

14.**Making “American” Families:
Transnational Adoption and U.S. Latin America Policy****Laura Briggs**

During the NBC coverage of the Summer 2000 Olympics, a major market for TV advertisers to tell sentimental stories of liberal internationalism, two separate corporate sponsors showed ads telling stories of Asian children being adopted by U.S. families. Retailer J.C. Penny interpellated the “Asian baby” story into a familiar narrative, in which a composed woman tells her frantic husband, “it’s time.” The ad gestures toward a genre of late-night labor-and-delivery stories; the husband rushes around ineffectually, while competent women personifying “J.C. Penny” put up cribs and assemble other baby paraphernalia. The punch line, a final shot of a Chinese girl toddler, is meant to surprise, and effectively completes the tale of how young heterosexual couples make a “new” American¹ family. The second ad, by the insurance company giant John Hancock, tells another liberal story of the “new” American family, but this one was controversial because the parents it portrayed were lesbians. It was first aired during the pre-Olympic gymnastic trials, and then became the site of a struggle

between the Christian Right and gay and gay-friendly activists. While right-wing groups urged boycotts, the email that circulated on left and liberal listservs urged recipients to contact Hancock over their “courageous” ad, and described the ad this way: it “shows 2 women at the airport where they are just bringing home their newly adopted Asian baby. They are so loving and it is so sweet you can’t help but cry. They congratulate each other on what great moms they’ll be, etc.” Hancock compromised; they showed it once during the Olympics. This paradoxical conjuncture—of a lesbian, cross-racial baby story that the conservative right hates, sponsored by a Fortune 500 global corporation—begs for analysis, mapping as it does startlingly contrasting narratives of what constitutes a “real” American family.

In an incisive article, “Why Daughters Die,” Nancy Armstrong argues that from the earliest moments of U.S. nation-making, there have been two textual traditions for understanding family: one, a sentimental tradition of racial purity, in which daughters in particular bear the burden of carrying forward a “pure” culture in the form of a “pure” (racial) body embedded in a heterosexual nuclear family. This daughter is always endangered, and the strength of Armstrong’s account is that it notices the way the imperial problem of “going native” (cultural impurity), the national problem of “miscegenation” (racial impurity), and the gender problem of female-headed households are collapsed, symbolically and materially, into the problem of the reproduction of the pure (English) family. She argues that

beginning with seventeenth century captivity narratives—stories about white women being kidnapped by Native Americans—we in the region that became the United States have been working out this problem of “pure” races, families, and nations through the textual problem of the “pure” daughter, counterpoised against a potentially more liberatory possibility of non-nuclear, racially heterogeneous families.²

There is much to be said for Armstrong’s account. It pulls together the reviled families of the Moynihan Report (in which Black men’s under-employment was blamed on their emasculating mothers, the “Black matriarchs”), the fictional single motherhood of TV character Murphy Brown, and all those whom demographers continue to point out are the majority—non-nuclear, not white, immigrant, or other, not necessarily “pure” American families. Further, it confirms our common sense about transracial and transnational family-making, that because it does not look like a white, suburban, heterosexually produced nuclear family ideal, it is an intrinsically radical cultural practice. But what of the “Chinese” girl toddler in the J.C. Penny ad? What cultural weight is she being made to carry? What does it mean to say that this is a new “American” family? I want to suggest that the narrative tradition Armstrong identifies is undergoing revision in ways related to how the historical “other”-ness of racial minorities inside the United States, and “foreign” elites elsewhere is also being re-written. International adoption, cathected through a sentimental liberal internationalism

and an increasingly emphatic demand that citizens be parents has made some transnational and transracially composed families “pure,” or at least pure enough. Free trade and globalization have produced a growing internationalization of the middle and elite classes in the United States (as elsewhere), a changing complexion of wealth that has made it possible to imagine raising dark-skinned children in white families. . . At the same time, in ways I will discuss later, there is another narrative of domesticity emerging, one that centers hybridity, difference, and the violence of the processes through which children come to be adopted. These two positions—of imagining that internationally adopted children can become the inheritors of their adoptive parents’ national culture, on the one hand, and of understanding them as exilic, diasporic refugees whose inheritance is necessarily plural and ambivalent—have, I will argue, replaced this older set of dualisms: pure/impure, white/racially mixed, and heteronormative/not heteronormative. To show what I mean here, let me turn to intercountry adoption narratives, specifically with reference to Latin America. Transnational adoption is a surprisingly literary affair, as adoptive parents, in particular (but also their children) struggle to make this unusual event make sense by narrativizing it. One strain of such narratives, I would suggest, manages the potential contradictions of these stories in the same way that Armstrong’s captivity narratives organized the meanings of racial and national domination: through the sentimental, by invoking endangered children and desperate (adoptive) parents. For example, one of the

best-known and most influential accounts of international adoption in recent years is a book called *Family Bonds*, by Harvard law professor Elizabeth Bartholet. In it, she tells the story of how she left for Lima, Peru in the Fall of 1985 to adopt the first of two Peruvian infants she would raise, and simultaneously launched a career as a policy analyst on matters of adoption, family, and race whose positions on adoption put her regularly in the company of the neo-conservative American Enterprise Institute. Her subsequent authority as a participant in policy-making that would make it easier for white families to raise Black and brown children (and provide them massive tax breaks, upward of \$9,000)—and for these children’s birthparents to lose them, some would say, even if their only crime was being poor or not-white—was not yet evident in her story of this and a subsequent trip to Peru. She wrote that she worried about whether her clothes were appropriate; she struggled to prove herself competent as a potential parent to lawyers and officials, and was terribly frightened that she would lose “her” children to a legal system she did not understand, communicating in a language she does not speak. She wrote, “I am now engaged in what will be an eight-week process of legalizing our bond, our connection. This process of making him ‘my child’ as a matter of law will be an agonizing one, in large part because of the threat that this person who already feels like part of me will be taken from me.”³ She tells a vulnerable and moving narrative, and returns to argue (uphill, she

would say) for the legitimacy of her family-by-adoption in the face of overwhelming bias for biological bonds.

Yet there is something off about this narrative, something too quick about the scare quotes that designate the legal work of making him “my child” essentially superfluous to the emotional bond that has already, after ten days, made him “part of me.” The child whom she calls Michael has birth parents, though she never refers to them; the legal process, as Bartholet well knows, is at least theoretically intended to ensure that their rights are respected, and to provide a forum for any grievance or objection they might raise. And despite Bartholet’s sense of vulnerability, her status as a Harvard law professor, and a United States citizen in Latin America at the height of U.S. Cold War preoccupation with the region, defines power relations between her and the birth parents that are uneven in a much different direction than the one she maps. In the opening pages of the book, she tells the story of her vulnerability with reference to a night in which she fearfully carried “her” two-week old child down thirteen flights of stairs in the dark, with far too much cash in her pocket to feel safe from thieves, with the electricity out as a result of a bombing near her apartment by the Maoist guerilla group, *sendero luminoso*, the Shining Path.⁴ Without minimizing the real fear that *sendero luminoso* has inspired in Peru, it is possible to notice that invoking Latin American Marxists imperiling U.S. mothers and children is hardly an original trope—it reads, rather, as an effort to incorporate brown children born in Peru into

a familiar account about endangered Americans. And indeed, this sets up the narrative structure of the book (as it opens onto policy pronouncements): Peruvian children are innocent, vulnerable, sick, crying; Peruvian adults are threatening, corrupt, takers-of-bribes, thieves, or terrorists. In the one passage where Bartholet does acknowledge the existence of birth mothers, some are portrayed as “having no good choices,” while others take pleasure in their decision to send their child to the “land of opportunity.” Yet even this marginally sympathetic characterization of birth mothers is cut short—managing one clause of one sentence in a 276-page book—and immediately contrasted with young children in Peruvian foster care, crying alone after being knocked down on a playground, with “birth parents who may never visit and have no apparent ability to function as parents,” and the grief of a would-be adoptive parent whose child was taken away a few days later, ostensibly because the birth parent wanted her back, but probably, Bartholet thinks (with no evidence) because some Peruvian official was not given a bribe.⁵ As feminist scholar Rickie Solinger points out, “Americans who have portrayed ICA [inter-country adoption] as primarily a child rescue mission have tended to define the situation in ways that insist that the biological mother doesn’t really count,” citing Bartholet as a key example.⁶ One might add that adoptive parents are portrayed as vulnerable, endangered, and fearful, while birth parents are portrayed as cold, indifferent, or (at best) happily sending their children off to a land where they will have more material benefits.

None of this is even particularly new. As Ann Stoler in particular has continued to remind us, raising the "orphans" of colonized people is a very familiar practice. From nineteenth century French orphanages in Indochina to early twentieth century U.S. children's homes in Puerto Rico in the opening years of the twentieth, managing orphans and raising youth to belong to a culture different from that of their ancestors has a history. Indeed, the white settler colonies of the British Empire—the United States, Canada, Australia—made acculturating Native children in boarding schools as indispensable a part of their policies toward indigenous people as war and reservations, beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing through the 1970s. By providing them with industrial education, teaching them how to farm, or clean other people's homes as domestic laborers, such policies sought to bring civilization to indigenous people. In all three nations, too, the decline of boarding schools was accompanied by a growing practice of adoption of Native children by white families. These practices created the conditions of possibility for transnational adoption, and begin to make Bartholet's and Hancock's representational practices less mystifying. Governments in these settler-states as well as missionaries long believed that it was possible to bring colonized people into the fold, make them part of colonial society—although always with a difference. Almost the same, but not quite, in Homi Bhabha's formulation.

Bartholet's invocation of *sendero luminoso* suggests a something of how invoking threats and danger serves to obfuscate and indeed reverse the actual power relations at work in transnational adoption..An analysis of this rhetoric offers a way of framing the ways transnational adoption is invested with colonial legacies and can be allied with U.S. state power and other kinds of violence. International adoption from Latin America to the United States became more than an occasional practice beginning in the 1980s, at the same moment that the Reagan administration made of Latin America a proving ground that Cold War anticommunist military interventionism was not over. In response to what its conservative critics called the "Vietnam syndrome"—the left and liberal call for the U.S. to abandon its imperial military role overseas—the Reagan administration instead pursued an aggressive policy of intervention in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and elsewhere in Latin America, even illegally continuing support for the *contras*' war against the elected government of Nicaragua in the face of an outright ban on such activities by Congress.⁷ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, U.S. military interventionism intensified in Latin America and Asia, promoting U.S. strategic and economic interests under the name of anti-terrorism and a war on drugs. This aggressive U.S. internationalism continued under the leadership of conservative Democrats like Clinton, who maintained the U.S. military role but also more explicitly began promoting economic interests through free trade agreements (embodied in treaties like NAFTA), neo-liberalism, and the

backing of what came to be called “globalization.” State policies related to free trade turned U.S. citizen-consumers into participants in this kind of globalization, which in turn shored up consent for interventionism abroad. International adoption was a good fit with the broad thrust of these policies, producing and relying on a renewed sense of American responsibility for those outside its borders and an easing of the movement of money and (some) people.

Bartholet's two ideological moves engage, with the discounting of birth parents and identifying the children politically with the interests of the United States. These are at the heart of how they become part of an “American” family. In an intriguingly pro-“nurture” move in this genetic age, writers, parents, and policy-makers like Bartholet systematically erase all but the most innocuous traces of the child's origins. These children become American in a very old sense: their biographies begin the day they come to the United States. Whether this forcible de-historicizing works is of course another question; the prevalence of the “search for lost origins” stories among adoptees suggests something of its failures.⁸ Indeed, there is plenty of evidence that trying to imagine internationally adopted children as the inheritors of their adoptive parents' culture and privilege is deeply problematic in a society stratified by race and national origin.⁹ The failures of these erasures may constitute them as intrinsically unstable. It does not make them any the less powerful. It may rather go a long way toward explaining

how Bartholet became a crusader against family reunification efforts in foster care policy, and a passionate advocate for adoption as a solution to poverty.¹⁰

In Latin America, in contrast, no negative characterizations of intercountry adoption would sound surprising or excessive. International adoption with the United States has often been characterized as an extension of U.S. economic and military power, and is frequently contextualized in a way that would be incomprehensible to most U.S. Americans—in relation to child kidnapping, prostitution, murder, and organ-theft. In 2002, for example, Juan Díaz González, a commissioner of the Mexico City Legislative Assembly, proposed a reform of police procedures to address child disappearances, saying “This is a very serious problem because beyond the [child] theft, we are also dealing with issues related to the child pornography network, the trafficking of organs and the sale of children into illegal adoptions,” Díaz González told the newspaper *Reforma*.¹¹ He warned readers and officials that 20,000 children disappear each year from Mexico City. Although his numbers may be hard to verify, Díaz González’s statements entered a familiar and extensive public discourse throughout Latin America about child kidnapping, illegal adoption, sexual exploitation, and a traffic in children’s organs. As anthropologist Nancy Shepper-Hughes as argued, the rumor of a grisly international traffic in the body parts of children who have been kidnapped, killed, and mutilated has been called an “urban legend” and vigorously refuted by the U.S. State Department, but official denunciations have

only carried the tale further, and a story that began in the shantytowns of Latin America and Asia is now discussed seriously in official circles, including the Mexican legislature.¹² It stands in sharp contrast to much of the literature for potential intercountry adopters in the United States, which describes orphanages full of unwanted children, and invites American families to imagine making space in their home and hearts for an unloved, racially and culturally different child with little or no future in their home country—adapting the classic U.S. sentimental narrative of what “we” do abroad.¹³

This disjuncture, between Latin American ideologies of U.S. exploitation and a U.S. belief in our capacity to rescue “them,” is both a set of competing stories about what happens to actual children and, implicitly, an allegory for all of U.S. foreign policy. Díaz González’s account and Elizabeth Bartholet’s are perfect, mirror opposites. Bartholet’s Latin Americans are soul-murderers, leaving parentless children crying on playgrounds, Díaz’s U.S. Americans are child-murderers, mutilating their bodies for organs; her Latin Americans are terrorists, thieves, and communists, his U.S. Americans are heartless capitalists, child rapists, and kidnappers; Latin Americans are rendered as too poor to raise children properly, U.S. Americans, as too rich to love anybody. Such caricatures are not entirely false. Bartholet’s account tracks the disrupted state of families, economies, and states, resulting in some measure from U.S. Cold War anticommunist foreign policy, first, and post-1989, neoliberal economics, anti-

terrorism and anti-drug policies have supported right-wing military dictatorships, , death squads, and the privatization or elimination of broad swathes of social services; Díaz González's account tracks a Latin American blame of the United States for the widespread violence and upheaval of the post-WWII period. Neither position—that the United States is innocent, nor that the United States is responsible for all bad things in Latin America—is particularly accurate, but both make sense to people.

Alternative Narratives

However, there are more than these two, opposing positions, in which U.S. families work through the sentimental to deny the fact that they are “taking” Latin American children, on the one hand, and Latin American officials demand their children back, on the other. U.S. individuals' and families' choices to adopt transnationally also arise from and produce dissent about U.S. foreign policy and hegemonic racial formations. The creation of racially “mixed” families was also a Civil Rights Movement goal, embodied most forcefully in *Loving v. Virginia*, a case fought to the Supreme Court to allow interracial marriage. The disruptive potential of international and interracial adoption to a nation foundationally wedded to beliefs about cultural and racial purity—rooted in the family—cannot be entirely papered over. Moreover, there are revealing moments when those who believed in sentimental child-saving narratives abandon them.

David Kruchkow tells such a story in his *When You Wish Upon a Star*. His narrative is a study in contrasts to Bartholet's. His book-length manuscript was published on the internet, not by Houghton-Mifflin; he is a used car salesman; the child adopted by him and his wife Sara has health problems; but most significantly, it turns out that the child was not legally available for adoption, though her birth family was never found. Kruchow emerges with a sharp critique of international adoption, charging that international adoption agencies are profiteers and that the State Department is not particularly interested in investigating potential illegalities. His narrative is ultimately both compassionate about the hard choices made by birth parents, and angry that his adoptive child will not have any future opportunity to have contact with hers.

His account begins in a fairly typical way, positioning him and Sara as consumers choosing from an internationalized market in children and race, with a sense that children's origins were fairly interchangeable and that the culture and inheritance the child would bear would be theirs. He began, as many U.S. adopters do, with little knowledge about opposition to and controversy over U.S. adoption of "Third World" children, an easy, sentimental sense of doing good by alleviating overpopulation, and an acute and hypervigilant sense of the domestic politics of race. He wrote:

Neither of us wanted to deal with the social issues of being white parents of an adopted black child, so we looked in the direction of

Eastern Europe and Latin America...Sara felt she would be comfortable parenting a Latin American child as she has a dark enough complexion to pass as Hispanic. My degree in Anthropology focused on the peoples, cultures, and prehistory of the Western Hemisphere, so I had no objections and felt that I could help our child stay connected with its culture and heritage.¹⁴

Unfortunately, Kruchkow's confident sense that he learned everything he needed to know about Latin America in a few anthropology courses was profoundly disrupted by their subsequent experience in adopting from Mexico. After a referral from a local adoption facilitator, he and Sara Kruchkow poured tens of thousands of dollars into an attempt to adopt, and ultimately went to Mexico where they took custody of an undocumented child. With an ignorance of immigration law at once privileged and tragic, they essentially smuggled her across the border, and wandered unwittingly into an international controversy. The Kruchkows subsequently became better acquainted with the politics of international adoption, when they, along with sixteen other Long Island, New York families, became the focus of an INS investigation of an illegal adoption operation between Mexico and the United States—and Kruchkow charges, though the allegations were not investigated, several other Latin American countries as well.¹⁵

Writing and erasing the traces of violence

Mexican journalists have struggled to document and tell the story of illegal adoption, and this, in fact, is how the Kruchkow's case began. In October of 1998, Mexican newspapers began to report on an illegal adoption network operating along the Mexican-U.S. border, for the most part through the contiguous cities of Agua Prieta, Sonora, and Douglas, Arizona.¹⁶ The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) investigated the allegations circulating in Mexican newspapers, and in March 1999, a woman named Margarita Soto was arrested crossing the border into Douglas for transporting an unrelated child whom she claimed was hers. Soto worked for a lawyer named Mario Reyes, who practiced on the Agua Prieta side of the border but lived in Douglas. He was arrested shortly thereafter (and was probably lucky to be arrested and tried by U.S. authorities, rather than Mexican ones, who accused him of smuggling 500 unlawfully obtained children and angrily demanded his extradition).¹⁷ The INS accused Reyes of mail and wire fraud, and illegally transporting seventeen children and placing them with U.S. adoptive families. Two Long Island women, Arlene Lieberman and Arlene Reingold, were held on similar charges for their roles in acting as go-betweens with New York families and Reyes.¹⁸

Agua Prieta/Douglas made an ideal site for an illegal adoption network. It is essentially a single city divided in two by an international border, and people on

either side are linked through ties of friendship, family, and commerce. There is an extensive, daily, circular traffic across the border, with people living on one side or the other but crossing to shop, socialize, and engage in political and business transactions, taking advantage of differences in law, opportunity, and costs that the border produces. In recent years, Agua Prieta/Douglas has been transformed from a quiet desert town into a booming border city by the establishment of *maquiladoras* on the Agua Prieta side, and Agua Prieta has grown from 18,000 people to a population of more than 90,000, drawn from all over Mexico by the promise of factory work, but as often as not ending up jobless in the city's growing shanty-towns. Average wages at the *maquiladoras* are about seventy-three cents an hour, according to those promoting business investment in the area.¹⁹ In Agua Prieta, social workers told the *New York Times*, wealthy lawyers regularly offer cash for children, and while most refuse, a handful, with few other prospects for earning money, accept.²⁰ An international airport in nearby Tucson makes it easy to transport an illegally procured child to a waiting family anywhere who is willing to pay twenty or thirty thousand dollars. This was, essentially, what happened with the Long Island cases.²¹

Illegal adoption cases, in the rare instances in which they are pursued and prosecuted, present a formidable narrative problem for a rescue story. In the Long Island cases, there were at least two responses: those that insisted ever more strongly that the children were “really” American, and those that worked out more

complex answers. The INS apparently assured the Long Island families from the very beginning of the investigation that they would be able to keep “their” children,²² and seemingly made no effort to locate the birth parents of illegally adopted children, even refusing to allow a group in Mexico dedicated to finding kidnapped children to obtain photos of the Long Island adoptees.²³ On the other hand, one Long Island family, the Libertos, returned their adoptive child, nine-year old Flor Azuceña, to the birth mother the child missed fiercely even before the illegalities of the adoption ring were revealed. Reyes had apparently persuaded the mother to relinquish her child for a few hundred pesos for food, and grandiose promises never kept, of building her and her family a decent house. The Libertos told the *New York Times* that they decided to return their child to her family because Mrs. Liberto understood, first-hand, how painful it could be to be “rescued” from one’s working-class family: “Mrs. Liberto cried when she was asked why she agreed to let Flor Azuceña go. The decision, she said, arose from memories of growing up poor and being sent every year to a summer camp in Pennsylvania. It was the most beautiful place she had ever seen, Mrs. Liberto said. But after a few days, she recalled, she was crying and pleading to go home. ‘A family bond is something you cannot break,’ she said.” For her, it was not self-evident that poverty was a reason to separate children from their birth families, nor that the child was “really” hers or “really” American. At the same time, the

Libertos' response was decidedly ambivalent; they got drawn into the INS case because they subsequently adopted Flor Azuceña's little sister.

Yet most of the press coverage of these cases refused any kind of complexity, relying instead on Bartholet-style accounts that rendered the birth parents unfit and discountable, and the adoptive parents as heroic rescuers. An article in the *Arizona Republic*—with similar intent but more flourishes than a great many similar news articles about the Reyes case—uses the Kruchkows to suggest the logic of keeping the children in the United States and, implicitly, points to the quotidian features of the rhetoric that produce transnationally adopting families as undoubtedly U.S. American:

Sara and David Kruchkow ... fear the child they adopted from Mexico may be taken from them...The couple already has been through an emotional wringer. ... Twice, the adoption group told the couple there was a child available, only to dash their hopes a few months later. [Sara is] happy to tell how delighted the Kruchkows were a year and a half ago, when they met a bright 20-month-old girl with a sense of humor. They named her Shelly, and “she took to us immediately,” Kruchkow said. A few things about her new life in New York startled the little girl at first. “When she saw running water, she started screaming and jumping up and down and saying, ‘*Agua, agua,*’ so evidently where she was there

wasn't running water," Kruckow said...Now, she said, "My biggest fear is I'm not going to be able to keep the child I was meant to have."

The article goes on to explain that the couple spent \$30,000 on the adoption, and that Reyes operated from a desire to help children and an opposition to abortion.²⁴ The ideological work of estranging "Shelly" (previously known as María Soledad) from her birth parents is accomplished in multiple ways in this article. First, she lived in Mexico, did not have running water, and has asthma. Although this is not an account of child neglect, for U.S. Americans schooled by organizations like UNICEF and the Christian Children's Fund in saving children from generic Third World poverty, the narrative works to mobilize pity, and begins to account for why "Shelly" belongs with her adoptive parents. Second, the Kruckows are American, middle class, were childless before her adoption, and have middle-America jobs—they are constituted as solidly within a nationalist narrative of "American" domesticity, except for their childlessness, which the article produces as an urgent problem to remedy. The article says nothing about "Shelly's" birth parents, *maquiladoras*, or U.S. foreign policy; by its end, the only important question is whether a worried and vulnerable Sara, who has already "been through an emotional wringer" will "be able to keep the child [she] was meant to have."

Another, similar story of smuggled children made headlines in Mexico in 1997, when editorials and articles argued that dollars and practices of globalization emanating from the United States were illegally separating children from their birthparents. This one involved documentation of the transport of Mexican children to “orphanages” in Guatemala, with no record of how the children were obtained. Journalist Karina Avilés, working for the Mexico City paper, *La Jornada*, wrote a series of articles detailing the traffic in children in Guatemala, including at least twenty Mexican children smuggled across the mountainous border between Mexico and Guatemala. She identified a network of eighty Guatemalan professionals and officials—lawyers, social workers, judges—who benefited from these operations. Avilés told stories of kidnappers, birth mothers who sold children for as little as \$250, homes where women stayed through their pregnancies with the understanding that their newborns would be adopted, and even prostitutes who “rented their wombs,” in her phrase, becoming repeatedly pregnant and paid for their offspring. She quoted Carmela Curup, of the Procuría General de la Nación of Guatemala, describing the difficulty of proving the existence of an international traffic in children, but acknowledging that everyone knows about it: “everything [about the operation] is legal, all, in inverted commas, is ‘legal.’” She added, “We see with concern the number of people who get here, into Guatemala who, for a few quetzales, manage to procure a child.” Avilés also wrote of the other side of the equation, a fantastic account of

a hotel full of foreigners, each carrying an about-to-be-adopted, brown-skinned infant, an image worthy of Borges repeatedly daily in Guatemala.²⁵ Jorge Camil, commenting on Avilés's investigation, found in the tragedy of the whole affair “the disembodied specter of the U.S. dollar,” a traffic in human beings for sale. For Camil, it was easy enough to understand U.S. adopters, weaned on images of large-eyed children in magazines asking to be “saved” by Americans, but not that difficult either to understand the corrupting influence of \$20,000 U.S. dollars per infant.²⁶

Guatemala is currently the largest exporter of children per capita (the fifth largest by nation²⁷), with 90% of the infants being adopted internationally going to the United States. Adoption is also one of the largest economic sectors in Guatemala, at \$50 million in 2001. Adoption from Guatemala takes place directly, with the heads of “orphanages” placing children with overseas families with no legal regulatory process intervening, except the U.S. embassy, which grants visas to these infantile immigrants.²⁸ While U.S. adopters imagine themselves as benefactors—one Internet-based organization for U.S. would-be adopters from Guatemala, Precious.org, titles its ad on Google.com, “Save a Child—Adopt”—Guatemalans, like Mexicans, believe the fundamental issue to be violence and theft. In 1994, two U.S. visitors to Guatemala were beaten nearly to death by mobs following accusations that they were trafficking in children.²⁹

An article in *Newsweek* from July, 2002 recontextualized the Mexican story of the corrupt effect of American dollars in Guatemala by rendering transnationally adopted children American, surrounding them with nationalist symbols of an American family. It begins with Kathleen and Richard Borz, who adopted a child, Fabiola—whom they renamed Holly—even after her birth mother told U.S. embassy officials that she had been paid to relinquish her child and had understood that she could expect to see Fabiola monthly. The director of the orphanage, Susana Luarca paid working-class families to relinquish, as both embassy officials and the Borzes understood; in addition, Luarca was at that time married to the chief justice of the Guatemalan Supreme Court. Not only did they keep Fabiola, but the Borzes mounted an a campaign with their Congressman to take her brother as well. Two years later, they did succeed in adopting “Holly’s” brother, as well as 7-year old “Rico,” after a Guatemalan judge found that his mother neglected and abused Rico, charges she disputed. The judge found the maternal grandmother an unsuitable parent because she was a lesbian, and a maternal aunt was rejected because, it was said, her husband had hit the child. Whatever the accuracy of the abuse and neglect charges, and letting pass the odious but familiar official homophobia, no one inquired after the biological father. When he resurfaced, Casa Alianza, an international children’s rights group that has been outspoken on issues of illegal adoption, charged that the child’s “abandonment” order was improper, but no judge would agree to re-hear the case.

Furthermore, the birth father told *Newsweek* that he was attacked on a bus by two machete-wielding men who told him to stop trying to reclaim his child.³⁰

Yet the *Newsweek* article casts the adoptive parents as beleaguered innocents, duped citizen-consumers in a globalized marketplace perhaps, but also importantly parents of an American family who should raise this child.

With dad proudly watching and the coach shouting his name,

“Rico! Rico!” a scrawny 12-year-old crouches at second base...

With his team up 8-0, Rico glances over to the first-base line. Dad smiles. What could be more perfect than a father and son at a Little

League game in the Pittsburgh suburbs? Every few months,

however, the bliss is shattered when yet another reporter calls

wanting to know if it is true: was Rico stolen? Kathleen and

Richard Borz, Rico’s parents, almost always refuse to comment

and hang up the phone. Like the growing number of Americans

who go overseas to fulfill their dreams of parenthood, they believe

that adoption—especially from an impoverished country—is

inherently a good thing for the child.

The article tells of the couple’s loss of a birth child to a brain seizure, Rico’s good grades and some difficult, post-institutional behavior problems like hoarding food. It quotes Rep. Henry Hyde saying, “there is nothing to be gained by forcing innocent babies to spend the rest of their childhood in orphanages instead of with

loving parents in the United States.” In this narrative, the Borzes are located within two nationalist rhetorics—domestic family values of baseball, concerned parenting, and good schoolwork on the one hand, and an officially sanctioned, liberal internationalist concern about “innocent babies” on the other. Birth parents once again are discounted. While the article urges prospective international adopters to “do their homework” as consumers, it never suggests that Rico ought to live with his birth father. Rather, it implies that poverty itself is a sufficient reason to estrange Rico from his country and parents of origin, as in the following passage: “[Rico’s birthmother, Flor] earned less than \$50 a month handing out food samples in grocery stores. Home was a one-room cardboard-and-corrugated-tin shack. Rico attended school sporadically. Flor had little choice but to leave him in charge of his baby half brother, Jeffrey.” Poverty, here, rather than being a problem of international capital or a civil war in which the United States was anything but innocent, is reduced to a symptom of bad parenting, from which U.S. families can rescue children.³¹

Truth Commissions and Activists

The origins of unregulated Guatemalan adoption lie in this violence. During the thirty-year civil war, children were abducted by the military and forced to be soldiers, servants, and sometimes, Mayan youngsters were given to the families of the ladino soldiers who were systematically exterminating their

people and were subsequently raised by them, according to reports by both the Catholic Church's Project to Recover Historical Memory (REHMI) and by the U.N.-sponsored truth commission, the Commission for Historical Clarification.³² According to one army officer, "The families of many army officers have grown with the adoption of victims of the violence since, at certain times, it was popular among army soldiers to take responsibility for little three or four year olds found wandering in the mountains."³³ The Commission for Historical Clarification report also documents, in twelve volumes, the role of the United States in the human rights abuses of those years: the war was sparked by the CIA's overthrow of the elected Arbenz government in 1954, and continued through the 60s, 70s, and 80s through U.S. funding, direct CIA involvement, and training for the Guatemalan military in "counterinsurgency" tactics that included disappearances, torture, and murder of civilians that were part of an attempted genocide of Mayan populations.³⁴ Although the civil war officially ended with the peace accord of 1996, violence and disappearances have continued. Even documenting illegal adoption and other human rights abuses in Guatemala is a dangerous occupation. Bishop Juan Gerardi Covedera, who oversaw the production of the REHMI report, was bludgeoned to death two days after its release.³⁵ According to human rights groups and even the U.S. State Department, a Universidad de San Carlos professor, Mayra Gutierrez disappeared in April 2000, probably because of her research on illegal adoption.³⁶ The office of Casa Alianza have been repeatedly

burglarized, and its director, Bruce Harris, has been charged with libel in Guatemalan court for his outspokenness about shady adoption practices.³⁷

Any account of illegal adoption in Latin America must also mention Argentina, which has an early and tangled history with exploitative adoption that is still being unraveled. During the Argentine Dirty War, the military kept alive pregnant women who had been “disappeared” and forced into camps. Some were pregnant when arrested or abducted by the military; others were raped. These leftist women prisoners were allowed to live until the birth of their children, then killed—and the resulting infants were adopted by families and friends of the ruling junta. The most persistent critics of the military dictatorship in those years, *las Madres de la Plaza de Mayo*, have in recent times shifted their activism and, calling themselves the *Abuelas* (grandmothers) *de la Plaza de Mayo*, have sought to locate and return what they say are the more than 500 illegally adopted children of the disappeared. Throughout the 1980s, the child kidnapping charges were officially denied, although a film, *La Historia Oficial* and an anthropologists' account confirmed them.³⁸ The *Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo* and other relatives mounted a 15-year campaign to establish their relationship to the adopted children of prominent families through DNA testing and trying to prosecute adoptive parents through the Argentine courts.³⁹ It was not until June 1998, when former president Jorge Rafael Videla was arrested and charged with running a government-sponsored illegal adoption operation during the Dirty War that these

claims gained official status.⁴⁰ The U.S. government supported the Argentine military junta throughout the dirty war through a variety of means, including training military and junta leaders at the U.S. School of the Americas, maintaining close diplomatic ties (except during the Carter administration), and encouraging their support of the Nicaraguan Contras. Recently declassified documents suggest that shortly after the Argentine military coup in 1976, Henry Kissinger directly assured members of the military junta that there would be no interference from the United States in the Dirty War campaign of assassination and torture.⁴¹

Since the advent of less repressive regimes in Argentina, it is still not clear that illegal adoption has entirely disappeared, nor that the United States' role in sponsoring less-than-consensual transfer of children from their birth families has, either. José Steinsleger, a Mexican journalist who has written extensively about illegal adoption, quotes Atilio Alvarez, president of Argentina's Nation Council for Minors, in a 1997 article as saying, "In this country, kidnapping of children does not usually exist because the trafficker doesn't need to steal them. They can get them, sometimes, for a bag of food. But if someone takes a child, nobody denounces or accuses them, and on top of that, if they are put in prison, the judge that punished them is questioned for having punished someone who possibly had an altruistic goal. But whether an object of exchange or product of theft, the child is equally a victim."⁴²

Anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes has documented illicit adoption practices in Brazil. “In the shantytowns of Brazil I encountered several cases of coerced adoption and (in 1990 alone) two cases of child stealing by wealthy ‘patrons,’” she writes, one of whom was a boss who requested the presence of workers’ child overnight “for [her] amusement.” When the child failed to return, the *patrón* told the parents that the child had been adopted by an American couple, and that their objections were “selfish” because they would deny the child an opportunity for a better life in the United States. In the context of pressure, threats, and the omnipresent reality of paramilitary murder of shantytown residents who cause too much trouble, the parents let the matter drop, though years later, Scheper-Hughes writes, they still mourned. At the other end of the adoption business, in 1989 Scheper-Hughes spoke to staff at an “orphanage” run by American missionaries. “When I asked, directly, about the Brazilian ‘traffic in babies,’ the director admitted that aspects of the adoption process were murky. Sometimes, she had to fight with mothers to release their children. Some birth mothers resisted signing the adoption papers even when they know it would be best for their child.”⁴³ Why, exactly, adoption was “best” for their child is left unstated, as if it were simply a given that any working-class, shanty-town resident parents in Brazil were intrinsically worse than middle-class or wealthy parents in the United States, Europe, Israel, or Australia.

The activities of these many activists and U.N.-sponsored truth commissions have had an effect; there have been efforts at the level of international law to clean up transnational adoption. In 2000, an international treaty, the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption, proposed to remedy some abuses. It requires that the birth family be shown to be unable to care for the child—not just impoverished relative to potential adoptive parents; that consent for relinquishment be freely and irrevocably given, that the relationship of those claiming to be the relinquishing parents to the child be clearly demonstrated, preferably through DNA testing; and that both sending and receiving countries have a central authority that regulates international adoption. Mexico and many other nations promptly ratified it. However, neither the United States nor Guatemala did. The United States promised (and failed) to implement it by 2004, following the enactment of legislative and administrative measures that would make kidnapped or coercively obtained children ineligible for adoption—a chilling acknowledgement of the past and current state of U.S. international adoption law.⁴⁴ Guatemala began the process of ratifying and coming into compliance with the Convention, only to abruptly decide not to sign it. That neither nation can readily agree to these terms speaks volumes about the nature of the adoption traffic between them, and suggests that considerable enforcement measures would be needed to ensure an end to illegal and abusive transnational

adoption practices, even if laws were changed in order to ensure conformity with treaty terms.

Conclusion

I have been arguing that the development of new “American” families through transnational adoption may be considerably less transgressive than it first appears, that for some adoptive parents and policy-makers, its justifications rely on a structure of erasing children’s origins and the violence encompassed within U.S. foreign policy. In such accounts, international adoption to the United States operates in much the same way U.S. foreign policy works—through a strategic forgetting that makes it possible to ask “Why do they hate us?” as so many did in the post-9/11 moment, to assume a posture of hurt, bewildered innocence. In this sense, adoption not only echoes but reinforces the broader cultural management of representing U.S. military and economic policy—the symbolic “rescue” of national policy becomes the literal raising of “Third World” children by U.S. families. And sometimes, as the Kruchkow’s and many other similar cases make clear, the Latin American charge that U.S. Americans are not rescuing children but violently destroying families is also literalized. Adopted children “saved” from the poverty and violence of Latin American nations may in fact be protected with the complicity of U.S. state power from repatriation in cases of kidnapping or unlawful relinquishment—a definition of “saving” that might justifiably be

understood as having something to do with “taking.” While individual parents or families may, understandably enough, feel that they are making a difference in the life of a child, feel attached to children they have raised for years, and be resistant to any calls to repatriate a child whom they love and whom they experienced great hardship to bring into their family, it also bears noticing that sentimental narratives, as told in the popular press, work in only one direction here. The pain felt by U.S. adoptive parents over previous childlessness, or over the thought of losing their child is not weighed against an equally emotive story that one might tell, of the loss felt by birth parents, or the desperate choices that individuals might make to feed some members of their family at the cost of losing another. Far from being a challenge to the white heterosexual reproduction of “American-ness” in the representational tradition that Armstrong identifies with captivity narratives, transnational adoption can be simply an expansion of who and what gets to count as a “real” American family

One sentimental narrative should not replace another. All adopted Latin American infants and children were not plucked from the arms of their victimized parents. Children come not to live with their birth parents, in Latin America as elsewhere, for reasons that include abuse, neglect, death, and disability of or by birth parents. Disrupted families in Latin America and unlawful adoption has a history rooted in a U.S. foreign policy that has made Latin America one of its battlegrounds for more than a half-century. Sentimental narratives of child-saving

acts cannot entirely be disentangled from that history. However, there is also another, subordinated but existing practice and narrative at work here, that embody strategies for understanding family and nationality that are not about producing a pure or nationalist domesticity. For the Libertos, complexity and multivocality are at the heart of their understanding of adoption—imagining the little girl they adopted for \$30,000 not to be “theirs,” in the sense of owning or buying, nor even U.S. American in any exclusive sense. They imagined her as potentially living in their family or with her birth family, as Mexican or U.S. In 2002, David Kruchkow wrote a conclusion and postscript to the narrative that he first posted to the Net the year before. In it, he railed against the corruption of the high-profit intercountry adoption industry, raised questions about coercion and illegitimate pressure on birth parents in places like Guatemala and Mexico to relinquish their children, and mourned the loss of the possibility of contact with his daughter’s birth parents due to the shady dealings of Mario Reyes and his associates. He wrote about the local politics in Agua Prieta that had first allowed Mexican officials to ignore Reyes’ illegal trafficking in children, and then to demand his prosecution. He had, in a few years, moved from being a naïve (if powerful) consumer of the goods of transnational adoption markets to a close analyst of the political and affective economies of intercountry adoption.⁴⁵ He is not alone among U.S. adoptive parents in calling for reform, or in tacking steadily to the left with respect to the politics of the Third World or adoption—these kinds

of sentiments are regularly raised on adoptive parents' listservs and in their books and stories. Raising an adoptive child born outside the United States sometimes seems to bring U.S. parents into complex, critical relationship with conditions in their home countries and U.S. foreign policy. For all their power in mobilizing potential parents to consider "saving" a child, or to account for why and how they ought to adopt from overseas, complicit sentimental narratives seem to do a surprisingly poor job of providing a satisfying narrative of how to raise them. And this unexpected outcome, of the very heterogeneous politics of *raising* adopted children, perhaps leaves the door open for more critical accounts of how the process of getting them could be different.

Notes – Chapter 14

¹ “American” here—as in the title and throughout the article—carries for me a heavy sense of irony. Many Latin American critics have pointed to the arrogance implicit in the use of the name for the whole continent—“America”—to refer to the inhabitants of one nation within it, the United States. My use of “American” to refer to a narrative about a hegemonic family formation is in precisely this sense—a U.S. family, understood in relationship to a U.S. nationalism that relies on a tremendous sense of U.S. entitlement and power.

² Nancy Armstrong, “Why Daughters Die: The Racial Logic of American Sentimentalism,” *Yale Journal of Criticism* 7:2 (Fall 1994):1-25.

³ Elizabeth Bartholet, *Family Bonds: Adoption and the Politics of Parenting* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993), 40.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-44

⁶ Rickie Solinger, *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the United States* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 28.

⁷ See William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1998), 6-7.

⁸ See the excellent documentary, for example, Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco, “Daughter from Danang,” ed. Vicente Franco (Waltham, MA: Balcony Releasing, 2002).

⁹ See, for example, Sandra Patton, *Birthmarks: Transracial Adoption in Contemporary America* (New York: New York University Press, 2001).

¹⁰ See, for example, her crusader’s book, Elizabeth Bartholet, *Nobody’s Children: Abuse and Neglect, Foster Drift, and the Adoption Alternative* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1999).

¹¹ Alejandro Bordon, "Advierten Robo De 6 Niños Al Día," *La Reforma*, 24 April 2002.

¹² See Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Theft of Life: The Globalization of Organ Stealing Rumors," *Anthropology Today* 12, no. 3 (1996).; Todd Leventhal, *The 'Baby Parts' Myth: Anatomy of a Rumor* [Web site] (Urbanlegends.com, 1994 [cited August 11 2003]); available from http://www.urbanlegends.com/medical/organ.theft/baby.parts/baby_parts_myth.html, José Manuel Martín Medem, *Niños De Repuesto: Tráfico De Menores Y Comercio De Órganos* (Editorial Complutense, 1994). While it seems unlikely that this particular rumor of child organ theft is literally true—as many have pointed out, where, after all, could the “receiver” obtain transplanted organs except in a hospital, where, at least in the U.S. and most places in Europe, such things are carefully monitored and transplants are registered in a centralized database—these stories make an effective and dramatic grammar that measures the violence of shady adoption practices.

¹³ Cynthia Martin and Dru Martin Groves, *Beating the Adoption Odds: Using Your Head and Your Heart to Adopt* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998).

¹⁴ David Kruchkow, *When You Wish Upon a Star: An Adoption Story* [web site] (2001, 2002 [cited 15 June 2003]); available from <http://saradave.tripod.com/adoptionstory/index.html>.

¹⁵ Although it was never mentioned in the indictment, some believed that the 17 Long Island children were the tip of the iceberg. Kruchkow cites evidence for believing that Reyes was involved in illegal adoption from Columbia and Peru; the Mexican parents' group FIND charge that he was involved in 500 illegal adoptions from Mexico. Although neither source is conclusive, they certainly raise interesting questions.

¹⁶ David Halbfinger, "U.S. Accuses 3 of Smuggling Mexican Babies," *New York Times*, 28 May 1999 1999.

¹⁷ Christina Ortiz, "Identifican a Traficante De Menores," *La Reforma*, 13 January 2000.

¹⁸ Mike Allen, "Women Accused of Smuggling Used a Friendly Approach," *New York Times*, 31 May 1999, Jim Cason and David Brooks, "Tres Detenidos En Eu Acusados De Tráfico De Bebés

Mexicanos," *La Jornada*, 28 May 1999, Halbfinger, "U.S. Accuses 3 of Smuggling Mexican Babies.", Ginger Thompson, "In Mexico, Children, and Promises, Unkept," *New York Times*, 2 June 1999.

¹⁹ City of Douglas, *Discover Douglas, Arizona* [web site] (1 June 2000 [cited 1 June 2003]); available from <http://www.discoverdouglas.com/EconDev/Agua%20Prieta.htm>.

²⁰ Thompson, "In Mexico, Children, and Promises, Unkept."

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Kruckow, *When You Wish* ([cited].), ch. 11.

²³ Virginia de Viana, "Presentarán Queja: La Secretaría De Relaciones Exteriores No Ha Respondido a La Fundación Nacional De Investigaciones De Niños Robados," *El Imparcial.com*, 31 August 1999.

²⁴ "Adoption Suspect Ordered to Ny; Douglas Man Had Good Intentions, Lawyer Says," *Arizona Republic*, June 1 1999.

²⁵ "Todo es legal, entre comillas, es legal. Nosotros vemos con preocupación la cantidad de gente metida aquí en Guatemala que por unos cuantos quetzales logra sustraer al menor." Jaime Avil'es, "El Tonto Del Pueblo: Benep'l'Acito Un Nuevo Pinochet," *La Jornada*, April 1997, Karina Avil'es, "Desde Guatemala, Red Internacional De Tráfico De Niños," *La Jornada*, 22 September 1997, Karina Avil'es, "En Quetzaltenango, 29 Niños En Calidad De Productos Caducos E Inservibles," *La Jornada* 1997, Karina Avil'es, "Impunes, Tratantes De Niños En Guatemala," *La Jornada*, 2 September 1997, Karina Avil'es, "Robo De Infante, Delito Común En Ese País: Casa Alianza, Ong Internacional," *La Jornada*, 23 September 1997, Karina Avil'es, "Se Utilizó El Hospital De Malacatán, En Guatemala, Como Expendio De Menores," *La Jornada*, 24 September 1997.

²⁶ Jorge Camil, "Tráfico De Ninos," *La Jornada*, September 1997.

²⁷ State Department, *Immigrant Visas Issued to Orphans Coming to the U.S.* (State Department, 2002 [cited 11 August 2003]); available from http://www.travel.state.gov/orphan_numbers.html.

²⁸ Alan Zarembo, "A Place to Call Home: The Anger, Tears and Frustrating Runarounds of a Guatemalan Adoption Case," *Newsweek*, July 15 2002.

²⁹ One of the women, June Weinstock, returned to her home state of Alaska in a coma and never recovered. According to some internet sources, she was a leftist who had gone to the region to support the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas. Jose Gutierrez, *June Weinstock* (Radio Farabundo Marti Australia, 1994 [cited August 11 2003]); available from

<http://csf.colorado.edu/femisa/1994/msg00150.html>. The other woman's name was Janice Vogel.

Edward Orlebar, "Child Kidnaping Rumors Fuel Attacks on Americans; Guatemala: Military May Be Fomenting Fear of Foreigners. Hysteria May Invite Hard-Liner Backlash.," *Los Angeles Times* 1994.

³⁰ Zarembo, "Place to Call Home."

³¹ Ibid.

³² Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Guatemala: Memoria Del Silencio*, 12 vols. (Guatemala: Oficina de Servicios para Proyectos las Naciones Unidas, 1991), vol. 3, 71-78, Recovery of Historical Memory Project, *Guatemala: Never Again. The Official Report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala*, abridged English edition ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1999), 37-38.

³³ Recovery of Historical Memory Project, *Guatemala: Never Again. The Official Report of the Human Rights Office, Archdiocese of Guatemala*, 38.

³⁴ Comisión para el Esclarecimiento Histórico, *Memoria Del Silencio*.

³⁵ Serge F. Kovalski, "In Guatemala, Grief Grows into Suspicion: Many Feel Bishop's Killing Was Motivated by Politics," *Washington Post*, April 30 1998.

³⁶ Human Rights Groups like the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, Amnesty International, and the Grupo de Apoyo Mutuo have championed her case for years. Even the skeptical U.S. State Department termed the account that her disappearance was political termed the allegation “credible.” Human Rights Bureau of Democracy, and Labor,, "Guatemala: Country Reports on Human Rights 2000," (Washington, DC: State Department, 2001), 13.

³⁷ Casa Alianza, *They Shoot Children, Don't They?* [Web Site] (Not specified [cited August 7 2003]); available from <http://www.casa-alianza.org/EN/human-rights/>.

³⁸ Aida Bortnik and Luis Puenzo, "The Official Story (La Historia Oficial)," ed. Luis Puenzo (Buenos Aires: 1985). Marcelo Suarez-Orozco, "The Treatment of Children in the Dirty War," in *Child Survival*, ed. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1987).

³⁹ Abuelas de la Plaza de Mayo, *Abuelas De La Plaza De Mayo* [web site] (July 31 2003 [cited August 11 2003]); available from <http://www.abuelas.org.ar/>.

⁴⁰ Clifford Krauss, "Ex-Argentine Junta Leader Held in 70's Kidnapping," *New York Times*, June 10 1998.

⁴¹ Christopher Hitchens, *The Trial of Henry Kissinger*, Paperback ed. (New York: Verso, 2002), xii-xiv.

⁴² José Steinsleger, "Lo Que El Diablo Se Llevó," *La Jornada*, August 1997. "En este país no existe habitualmente la sustracción de los chicos porque el traficante no necesita robarlos. Los consigue, a veces, por una bolsa de comida. Pero si alguien consigue un chico, nadie lo denuncia ni lo acusa y encima, si lo meten preso, el juez que lo castiga es cuestionado por haber castigado a su vez a alguien que posiblemente tuvo una finalidad altruista. Por lo que sea, objeto de trueque o producto de robo, el niño es igualmente víctima”.

⁴³ Scheper-Hughes, "Theft of Life: The Globalization of Organ Stealing Rumors."

⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State et al., *Hague Convention on Intercountry Adoption* (U.S. Department of State, June 2002 [cited August 11 2003]).

⁴⁵ Kruchkow, *When You Wish* ([cited]).