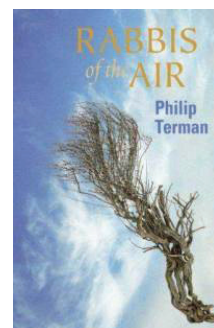


at the ASAC 2012 conference, is doing well! It is being used in schools, colleges and social service agencies across the United States as a teaching tool around foster care and family issues. More information about the film and how to order it is at [www.kingdomcounty.org](http://www.kingdomcounty.org)



**ADAM PERTMAN** has co-edited a new book with David Brodzinsky, *Adoption by Lesbians and Gay Men: A New Dimension in Family*

*Diversity*. You can find it on the Oxford University Press website, and you can save 20% by using promo code 301001 at [www.oup.com/us](http://www.oup.com/us). Adam blogs at <http://adampterman.com/2012/02/24/adopteeblog/> and he often appears on the *Huffington Post*. At the website [www.adoptioninstitute.org](http://www.adoptioninstitute.org) you can find links to the institute's reports issued this year on openness in adoption, adoption by gays and lesbians, achieving permanency and maintaining connections for older youths in foster care, and the need for post-adoptive services.



**PHILIP TERMAN's** new book of poems, *Rabbis of the Air*, published by Autumn House Press, includes some poems about adopting his daughters from China.

*continued, page 10*



**BRUNO PERREAU**'s new book is out in French: *Penser l'adoption. La gouvernance pastorale du genre* (*Rethinking Adoption. The*

*Pastoral Governance of Gender*).

Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, February 2012. Bruno is translating it into English and looking for an American publisher.

Here is a summary: Since the 1980s, international adoption has developed considerably in France. It is now the main form of adoption, representing no less than 90% of adopted children each year. Parallel to this evolution, mass media have gradually put the emphasis on possible illegal traffic in children. Bruno Perreau's new book argues that the fear of traffic reveals the contemporary challenges to French identity in a globalized world. It actually hides the fear of adoption itself. Since 1972, when children born outside and inside marriage were made equals before the law, one can observe an increasing biologization of French law. A greater focus on the biological origins has been promoted by bioethics committees and integrated into laws and decrees, in particular in 1994 and 2004. The body has literally been sacralized. Surrogacy is in fact forbidden, and assisted procreation is limited to sterile heterosexual couples. As a consequence, many scholars describe adoption as a site of resistance against biologization. For instance, an adopted child can have from one to four legal parents in France, given that adoptive families (single people or married couples) can either replace biological families or be added to them.

However, by rewriting the civil status of the adopted child as if he/she was born from his/her adoptive parents, adoption also pays tribute to biological filiation. A telling example is the required length for accrediting a parent for adoption: the entire administrative procedure must last nine months, like the term of a pregnancy. *Rethinking Adoption* argues that biologization is only the tip of a bigger, more profound issue: naturalization. For adoption policies question the naturalist imaginary of the origins traditionally inhering in the social contract in France. In order to deconstruct this imaginary, Bruno Perreau analyzes the process for authorizing an adoption and shows that it is understood as a "moment of truth," in which administrative categories and social identities confront each other. Gender is a crucial register in this encounter, and the decision to accept or reject an application is the occasion for some important work on defining what constitutes a legitimate family. *Rethinking Adoption* offers a study of parliamentary debates since 1945 as well as French and European case law. It also throws light on social work by developing a discursive analysis of the various types of justification deployed by agents of the Child Social Welfare Agency when surveyed on the topic of homosexual people applying for adoption. It asks more specifically how gay adoption reshapes the institution of adoption, not only as a legal system, but also as a metaphor of national belonging.

**RAVEN SINCLAIR** is presenting at the Adoption Experience Conference Oct 19-20 in Toronto, Canada. Here's the link for anyone interested in coming north of the line to participate: [http://www.](http://www.adoptionexperience2012.ca/)

[adoptionexperience2012.ca/](http://www.adoptionexperience2012.ca/)

**JEAN STRAUSS** is currently finishing up principal photography of a new film about adoptee access legislation and its outcomes. *A Simple Piece of Paper* follows a dozen Illinois adoptees as they are enabled to receive their original birth certificates. The complicated system for releasing the records is part of the story - but so is the reality that most adopted citizens in the country's tenth largest state will now have the ability to have closure on this part of their lives. Jean hopes for a premiere in early 2013, with a rough cut done in time for screening on the first anniversary of the release of records.

In November, **KATE VOGL** spoke about reconnecting through reunion at the AFIN Conference (Adoptions, Families, Childhood) in Barcelona. The conference focused on the family of origin in adoption, foster care and assisted reproduction.

AFIN is a research organization that deals with the family and social life of children and youth, their family and social relationships, their risk and crisis situations, difficulties and rights. It is affiliated with the Autonomous University of Barcelona. <http://www.uab.es/servlet/Satellite/research-1263801915749.html>

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## UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**JOHN RAIBLE** announces:

**“Best Interests of the Child?”  
Race, Religion, and Rescue in  
Adoption**

October 18-20th 2012

(Thursday evening to Saturday afternoon)

Please visit us at: <http://adoptioninitiative.org/>

**Due Date: June 10, 2012!!**

We are pleased to invite professionals, researchers, scholars, practitioners, and graduate students to submit papers and research manuscripts that address issues likely to impact individuals and families touched by adoption for the seventh biennial adoption conference at St. John's University. In keeping with our goal to present thought-provoking themes relevant to the training of mental health professionals as well as to the personal growth and understanding of adoption triad members, our 2012 conference will consider the implications of the phrase “best interests of the child” as it is commonly applied in child welfare and adoption.

The history of U.S. adoption is rooted in social reform movements to restore the morality of “fallen” women and to protect that of the nation. Now in the 21st century, we are witnessing an emerging religiously motivated movement to promote the “saving” and rescue of so-called orphans from the Third World to the First (or the global South to the global North). This conference will give special consideration to exposing the connections between race, racism, and the role played by religion in creating public understandings of children as needing rescue through adoption. We seek proposals particularly that address

these connections, and that ask whether such religiously motivated understandings accurately reflect the “best interests” of adopted children—and the adult adoptees they will become.

The 2012 conference theme highlights both historical and emerging practices of adoption, with a critical eye toward whose interests have been served, are currently being served, and whose interests should be served. Papers and presentations should include some consideration of race and/or religion in adoption. Ideally, proposals will also address creatively the notion of rescue; however, this is not mandatory.



**KAREN BALCOM** writes:

The Society for the History of Children and Youth has just announced that it will hold its next conference at the University of Nottingham in **June 2013**. This is a very friendly, truly transnational biennial conference that has been very open location for work on this history of adoption in the past. It tends to move from North America to Europe and back. The call for papers is still pending, but you can find out more about this organization and the conference at the SHCY website, <http://www.h-net.org/~child/SHCY>

**KIM PARK NELSON** writes

International Adoption from Korea and Overseas Adopted Koreans: The Third International Symposium on Korean Adoption Studies Call for Papers

**Symposium Date:**

Tuesday, July 30, 2013

**Planned Location:**

IKAA Korean Adoptee Gathering, Seoul, Korea. For more information about the Gathering, see <http://gathering.ikaa.info/en>.

**Symposium Sponsor:**

IKAA (International Korean Adoptee Associations). For more information about IKAA, see <http://ikaa.org/en>.

**Submissions Due by:**

December 6, 2012

**Submit to:**

TISKAS2013@gmail.com

Questions? Contact Kim Park Nelson, [greg0051@umn.edu](mailto:greg0051@umn.edu) for full proposal forms, instructions, other information

If selected, your conference paper will be due June 15, 2013. Submission of a complete conference paper by the due date is a requirement for participation in the Symposium. You may also be invited to participate in a research panel at the Gathering the week following the Symposium.

## 2012 ASAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Karen Balcom** (History, McMaster University)

**Cynthia Callahan** (English, Ohio State University at Mansfield), *Co-Chair*

**Emily Hipchen** (English, University of West Georgia), *Treasurer*

**Margaret Homans** (English, Yale University), *Co-chair*

**Mark Jerng** (English, University of California, Davis)

**Claudia Nelson** (English, Texas A & M University)

**Lisa Marie Rollins** (African Diaspora Studies, University of California at Berkeley)

**Carol Singley** (English, Rutgers University, Camden)

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**Marianne Novy** (University of Pittsburgh) *Newsletter Editor*

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