



# Adoption in Australian History

Submission of Origins Inc to Part (a) of the  
Inquiry into Commonwealth Contribution to Forced Adoption

# Adoption in Australian History



Adoption is a legal institution founded on the decriminalization of child abandonment<sup>1</sup>, at the heart of which is not only the denial of fundamental human rights and entitlements but also the demise of the parent as loving child guardian. The giving away and taking of another's child for adoption is a legal<sup>2</sup> and, therefore, morally neutral institution; it is not punishable by law. And yet the child grows to seek justification for the permanent loss of his mother, father and kin, demanding to know, primarily: "Why did my mummy give me away..." As the law has not required an answer to that question, propaganda has grown up in pseudo-provision of the taken baby.

Such propaganda is to be found in the literature of the institutions and individuals who participated in the unlawful adoption practices circa 1950-1998; however, the adoption industry left an inevitable, mountainous trail of evidence behind it. Consequently, as the crimes against the mothers and their taken children increasingly became public knowledge, so did the nature of adoption as a leopard prone to changing its spots. Beneficiaries of adoption had promoted the 'relinquishment' of the 'illegitimate' child as the sacrifice of a loving mother. In practice, the child along with its mother, was degraded in the charade of the childless married stranger as superior to the *loving*, if poor and unmarried, guardian of the child.

Adoption as a legal institution witnessed the creation of a child market, which made easy withdrawal of the human rights and entitlements of vulnerable, unsupported mothers to the advantage of childless, married couples. A frenzied grab for healthy newborns ensued efforts to recruit the wed, while the 'unwed' who succeeded in resisting adoption were branded as pariahs. Still this culture with its roots in Puritan periods, persists in circles of those who disapprove of the lack of babies domestically available to childless couples, as media tolerance of public hate speech against the sole mother once branded 'unwed' or 'single', attests.

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<sup>1</sup> Abandon: 'To give up completely', Oxford American Dictionaries

<sup>2</sup> Legal: 'Permitted by law', Oxford American Dictionaries

Where the practice of adoption has spread its influence, the traditional concept of parental rights – as defended by common law and as consisting in loving guardianship over a given child – have increasingly given way to a concept of the child as legal possession of its parents of birth or adoption. Adoption has meant that not only can a parent be forced and tricked into legally abandoning their child, but that strangers, in turn, can own that child.

A child market gradually pursued the institution of adoption in Australia, leading to the unscrupulous procurement of ‘illegitimate’ newborns on behalf of strangers pitted against their parents in a spirit of competition. Thousands of associated crimes were committed against the child via this plunder of the parental duties of the loving if unsupported mother and her family.

Nevertheless, Adoption Awareness Week will again go ahead this year without addressing the very reasons for the demise of adoption in Australia, as its objective is to reverse an ‘anti-adoption’ culture. In response Origins will conduct its own campaign titled ‘Family Remembrance Week’, details regarding the aims and objectives of which will be provided in due course.

Family Remembrance Week will also be a way to respond to Recommendation 20 of the Standing Committee on Social Issues for the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Past Adoption Practices (1950-1998) – a recommendation that remains to be implemented, despite the passage of ten years since the Final Report of the latter Inquiry stated that: ‘The Minister for Community Services should establish a public education campaign on the effects of past adoption practices...’<sup>3</sup> Dr G Rickarby, consultant psychiatrist to the latter Inquiry, who has been consulted by hundreds of the mothers and their taken children, regarded the effort to educate not only the public but health care professionals, as essential.

Please see Origins principal submissions to this Inquiry, to verify the following overview of adoption in Australia.

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<sup>3</sup> Releasing the Past, 2000, Retrieved March 14, 2011, from [http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/56e4e53dfa16a023ca256cfd002a63bc/\\$FILE/Report.PDF](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/56e4e53dfa16a023ca256cfd002a63bc/$FILE/Report.PDF)

An Outline of the Historical features of

## ADOPTION IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

as verified in submissions of Origins Inc<sup>4</sup> to the

Senate Inquiry into the Commonwealth Contribution to Forced Adoption

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- ADOPTION AS A VIOLATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD, BASED ON THE FALSE ASSUMPTION OF A CHILD AS LEGAL POSSESSION:
  - Adoption as the legal right to abandon a child;
  - Adoption as the legal right to own a child.
  
- STEROTYPICAL MOTHERS OF THE ADOPTION INDUSTRY: THE SUPERIMPOSITION OF VALUE AND IDENTITY
  - The unmarried mother:
    - pariah;
    - abandoner/aberrant/immoral:  
'accidental/unplanned/unintended child' – adoption as a nine-month termination;
    - sacrificial: 'the victim mother', 'the virgin mother';
      - 'the unplanned child' – sacrificial relinquishment;
      - 'the planned child' – sacrificial surrogacy;
  - The married mother:
    - in spirit and by choice – 'the chosen child' – 'the planned for child' – 'the special child' – 'the child who grew in her heart and not under it'. This mother is loving (the disappointed planner/the bereaved/proven), respectable (married), responsible (financially independent).
  
- THE CHILD AS PRODUCT IN DEMAND
  - Promoting the product – creating the demand:
    - Adoption eugenics marketing 'the healthy baby';
    - The child as *tabula rasa* (Blank Slate theory) as environment is promoted as main consideration; fears of Bad Blood, allayed;

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.originsnsw.com/>

- ‘The baby’ – a blank slate for the superimposition of any identity; for example, ‘unnamed baby’.
  - ‘As if born to them’ – infants taken at birth via medical codes such as “BFA” (Baby for Adoption) to be bonded with strangers;
  - Attracting the consumer: the childless married couple
    - Recruitment;
    - Public denigration of the unwed mother and public relations on behalf of the adopting mother.
- THE DENIAL OF MATERNAL PERSONHOOD
- Marketing and solicitation of the unwed mother as ‘birthmother’, biological mother’, ‘breeder’, ‘gestational carrier’<sup>5</sup>;
  - Deprivation of the basic rights of liberty, freedom from persecution, and humanitarian care;
  - Genocide against unwed mothers, including ‘Forcibly transferring children of (that) group to another group’<sup>6</sup>;
  - ‘Social death’<sup>7</sup> of an existent family.
- THE DENIAL OF INFANTILE PERSONHOOD
- Child as possession (in contrast with under loving guard);
  - Violation of the Hague Convention.
- THE ‘STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE’<sup>8</sup> OF ADOPTION
- Adoption as a harmful, anti-social institution:
    - Irresolvable grief, especially of abandoned mothers;
    - Identity issues, especially of adopted children;
    - High suicide rates of mothers and their taken children; a culture of despair in created and superimposed identity;
    - The emasculation of aggressive parenting (the creation of the child of strangers);
    - This list is not exhaustive.

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<sup>5</sup> “In order for adoption to succeed, it is first necessary to destroy the mother”, attributed to Dian Wellfare, ABC Unsung Hero and founder of Origins SPSA Inc

<sup>6</sup> See article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (see also, Origins principal submission regarding breaches of common law)

<sup>7</sup> “Structural Violence, Social Death, and International Adoption: Part 3 of 4”, Conducive Chronicle, Retrieved January 10, 2011, from

<<http://cchronicle.com/2010/03/structural-violence-social-death-and-intl-adoption-part-3-of-4/>>

<sup>8</sup> ibid