

Claris Harbon

DCL candidate, Faculty of Law, McGill University

Research

Claris Harbon specializes and focuses on economic – social and feminist lawyering mainly on subjects concerning the subordination of subaltern minorities and disempowered groups such as Mizrahis (Jews of Arab/Muslim Descent), women, Arab-Israelis and children.



She has been researching the Eurocentric discriminatory basis of the Israeli Land Law and the crucial role it has played in discriminating against Mizrahis and Palestinians in Israel, especially with regard to public housing policies. She argues that the differential land policies directed against Mizrahis formed the basis for their legal and social inferiority, and resulted in creating unique structural legal problems that collectively affect Mizrahis. Specifically, she represented Mizrahis and Palestinians who resisted the ruling order, especially through land and property lawbreaking. It is this notion of resistance and civil disobedience that she now further explores for her doctoral research at McGill as an O'Brien Fellow.

At McGill she writes about the jurisgenerative aspects of Lawbreaking. She offers a new understanding of lawbreaking and violence, particularly when committed by women, as a legitimate manifestation of resistance and civil-disobedience, aimed at correcting injustices, and as a viable form of lawmaking. Taking a Coverian approach, Claris focuses on the hermeneutics of lawbreaking, and argues that it is a language that reflects deep social meanings and narratives of communities, generating dynamic processes, whereby lawbreakers can be perceived as participants, rather than out-law- outsiders, in the course of creating legal and social meanings when the ways they speak diverge from professional paradigms of intelligibility. Instead of focusing on the “heroic” stories of mass disobedience committed in public by politically engaged people, Claris focuses on “small” “day-to-day” cases of resistance secretly committed by women; but, which are nevertheless, regarded as mere crimes, and not as legitimate forms of

resistance. She argues that these women, albeit operating against the law, violating the formal modes of lawmaking, are engaged in an evolutionary dialogic process of persuasion and communication, eliciting a public response, and, thus, play an integral role in generating and mobilizing the platforms for legal change.

Education

- LL.M. 2008, Yale Law School.
- LL.M. With Thesis (magna cum laude) in "Law, Society and Politics", Tel-Aviv University, Law School.
- LL.B. 1998 (with honors) from Northumbria Law School (Newcastle, England).

Memberships

The Israeli Bar Association.

Fellowships and awards

- O'Brien Doctoral Fellowship, Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism, Faculty of Law, McGill University.
- The Citizen's Empowerment Center in Israel (CECI): A prestigious scholarship award granted for excellency in legal research as an LL.M student.
- The E. David Fischman Fund Scholarship awarded to thoroughly selected top Israeli students who are admitted to Doctorate Programs in leading American Universities.

Selected Publications

- Revealing the Past - Breaking with Silence. Review Article: The Yemenite Babies Affair and the Israeli Media, Forthcoming in Holy Land Studies: A Multidisciplinary Journal (Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
- Poems: "The Scream - Never Again" " in 18 Hakivun Mizrach (The Journal of Culture and Literature, 2009)
- "Squatting and Invasion to Public Houses in Israel: Mizrahi Women Correcting Past Injustices" (in Law, Gender and Feminism. Daphne Barak - Erez et al. eds., 2006, Nevo Publishers).
- "On Sense and Sensitivity - A Deconstructive Quest for My Mizrahi (Grass) Roots and Identity in Legal Representation" (in To My Sister: Mizrahi Feminist Politics. Shlomit Leer et al. eds., 2006, Babel Publishers).
- Claris Harbon has other scholarly articles in progress, and she is about to publish a children's book, along with a poetry book. Many of her poems have already been published in major poetry journals.

Selected Conferences

- Lecturer, The Annual Women's Parliament Forum Conference on Sexual Harassment (2002).
- Lecturer, The Annual Conference on Feminist Issues, The Department of Gender Studies, Tel – Aviv University (2003, 2005).
- Lecturer, The Annual international Woman's Day Conference, Woman to Woman, Haifa (2003).
- Initiator and Lecturer, Representing Youth in Court, Faculty of Law, Tel – Aviv University (2003).
- Lecturer, Conference on Gender, Space and Planning, Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights, The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, Heinrich Böll Foundation. (2004).
- Lecturer, Mixed Arab – Jewish Cities Forum Conference, Shatil, The New Israel Fund's empowerment and training center (2004).
- Lecturer, The Annual Women's Parliament Forum Conference on Women's Leadership (2004).

- Lecturer, Housing in Israel – History and the Law, The Israeli Bar Association (2004).
- Lecturer, The Annual Conference In Memory of Dr. Vicky Shiran, Women and Gender Studies Program, The School of Interdisciplinary Studies, Beit – Berl College (2006).
- Lecturer, Leadership, Gender and Activism, The Hebrew University (2006).
- Lecturer, An Other Sex 06, The Sixth Israeli Annual Conference for Lesbian & Gay Studies and Queer Theory, The NCJW Women Studies Forum, Tel Aviv University, The Forum for Lesbian & Gay Studies and Queer Theory (2006).
- Lecturer, Law And Society Association Conference – Berlin (2007).
- Lecturer, Democracy And The Middle East - Yale University Law School (2008).
- Lecturer, The association for Israeli Studies, Annual Conference, Taub Center for Israeli Studies, New – York University (2008).
- Lecturer, The 4th Annual CRS (Critical Race Studies) Symposium: Intersectionality Challenging Theory: Reframing Politics, Transforming Movements, UCLA Law School (2010).
- Lecturer, The Canadian Law And Society Association Annual Conference - Concordia University (2010).
- Organizer, Lecturer, The Graduate Law Student Association Annual Conference (2010) - McGill University Law School.
- Presenter, Women Creating Change Through Poetry. Reading selected poems in a Poetry Night Dedicated to my Poems, Tel - Aviv, Israel (2010).
- Organizer, Lecturer, The Graduate Law Student Association Annual Conference (2010) - McGill University Law School.

Honors

- Women Creating Change: One of 38 Women selected as most influential Israeli women committed to Human - Rights. The profiles were displayed in an exhibition and published in a catalogue both in Israel and in Tallinn, Estonia (2008).
- Ha'aretz Newspaper, Gallery and Book Review Section: “Israeli Writers and Poets Living Abroad”. A project for the “Israeli Hebrew Book Week”, covering selected Israeli intellectuals living abroad and creating in Hebrew who were invited to write about their experience in publishing in Hebrew.

Testimony

“I was particularly drawn by McGill’s fervent devotion to both scholarship and social service, bridging knowledge and practice. As a human-rights lawyer and scholar devoted to promoting common good and social justice through law, that was of special importance for me, further enabling me to challenge the traditional legal theory which positions a hierarchical oppositional binary of theory versus practice, and thus further preserves the monopoly of few over knowledge and theory. The Law is to certain extent a rigid and inflexible discipline, confining lawyers to the task of solving problems, forming solutions and finding answers. Instead, McGill Law School encourages its students to ask questions. What I found mostly appealing was that at McGill thinking and daring are not disciplined but rather encouraged. Its declared dedication is to integrative and interdisciplinary analyses, advocating the importance of context and diversity-based approaches to understanding equality and human-dignity. These are only some of the reasons why I have decided to study at McGill. I believe that it is McGill law school, whereby the law is not the only source of reference, but rather a medium of research amongst other intersecting disciplines, that can provide me with the intellectual and personal-professional means for pursuing my research. I truly believe that graduate studies at McGill whereby women are allowed and encouraged to think, speak and dare, will be the best platform for advancing and achieving my goals.”