

Delve Deeper into "First Person Plural"

by Deann Borshay Liem

ADULT FICTION

There is a rich history of literature addressing the challenges of adoptive and interracial families; recent entries include:

Denker, Henry. *Payment in Full*. New York: W. W. Morrow, c. 1991.

Dorris, Michael A. *Cloud Chamber*. Thorndike, ME: Thorndike Press, 1997.

Fenkl, Heinz Insu. *Memories of My Ghost Brother*. New York: Dutton, c. 1996.

Garrotto, Alfred J. *Finding Isabella*. Columbus, MI: Genesis Press, 2000.

Kornheiser, Tony. *The Baby Chase*. New York: Atheneum, 1983.

Sanders, Dori. *Clover*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1990.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Gardens in the Dunes*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1999.

JUVENILE FICTION

Adoptive, interracial, and other nontraditional families have also inspired dozens of stories for children and youth. Younger readers should enjoy Kline's Song Lee series and the Adler, Girard, and Pellegrini stories; teens will find Johnson's novel and the fine short stories in Carlson's collection engrossing.

Adler, C. S. *Youn Hee and Me*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, c. 1995.

Carlson, Lori M. *American Eyes: New Asian-American Short Stories for Young Adults*. New York: Fawcett Juniper, c. 1994.

Girard, Linda Walvoord. *We Adopted You*, Benjamin Koo. Niles, IL: A. Whitman, c. 1989.

Johnson, Angela. *Heaven*. Thorndike, ME: Thorndike Press, 2000.

Kline, Suzy. *Song Lee in Room 2B*. New York: Viking, c. 1993. (Part of a series)

Pellegrini, Nina. *Families Are Different*. New York: Holiday House, c. 1991.

ADULT NONFICTION

The following four books provide helpful information on domestic and international adoption, while Simon's book presents a longitudinal study of transracial adoptions:

Alperson, Myra. *The International Adoption Handbook*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1997.

Nydam, Ronald J. *Adoptees Come of Age: Living with Two Families*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1999.

Pavao, Joyce Maguire. *The Family of Adoption*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1998.

Rosenberg, Elinor. *The Adoption Life Cycle: The Children and Their Families Through the Years*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

Simon, Rita. *Transracial Adoptees and Their Families*. New York: Praeger, 1987.

These books illuminate the history, joys, and special challenges faced by adoptive, nontraditional, multiracial, and multicultural families; these titles include personal memoirs, case studies, and academic analyses.

Campbell, Carolyn. *Together Again: True Stories of Birth Parents and Adopted Children Reunited*. New York: Berkley Books, 1999.

Coontz, Stephanie, ed. *American Families: A Multicultural Reader*. Routledge, 1998.

Kim, Elaine H. and Eni-Young Yu, eds. *East to America: Korean American Life Stories*. New York: New Press, c. 1996.

Kim, Elizabeth. *Ten Thousand Sorrows*. New York: Doubleday, 2000.

Lamb, Michael E., ed. *Parenting and Child Development in "Nontraditional" Families*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999.

Lee, Helie. *Still Life with Rice: A Young American Woman Discovers the Life and Legacy of Her Korean Grandmother*. New York: Scribner, c. 1996.

McBride, James. *The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*. New York: Riverhead Books, c. 1996.

JUVENILE NONFICTION

This list includes the personal stories of domestic and international adoptees and their families, as well as helpful information on adoption in general, and Takaki's history of Koreans in America.

Gravelle, Karen and Fischer, Susan. *Where Are My Birth Parents? A Guide for Teenage Adoptees*. New York: Walker and Co., 1993.

Harnack, Andrew, ed. *Adoption: Opposing Viewpoints*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 1995.

Koh, Frances M. *Adopted from Asia*. Minneapolis: EastWest Press, c. 1993.

Pohl, Constance and Harris, Kathy. *Transracial Adoption*. New York: F. Watts, c. 1992.

Rogers, Fred. *Adoption*. New York: Putnam, c. 1994.

Rosenberg, Maxine. *Growing Up Adopted*. New York: Bradbury Press, c. 1989.

Sobol, Harriet Langsam. *We Don't Look Like Our Mom and Dad*. New York: Coward-McCann, c. 1984.

Takaki, Ronald. *From the Land of Morning Calm: The Koreans in America*. Adapted by Rebecca Steffoff. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1994.

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WEB SITES

The scores of adoption-related web sites include many sponsored by agencies, attorneys, and other service providers offering assistance to families who would like to adopt. Valuable general-interest sites include those sponsored by the federal government's National Adoption Information Clearinghouse (www.calib.com/naic); the National Council for Adoption (www.ncfa-usa.org); Pact, An Adoption Alliance (www.pactadopt.org); and AdoptioNetwork, a volunteer-operated information resource (<http://www.adoption.org/>).

Major portals (e.g., Lycos and about.com) have interesting adoption sites, and AOL offers a "Readers' Guide to Adoption-Related Literature" at <http://members.aol.com/billgage/lit-list.htm>. Consider also www.rainbowkids.com, a volunteer-operated international adoption publication, and the Korean American Adoptee, Adoptive Family Network site (www.kaanet.com).

DOCUMENTARY VIDEOS

Films offering insight into some of the complexities related to adoption include: "Secret Daughter," which documents a biracial woman's reunion with her white mother; and "Baby Business" and "Struggle for Identity," which present less personal assessments of the adequacy of the adoption "system" and issues raised by transracial adoption.

"Baby Business." By Judy Jackson. A co-production of the National Film Board of Canada and Les Productions du Rapide-Blanc, in association with TV Ontario. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, c. 1995. (60 min.)

"Secret Daughter." Produced and reported by June Cross. Boston: WGBH Educational Foundation, c. 1996. Broadcast on "Frontline" 11/26/96. Distributed by PBS Video, Alexandria, VA. (117 min.)

"Struggle for Identity: Issues in Transracial Adoption." A presentation of the New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children. Ithaca, NY: PhotoSynthesis Productions, c. 1998. (20 min.)

DRAMATIC VIDEOS FOR ADULTS

These theatrical and TV films sensitively tackle the issues raised between a white adoptive mother and a black birth mother, a young American adoptee's search for her Vietnamese birth mother, and the reunion of a successful Anglo-African woman with the working class white "mum" who gave her up for adoption, respectively:

"Losing Isaiah." Directed by Stephen Gyllenhaal. Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures, c. 1995. (108 min.) (See also Margolis, Seth. *Losing Isaiah*. New York: Hyperion, c. 1993.)

"Redwood Curtain." Based on the play by Lanford Wilson. Directed by John Korty. A Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation. Los Angeles: Republic Films, 1995. (100 min.)

"Secrets and Lies." Written and directed by Mike Leigh. A CIBY 2000/Thin Man Production. Beverly Hills, CA: CBS Fox Video/Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 1997. (142 min.)

DRAMATIC VIDEOS FOR CHILDREN

Adoption, like team sports, raises questions of "belonging." These short films use sports to dramatize how kids feel about adoption:

"American Eyes: Racial Prejudice and Self Esteem." Cynthia A. Cherbak Productions. A CBS Schoolbreak Special. San Diego: The Media Guild, 1991. (30 min.)

"Me, Mop, and the Moondance Kid." Illustrated by Rodney Pate. Washington, DC: PBS Home Video, c. 1994. (15 min.) (See also Myers, Walter Dean. *Mop, Moondance, and the Nagasaki Knights*. New York: Delacorte Press, c. 1992.)

"First Person Plural"

In 1966, filmmaker Deann Borshay Liem was adopted by an American family and was sent from Korea to her new home. Growing up in California, the memory of her birth family was nearly obliterated until recurring dreams lead Borshay Liem to discover the truth: her Korean mother was very much alive. Bravely uniting her biological and adoptive families, Borshay Liem's heartfelt journey makes this **P.O.V.** program a poignant essay on family, loss, and the reconciling of 2 identities.

National **PBS** television premiere on **Monday, December 18, 2000 at 10pm ET** (check local listings) on **P.O.V.**

To order additional copies of "Delve Deeper into First Person Plural" contact:

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