From Unplanned to Miracle: The Use of Metaphor in Adoption Webpages

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Abstract: The topic of adoption has become more prominent in public consciousness thanks to everything from high-profile celebrity adoptions to easy access of related information via the Internet. With this increase in awareness has come a change in adoption-related language/rhetoric. One such change is in the use of metaphor.

Grounded in Aristotle's definition(s) of metaphor and filtered through works by Navoy, Lifton, among others, this rhetorical analysis of two adoption-related websites identifies/explores metaphors used in creating/promoting positive adoption rhetoric. This presentation is not so much examining *who* is using positive adoption language, so much as it interrogates *how* adoption language is presented to the public, particularly via the multi-media forum of the Internet.

The conclusions drawn from this analysis suggest that metaphor is used to empower, to support, and to create positive images of the members of the adoption triad, but also that metaphor is invoked as a tool of persuasion—sometimes for economic purposes—and they often create new problems of their own. However, because of the public nature of the forum in which these websites appear, the use of metaphor as positive language may reach a wider audience, thereby assisting adoption reform movements in promoting positive adoption language.

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