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Rethinking "Positive" Adoption Language and Reclaiming Stigmatized Identities[1]

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My first article in September focused on "the violence of love" in transracial and transnational adoption, explaining the primary framework that I used for my dissertation research. This article again draws from my dissertation to provide an example of what I mean by this framework. As the quotes indicate, I am specifically interested in the violence of love when it comes to positive adoption language (PAL).

Introduction: The emergence of positive adoption language (PAL)
Historically, adoption has been demeaned as being different from and less than biological families. Popular discourse constructed adoptive mothers in particular as infertile and emotionally unstable. Underscoring the stigma surrounding adoption was secrecy as its foundation, which became standard procedure by World War II. The practice of creating new "original" birth certificates and sealing all birth records, even to adoptees, persisted in the 1970s (and continues today except in open adoptions and a handful of states). Secrecy implied that heterosexual marriage and rearing biological children, or at least the mirroring of this, were necessary components of a normative, healthy, and happy family.

Today, adoptive families continue to be judged, stigmatized, and discredited by society as abnormal, unnatural, and second or last choice because they lack genetic connection. This has been impressed even more with the expansion of new and assisted forms of reproductive technology. Moreover, adoptive parents have faced scrutiny by the state government and adoption agencies in ways that the majority of "normative" biological parents rarely, if ever, face, including meeting age, income, work (or stay-at-home), health, marriage, home study, parent preparation, and post-placement requirements.[2] In addition, adoptive parents contend with pervasive invasion of their privacy, where strangers and friends feel that it is acceptable to ask prying questions or offer off-the-cuff remarks that are often offensive and hurtful to adoptive parents and adoptees.

In *Kinship by Design: A History of Adoption in the Modern United States*, historian Ellen Herman discusses how adoption professionals attempted to destigmatize and reduce the risks of adoption through two processes of "interpretation" and "naturalization." Interpretation involved social workers and psychiatrists who "investigated, adjusted, and normalized" behaviors and personalities at psychological and emotional levels in order to instill feelings of "realness" for adoptive parents and adoptees. Naturalization attempted to make adoption "mirror" nature.

In my dissertation, I contend that "normalization," as an expansive form of interpretation, was another goal. The objective of normalization was more than convincing people that adoption was real or could mirror nature, but to elevate adoption in the eyes of the public so that it could be *equal to* and *just as* "normal" as families formed through biological reproduction and genetic kinship. Indeed, legitimizing and normalizing adoption were in many ways the main goals of PAL.

Thirty-five years have passed since 1979, when Marietta Spencer published a short, but influential article on "The Terminology of Adoption" in *Child Welfare*. This was the first major publication addressing adoption language. According to Spencer, PAL was premised on the beliefs that words educate, evoke feeling, carry emotional weight, produce labels, have multiple and changing meanings, and must be used with care. Her goal was to provide a "correct" and common sense language standard for social service professionals and adoptive parents in an effort to displace language considered problematic, negative, and imprecise.[3] By the late 1970s and early 1980s, agencies, social workers, and adoptive parents began to combat the discrimination against and shame attached to adoption and adoptive families. They

specifically revised adoption terminology to reflect what they perceived as the accurate outcome and beauty of adoption (see table for a compiled list).

Positive Language	Negative Language
Adoption triad / -circle / -tapestry	Adoption triangle
My child / was adopted	Adopted child / is adopted
Parent	Adoptive parent
Birth / biological parent / Birthgiver* / Woman who gave birth	Natural / real parent
Birth child	Own child
Birth father / mother / parent	Real / Natural father / mother / parent
Genetic ancestors	Blood relative
Born to unmarried parents / outside of marriage	Illegitimate
Waiting child / Children in need of adoption	Adoptable child / Available child
Court termination	Child taken away
Make an adoption plan / choose adoption / transferring or terminating parental rights	Give away / give up / put up / abandoned Relinquished / surrendered
Child placed for adoption / unplanned	Unwanted child
To parent	To keep
Parent preparation / pre-adoptive counseling	Homestudy
Intercountry adoption	Foreign adoption
Interracial	Mixed race
Child from abroad	Foreign child
Child with special needs	Handicapped child / hard-to-place
Search / making contact or meeting with / locate	Track down parents / reunion
* Indicates the term is used only by some.	

Two decades later, Patricia Irwin Johnston, author and one of the foremost educators and advocates for Respectful Adoption Language (RAL), a variation of PAL, claimed that RAL was a vocabulary that reflects "maximum respect, dignity, responsibility and objectivity" about adoption decisions made by birthparents and adoptive parents.[4] The goal of using and sharing both PAL/RAL, as the *Adoptive Families* magazine stated, is to "stop misconceptions" and help such terminology to "someday become

the norm."[5] Thus, Spencer, Johnston, and other proponents of PAL/RAL would argue that traditional adoption terminology was symbolically violent by attaching the labels "natural" and "real" to biological motherhood. This required new, common sense, and "emotionally correct" language that would validate and destigmatize adoptive families, mothers, and parenthood. PAL/RAL relates to the violence of love because adoption language emerged from the effort to promote a universally loving set of terminology.[6] However, has the introduction and standardization of this new language engendered other forms of violence?

I would argue, yes. The stigmatization of adoption as abnormal and less than produced a complex "battleground" and stakes to establish new meanings of realness, legitimacy, and normality for adoptive parents and their families.[7] This effort to both deflect negative attitudes toward and equalize the status of adoptive parent and motherhood by PAL/RAL ignored the history of structural violence and inequality (i.e. the racism, sexism, and imperialism in and by the United States) that has produced the "need" for adoption and positive adoption language in the first place. Additionally, such language misses any traumatic and symbolic violence that might be enacted by instituting PAL/RAL or claiming that transracial and transnational adoptions always have positive outcomes.

While there are at least a handful of first mother authors and organizations that have strongly critiqued PAL/RAL, it has surprisingly received very little scholarly attention beyond cursory references and that it is the preferred terminology.[8] Notable critics include Karen Wilson-Buterbaugh, who describes PAL/RAL as instruments in the for-profit adoption industry, and Jessica DelBalzo, who offers "honest adoption language" as both a compelling yet partially problematic alternative to PAL.[9] Although PAL/RAL's place in the larger society is less definite, the lack of critical attention and research beyond the few mentioned underscores the extent to which PAL/RAL have been ingrained and normalized in adoption practice by adoptive parents and adoption agencies. Language is an important site of inquiry because discourse helps determine meaning and what we know to be "true." By eliminating or creating terms or attaching new meaning to others, we try to change what is "truthful," which can produce deep and complicated ramifications.

Problematizing efforts to destigmatize and normalize adoption

Some of the language changes enabled by PAL/RAL have not been greatly challenged by critics, such as adoptive parents plainly stating that "this is my child" rather than saying "this is my adopted child" or "adopted son/daughter."[10] Eliminating the modifier "adopted" destigmatized and affirmed kinship through adoption by situating the child on the same level as biological children. Part of this destigmatization of adoption, however, involved problematic lexical changes. For example, PAL/RAL was not only intended to more accurately reflect the legal outcome of adoption, but also frame it as an ethical and responsible process. According to Spencer, phrases and terms such as "given away" and "abandoned" portrayed biological parents as callous and uncaring, while "given up," "relinquished," and "surrendered" implied that the child was torn out of their arms, which could also lead children to fantasize about improbable reunions. New language that included "making," "choosing," and "arranging" "adoption plans" was meant to construct the first mother as loving, thoughtful, and responsible. Spencer rebutted the claim that children can be removed from parents against their will by claiming, "When the court steps in to terminate parental rights without consent of the bioparents, the chances are that the latter filled the role inadequately or not at all."[11]

Johnston echoed this sentiment that all birth parents are "thoughtful and responsible people" with "authority and responsibility." RAL is about using emotionally-correct terms over emotionally-charged ones that, according to Johnston, inaccurately conjure babies being torn away from parents, which only happens in rare instances of child abuse or neglect.[12] The logic of PAL/RAL relied on the perspective that adoption is simple equation, where all parties win: birth parents are no longer forced or coerced to "surrender" their child but instead "choose" to make an informed and voluntary adoption "plan"; adoptive

parents now have a socially embraced way to create and/or expand a family and thus are simply the "parents," not "adoptive parents"; and adoptees benefit the most because they receive a caring and loving family, permanent home, and bright future.

Significantly, the rationale behind choosing "emotionally correct," "positive," and seemingly race-neutral terms ignored the dynamics of domestic transracial adoptions and transnational adoptions for which the issue of race was infused. This complicates the presumed universality of PAL/RAL. For example, the "thoughtful" and "responsible" language of PAL/RAL used to describe birth mothers' decision implied that all, regardless of color, were perceived and treated by society in this way. For Spencer and Johnston, first mothers never had to surrender or relinquish their child against their own will. Those who did experience this were partially or wholly "inadequate bioparents," deserving of state intervention to be separated from their child. This ignored the ways in which poor mothers and mothers of color in particular were forced to interact with heightened government surveillance, regulation, and punishment by virtue of their impoverished and/or racialized statuses and, thus, higher probabilities of being declared as an unfit mother or parent. Mothers of color, in particular, have been constructed as unfit parents and opposite of normative motherhood.[13] This racial ideology was especially concretized with the representations of "culture of poverty" and "welfare queen" in the 1960s by academics and politicians, such as Oscar Lewis and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, and perpetuated by the media.[14] These racialized, gendered, classed, and sexualized representations that continue today help explain why the specific identities, stigmas, and subjectivities of *first mothers of color* are unaddressed not only by this new language, but by the "solution" of adoption in general.

Similar to the domestic circumstance, Spencer's aversion to terms, such as "relinquished" and "surrendered," also ignored the race, gender, and class for the transnational context. While poverty and social stigma contributed to these adoptions, military intervention, devastation, and abandonment by the United States during the wars in Korea and Vietnam created impossible situations for birth mothers who were indeed forced to relinquish their child. Such "positive" and "respectful" language also glossed over the numerous cases in which birth parents never intended to fully relinquish parental rights but rather leave their child at an orphanage with the full intent of returning later. In these cases, and contemporary ones that include coercion and outright child trafficking in various sending countries, "surrender" and "planning" never occurred. Karen Wilson-Buterbaugh notes that psychological, emotional, systematic financial coercion and lack of information are indeed naturalized by RAL/RAL.[15] In the minds of the West, birth mothers outside of the United States are victims of poverty and/or cultural patriarchy, whose child will gain hope and freedom in the America. These first mothers, like mothers of color in the United States, are the "absent presence" in PAL/RAL because how does one "positively" and "respectfully" convey the effects of military imperialism, corruption, or adoptions that continued as a way to not only combat overpopulation but also develop political and trade relations with Western nations? While Spencer could not have predicted the continued predominance of such adoptions in the late 1970s, both Spencer and Johnston were promoting this language into the beginning of the twenty-first century at the peak of transnational adoption.

Linked to the legal outcome and ethical/responsible choice arguments was the desire to portray adoption as normative. The stigmatization that adoptive parents faced (and in many ways still deal with), along with the desire to be validated as normal, however, required a double move of first removing the "adoptive" descriptor from adoptive parent. Using the "adoptive parent" label outside of adoption-specific contexts permanently and unfairly labeled the parents by the process by which they acquired a child, which questioned the authenticity of such family ties and highlighted their difference and "abnormality."[16] Second, prior to the institutionalization of PAL/RAL, the biological mother was referred to as the natural, first, or real mother by agencies, the court, and society at large. Spencer, Johnston, and other supporters of adoption felt that these terms in particular worked to delegitimize adoptive families

and parenthood. Instead, they encouraged using more "correct" terms such as birth mother, mother of birth, and biological parent.

Terms, such as "first," "natural," and "real parent," used to describe birth parents were "emotionally charged" and threatened the legitimacy of both the adoptee and adoptive parents because they did not reflect the *legal* outcome of adoption, which severed rights; legal and moral responsibilities; and ties of the birth parents from the child. PAL/RAL proponents suggest that "first mother" is only applicable if the "birth-giving mother or biological father did some parenting," as in the case of an older child who is adopted. Additionally, terms "natural" and "real" parent to refer to the biological parents implied that adoptive relationships were "artificial and tentative" and that adoptive families were inferior or "second-best."[17] Thus, PAL/RAL destigmatized and normalized adoption and adoptive parents, yet it did so over and against first parents by 1) "denaturalizing" them, or as Wilson-Buterbaugh termed "creating ex-mothers," and 2) attempting to erase not only the legal and social ties, but also any biological, physical, and emotional connections between first parents and their children, which is what many scholars have called the "clean break" in adoption.[18] Many first mothers and adoption critics have argued that "birth mother" has, in fact, reduced first mothers to "breeders," and that many mothers have experienced the assignment of the "birth mother" label even before the adoption is finalized, during the pre-adoptive process.

Spencer also opposed the use of the term "reunion" to describe cases when adoptees both seek and see their biological parents or family. Spencer argued that the term delegitimized the legal status of adoption and implied that the adoption is (or could be) dissolved, even though the adoptee does not rejoin the biological family. The celebrated status of reunions, along with the search and open records movements in general, has also positioned adoptive mothers as deficient and even harmful to the well being of adoptees.[19] Again, PAL/RAL perceive "reunion" as emotionally charged and usually inaccurate because most adoptees have only a minor curiosity to know about their ancestry, past, or medical history. This was to be replaced by more precise phrases, such as "making contact with," "meeting with," or "getting in touch with."[20] Johnston is in full agreement, suggesting that only older children might experience a reunion, while most adoptees who were adopted as infants lack common memories or experiences that compose of traditional reunions.[21] Indeed, these terms barely acknowledge a DNA connection, let alone any indication of familial relationship between the adoptees and their birth parents, which diminishes actual desires of many adoptees who want to know more or reconnect with their past.

The denaturalization of the first mother and the adoptee's past can be related to what Jacque Derrida calls the "trace." By discarding "natural" and assigning the term "birth" in its place, PAL/RAL attempted to fix meaning so that the term "birth mother" referred to the undertaking of birth and little else, severing any imagined or actual future emotional and familial ties. The corollary, in claiming the title "parent," adoptive parents became the unmarked norm, displacing birth parents as the *only* signifier of "real" parents. PAL/RAL ultimately reiterated heterosexual, nuclear, and patriarchal norms of having only one set of parents. Anything outside of this narrow definition of family could not constitute a legitimate and normative family. Despite the effort to hide, obscure, and even erase birth parents as parents/family, they are what scholars call an "absent presence" (thus the symbolic "trace"). They still exist and are present but just absent and unacknowledged or rejected. Or as others scholars have said, they are the ghosts that haunt adoption.

For Spencer, more precise vocabulary served the interest of those who are involved with and a part of adoption. Ironically, she claimed that adoption was "an essentially simple and orderly human transaction" that "should not be confused or made more complex by the use of imprecise language." She ended by reaffirming that love was embedded in the creation of a family through adoption and in her effort to transform adoption terminology: "After all, the language of adoption is loving communication among members of a family created by social contract, sustained by their life together, and supported by an

informed society that validates the integrity of the family."[22] Despite the explicit reference to love and "positivity," PAL and RAL were both *effects* of power deployed by social workers, adoption professionals, and adoptive parents (rather than birth parents) and *instruments* of power that have been used to violently define motherhood and family, which have significantly shaped adoption discourse and practice. The new language guidelines are fairly standard now for agencies, and tables delineating positive/respectful language versus negative and old language can be found across the Internet in ways that still ignore the complexity of the adoption institution that is affected by race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and capital.

By examining PAL's emergence in the late 1970s and early 1980s (and its contemporary form in RAL), we can better begin to see the ways in which the loving effort to change adoption terminology and destigmatize adoption by narrowing the meaning of mother, parent, and family had considerable and symbolically violent repercussions for first mothers (and families), especially for those who were poor, nonwhite, and not categorized as "responsible choice-makers." In this way, PAL/RAL revealed how adoptive mothers, white birth mothers, and birth mothers of color were stigmatized in relation to each other yet in different ways as racial, classed, and gendered subjects. While (white) *adoptive* mothers could be recuperated within heteropatriarchal ideals of motherhood by adopting a child and becoming a nuclear family, *white birth mothers* could only be redeemed through making the "positive choice" of adoption and being severed (legally and symbolically through PAL/RAL) from "real" and "natural" motherhood. Lastly, birth mothers of color were invisible subjects in terms of PAL/RAL. Neither adoption nor PAL/RAL addressed their identities, stigmas, or subjectivities because, as "illegitimate" mothers, they exist outside of the idealized concept of the universal woman. In attempting to positively define and sanitize the process of adoption, PAL/RAL hid existing and produced new forms of violence. Moreover, the universalism that is applied to PAL/RAL rehearsed the western feminist refrain of liberating white middle class women (and families) from the stigma of society. But in defining motherhood so narrowly, the "universal" terms it offered dismissed biological ties and disregarded the inequalities endured by poor and nonwhite birth mothers and families.

Conclusion

My point is not to "restigmatize" adoptive relations in favor of biological ones. While we should always support keeping families together through radical structural adjustments, familial bonds that transcend the (hetero)biological have deeply important affective, political, and social value. Rather than privileging one form of family-making over the other, my hope is that we examine how we can engage the violence that produces and emerges from both. This piece argues that the terminology that emerged from adoption language came at the cost of the first parents and first families, who became the absent presence of normalized (adoptive) motherhood and family. In his piece on "Adoption Language," Daniel Lee Kearns, a Korean American adoptee, suggests that life is not as simple as a set of positive adoption terms because it has the potential to invalidate adoptees' (and first parents') history.[23] Thus, for the same reason that we should not completely negate PAL/RAL, Kearns offers why adoptees' lives should be put into historical context rather than bound by wholly "positive" terms. Thus, there are many instances when the judicious use of "honest adoption language" (e.g. surrendered, relinquished, reunion) is more than appropriate. Kearns contends that respect and dignity can only be conveyed when pain, conflict, and complexity are addressed.[24]

PAL/RAL has reproduced precisely the norms of gender, race, class, and family that adoption inherently disrupted. Hence, the question we must ask is how might adoptive parents and adoptees articulate and practice non-heteronormative family-making? As adoption scholars have noted, adoptees in the United States have focused on gaining access to their birth records and domestic adoptions have become increasingly more "open."[25] The majority of openness, however, occurs via "low intensity contact" or non-face-to-face visits, such as exchange of cards, letters, pictures, gifts, e-mails, and phone calls.[26] Although both of these strategies have yielded material and symbolic results, giving adoptees access to

their pasts and connections to their birth families, they oftentimes leave unchallenged the structure and representation of adoption. Furthermore, they have less relevance for the transnational adoption context in which open adoptions, unlike U.S. domestic cases, are extremely difficult because of physical distance, language, and class barriers. Indeed, transnational adoptions are too often chosen specifically as a mechanism to avoid such a relationship with the birth family in the first place.[27] Some adoptive parents have moved to employing "birth culture" as a replacement for "birth families," who are rarely mentioned in common "cultural" activities.[28]

Micky Duxbury notes, however, that adoptive parents who are involved in "high intensity" open adoptions understand that they cannot solve the violence of adoption and make the pain disappear. Rather, the goal of open adoptions is to enhance the child's sense of self, provide a birth right, and empower adoptees.[29] Fully open adoptions involve taking risks, as well as sharing an uncertain and previously unimagined future that has the potential to engender expanded family connections. It is here that adoptive parents and adoptees could also look to the late José Esteban Muñoz's concept of "disidentification" as a way to (dis)engage adoption discourse that brackets the (hetero)normative adoptive family. Muñoz defines disidentification as that which is between the "identification" practiced by the "Good Subject" and "counteridentification" that is taken on by the "Bad Subject":

> Disidentification is the third mode of dealing with dominant ideology, one that neither opts to assimilate within such a structure nor strictly opposes it; rather, disidentification is a strategy that works on and against dominant ideology. Instead of buckling under the pressures of dominant ideology (identification, assimilation) or attempting to break free of its inescapable sphere (counteridentification, utopianism), this 'working on and against' is a strategy that tries to transform a cultural logic from within, always laboring to enact permanent structural change while at the same time valuing the importance of local or everyday struggles of resistance.[30]

Following Muñoz's call might allow adoptive parents and adoptees to develop alternative "disidentificatory desires"[31] away from normative ideas of family and instead toward embracing open adoptions that have complex and fragmented family structures with multiple parental figures. My intent here is not to define which terms are best for either set of parents because they should have the power to define their own identities. Instead, what I want to offer is that it could be generative to keep the descriptors birth/first and adoptive. To be sure, many adoptive parents/families attempt to reject the label adoptive in order to be normal or better than normal (biological) as demonstrated by the saying "love is thicker than blood." At the same time, "birth" parent/family is seen as a derogatory term meant to reduce birth mothers to breeders. Yet, embracing "adoptive" and "birth" (or "first") we could—similar to black, brown, and queer communities—re-imbue them with new meaning that *intensifies alternative familial relationships* rather than re-stigmatize them through our own rejection of the terms. Adoptive and birth families do not have to be mutually exclusive and oppositional entities. If reclaimed, "birth" and "adoptive" can mean more than what they mean now. I read them as extremely political terms that have the potential to carry valuable historical context and emotional weight.

I am not suggesting that adoptees call their adoptive parents and birth parents by these terms. During interactions, it is more than appropriate to use "mother" for either adoptive or first mother. What I am suggesting is that we reject temptations to fit the "norm" or "naturalize" one set of parents over the other, especially when *talking* about our families and identities. Adoptive ties are special because shared physical experiences, emotional feelings, and spiritual connections transcend the biological. Biological ties are also very important because they are not only about sharing DNA, but also about the physical, emotional, and spiritual connection from the early days, months, or years together that can carry into the present and future. Additionally, a recent study showed that a mother and child literally exchange cells during the gestation process that stay in the body for decades, which in my case, makes my first mom's

presence in my life even more real.[32] For me, both of my sets of parents are very real, and neither should be de-naturalized. While working to change adoption practices, we can consider and value the unique and important aspects of non-normative adoptive and birth families and embrace this non-normativity, as well as its even larger potential with open adoptions.

[1] Kit Myers, "Rethinking "Positive" Adoption Language and Reclaiming Stigmatized Identities," *Gazillion Voices*. January 2014. Web. http://gazillionvoices.com/rethinking-positive-adoption-language-and-reclaiming-stigmatized-identities/#.VbQR2vnQhnk.

[2] Of course many birth parents, being "non-normative," are often placed into their position precisely because of a similar judgment by family, society, and the government.

[3] Marietta Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," *Child Welfare* 58.7 (1979): 451.

[4] Patricia Irwin Johnston, "Speaking Positively," last accessed December 13, 2013, http://abrazo.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Speaking-Positively.pdf.

[5] "Positive Adoption Language," *Adoptive Families*, June 1992, last accessed December 10, 2013, http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/pdf/PositiveLanguage.pdf.

[6] Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," 459.

[7] Ellen Herman, *Kinship by Design* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2008) 17 and Suter et al., "Adoptive Parents' Framing of Laypersons' Conception of Family," *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication* 12.1 (2011): 43-50.

[8] There are many popular web sites that critique PAL/RAL such as http://www.birthmothers.info/headlines/adoption_language.html; http://adoptioncritic.com/2009/07/11/birthmothers-as-incubators/; and http://www.firstmotherforum.com/p/positive-adoption-language.html. A search of academic databases for "positive adoption language" and "respectful adoption language" produced no journal article results.

[9] Honest adoption language includes terms such as relinquished or lost (rather than plan); reunion (instead of made contact); natural mother (rather than birthmother); and caretaker (instead of parent or adoptive parent). Jessica DelBalzo, *Unlearning Adoption* (Book Surge, LCC, 2007): 10-12. Karen Wilson Buterbaugh's (2013) independent working research paper entitled "Whitewashing Adoption: A Critique of 'Respectful Adoption Language'" is the most extensive scholarly piece on adoption language that I have found. Accessed December 7, 2013, http://ssrn.com/abstract=2195774.

[10] Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," 453.

[11] Ibid., 454.

[12] Johnston, "Speaking Positively."

[13] Instead, nonwhite female bodies have been used for the reproduction of slaves, as domestic house servants and nannies, test subjects of birth control, and most recently as transnational commercial surrogates. See Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body* (Vintage Books, 1997).

[1414] See Oscar Lewis, *La Vida: a Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty*, (Random House, 1966) and Daniel Moynihan, "The Negro Family," 1965.

[15] Wilson-Buterbaugh, "Whitewashing Adoption," 8-16.

[16] Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," 458.

[17] Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," 456-7 and Johnston, "Speaking Positively."

[18] Wilson-Buterbaugh, "Whitewashing Adoption," 5.

[19] Katarina Wegar, "In Search of Bad Mothers," 82.

[20] Spencer, "The Terminology of Adoption," 455.

[21] Johnston, "Speaking Positively."

[22] Ibid., 459.

[23] Daniel Lee Kearns, "Adoption Language," 4, accessed December 11, 2013, http://www.iaccenter.com/adoption_language.pdf.

[24] Ibid.

[25] E. Wayne Carp, *Family Matters* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2000) and Adam Pertman, *Adoption Nation* (Basic Books, 2000).

[26] Grotevant et al., "Many Faces of Openness in Adoption," *Adoption Quarterly* 10.3/4 (2008): 81 and 85.

[27] Ibid., 144.

[28] See Kit Myers, *Race and the Violence of Love*, Dissertation (Univ. of Calif., San Diego, 2013) chapter 4.

[29] Micky Duxbury, *Making Room in Our Hearts* (Routledge, 2006): 8.

[30] Jose Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications* (Univ. of Minn. Press, 1999): 13.

[31] Ibid., 34.

[32] Robert Martone, "Scientists Discover Children's Cells Living in Mother's Brains," *Scientific American*, December 4, 2012, accessed December 14, 2013, http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=scientists-discover-childrens-cells-living-in-mothers-brain.