

Department of English Speaker Series



Invitation | "South African Adoption Narratives: Maps and Memoirs"

Date: Thursday, 5 March 2020
Time: 13:00 – 14:30
Venue: Equitas Senate Hall

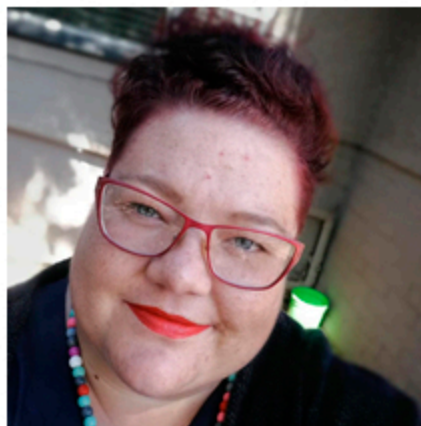
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Abstract: Adoptive families in South Africa, especially families formed through interracial adoption, are burdened by beliefs and practices instituted during the apartheid regime, and are faced with rejection, misconceptions, and ignorance regarding the act of adoption, interracial adoption, and beliefs pertaining to culture and identity. This paper aims to shed light on recently published South African adoption narratives, particularly "Killing Karoline" by Sara-Jayne King, saliently addressing issues of identity, social bias, as well as the white saviour narrative. Further, the paper will explain the concept of the adoption memoir as a map, both semantic and cognitive-affective, and how this could aid those involved in the adoption triad to navigate their adoption experiences in light of these obstacles. The paper will provide a short overview of interracial adoption and its challenges, and will then use "Killing Karoline" as a basis for explaining the different maps employed in and created by adoption narratives.

Finally, the paper will discuss the potentially far-reaching effects of the representation of those in the adoption triad in adoption narratives, and the implications for the South African adoption community.



Bionote: Hanta Henning teaches in the Department of English at the University of the Free State. She is currently pursuing her PhD with her dissertation titled "Interracial Adoption Narratives in South Africa: Adoptive Parents' Search for Belonging", and has presented on this topic at various local conferences. Her research aims to investigate the representation of members of the adoption triad in South African adoption narratives, such as "Fiela's Child" and "Killing Karoline". She is further passionate about poetry, with her poems published on Litnet, and a forthcoming publication in the Stanzas journal.