## Contents

Series Preface: Contemporary Family Perspectives  
Acknowledgments  
Introduction  

### Making Families: The Inequalities and Intimacies of Adoption  
Adopt in the United States  
Definitions  
Adoption and Statistics  

### 1. Adoption Across Cultures  
Ethnographic Cases  
The Preference for Fostering in West Africa  
The Commonality of Child Circulation in the Andes  
The Stigma of Adoption in the Middle East  
Exploring the Significance of Cases  
Debunking the Opposition between  
Natural and Adoptive Parents  
Who Is Responsible for Raising Children?  
History Comes Up Behind Us: Fostering and  
Adoption as Shaped by Context  
Conclusions  

### 2. Adoption in the United States: Historical Perspectives  
Children’s Role in Society  
What Makes a Family? Contradictions and  
Controversies in American Adoption  
The Growing Demand for Adoptable Babies and the Increased  
Regulation of Adoption: Who Are the Best Mothers?  
Adoption Secrecy in the Formation of As-If Families  
Making Families Through Adoption in the Postwar Period  
Adoption in the United States Today  
Open Adoption  
Conclusions
3. Adoption: Private Decisions, Public Influences
   Who Adopts? Who Is Adopted? 57
   Socioeconomic Class: The Power of Money 57
   The Children: Characteristics of Adopted Children 61
   The Parents: Marital Status and Sexual Orientation 62
   What Makes a Proper Family? Interpreting Social Norms 63
   The Role of the State 65
   Comparative Perspectives on Government’s Role in Adoption 69
   Adoption in China 69
   Adoption in Norway 71
   Conclusions 72

4. Race, Ethnicity, and Racism in Adoption and Fosterage Systems 73
   Race: A Social Construct, a Forceful Reality 74
   Race in U.S. Adoption History 77
   Transracial Adoption: Issues and Debates 79
   The Foster System and Adoption in the United States 83
   Native Americans and Adoption in the United States and Canada 87
   Conclusions 91

5. The Practices of Transnational Adoption 94
   The Global Transfer of Children 96
   Rules Governing Intercountry Adoptions 99
   The Receiving Countries 101
   Early International Adoption as Humanitarian Aid 101
   The United States 104
   Adoption in Norway 105
   The Sending Countries 107
   Korea 107
   Romania 109
   Guatemala 111
   China and Its Abandoned Girls 113
   After Adoption: The Making of Transnational Families 116
   Conclusions 122

Conclusion 123

Bibliography 132

Further Exploration 143

Index 148

About the Authors 155