

ERASING THE NATURAL FAMILY? RETHINKING ADOPTION

One day seminar in London, Tuesday 7 July 2009

In the recent case of *W (Children)* [2009] EWCA Civ 59, three children were adopted mainly on the basis that one of them had suffered non-accidental injuries at the hands of one or both of their parents. Later evidence indicated that the injuries might have been caused by illness instead. Refusing the parents' application to revoke the adoption orders, the Court of Appeal confirmed that an adoption order could only be set aside in highly exceptional circumstances, because adoption had to be perceived as final.

Bringing together experts in adoption from a range of disciplines, this one-day seminar will take the opportunity provided by this case to re-consider the very concept of adoption as 'legal transplant' that has underpinned the law since 1926. Adoption was described by the Court of Appeal in *W* as a process whereby a child becomes a permanent and full member of a new family and is treated for all purposes as though born to the adopters. But is this the best childcare model for the future, given that the characteristics of adopted children have changed immeasurably since adoption was first introduced? Or should the law move to a more flexible model, which could offer children long-term security without the legal erasure of their natural family?

SPEAKERS

Professor Shaheen Sardar Ali, School of Law, University of Warwick: *To Adopt or not to Adopt? Some Muslim Jurisprudential Perspectives.*

Professor Elaine Farmer, Centre for Family Policy and Child Welfare, School for Policy Studies, University of Bristol: *Reunification*

Dr Jill Marshall, School of Law, Queen Mary, University of London: *Giving Birth and Refusing Motherhood*

Professor Judith Masson, School of Law, University of Bristol: *The Evolution of Adoption Law*

Dr Julie Selwyn, Hadley Centre for Adoption and Foster Care Studies, University of Bristol: *Alternatives to Adoption and the Characteristics of Adopted Children*

Dr Carole Smith, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work, University of Manchester: *The Legal and Social Constructions of Adoptive Parenthood: Implications for Thinking about or Planning for Adoption*

The seminar will take place at Birkbeck University of London
Registration £50 (£25 students)

To register go to <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/law/research/events/adoptionworkshop>
For more information contact Rebecca Probert: Rebecca.Probert@warwick.ac.uk or
Helen Reece: h.reece@bbk.ac.uk