

*Legal Education Seminar Essay – The Future of Legal Education*

**Teaching Privilege in Legal Education: Placing Lawyers on the Road to Justice**

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*Privilege* is rarely at the center of learning in law school. The word gets used in the law of evidence, and in professional ethics, in very particular, legalistic ways, but here I use ‘privilege’ in the social sense of the word. Privilege, socially, is the advantage that comes with being identified as white, male, straight, cis-gendered, able-bodied, middle or upper class, or many other markers of dominant social and political power. Privilege can be difficult for us to think about, let alone talk about. Thinking about privilege means, crudely, to think about how lucky you are in some ways, while also thinking about how others are luckier than you in other ways. One way to engage with privilege, I suggest, is to think about your *place*: take a look at yourself, take a look around, and what sort of privileges do you see? At the moment, I have the privilege of having you read my words and seeing what I have to say. This privilege is a result of my place in the world, as a student at a law school in Quebec/Canada, who gets to write a paper on the future of legal education and have it read and assessed by a professor, and then get credits for completing a university course. On the way to this place, I have been aided by some privileges, and challenged by a lack of certain privileges that others have had. With this paper, from my present place, I argue for the importance of teaching law students to be conscious of privilege, and consider different ways of engaging this difficult issue in and out of the classroom.

My thoughts on this topic have been shaped by personal experiences in law school and the comments of law professors. I begin with my own LL.M. supervisor’s remarks on the importance of being self-aware. McGill Law Professor Mark Antaki often tells a story about handing in the first chapter of his doctoral thesis to his supervisor, which he knew was not very good, and getting it back with a blunt and honest verbal

comment: ‘I don’t mean to psychologize but maybe you don’t love yourself enough.’

This, Antaki says, was one of the best pedagogical moments of his life, because it led him to question whether he had really been ‘there’ when writing the chapter. Many students, he says, ‘do not have an internal sense of whether they are producing good work or not’ and ‘just try to meet their professors “expectations” rather than learning to judge their own work and do so for their own sake.’<sup>1</sup> Self-awareness, Antaki realized, is key to producing good work. While his story is not about privilege, it follows that recognizing privilege is part of being self-aware. Antaki has almost all his classes read George Orwell’s essay ‘Politics and the English Language,’ which criticizes the use of complicated and abstract writing that is inaccessible and detached from concrete meaning: ‘What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about. In prose, the worst thing one can do with words is to surrender to them.’<sup>2</sup> Orwell calls for language use that comes from lived experience, not from the reproduction of arid terminology that we learn as *de rigeur* in intellectual discourse. In law, words are our tools, but the language of law often mystifies and masks their real meaning in the world, and one must become deeply absorbed in legalese to be able to make sense of it. The ‘politics’ of language, Orwell says, is ‘designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind.’<sup>3</sup> Self-awareness is about knowing who you are and what you are trying to say, and thus making your words clearly reflect the meaning you want them to have in the world. If we are self-aware, we cannot avoid reflecting on our own experiences and understandings of

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<sup>1</sup> McGill: Faculty of Law, ‘Mark Antaki: being self aware,’ online:

<sup>2</sup> George Orwell, ‘Politics and the English Language,’ in Sonia Orwell & Ian Angus, eds, *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Javanovich, 1968) at 138.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* at 139.

privilege, and we have to choose whether our words will engage the reality of privilege or mask our place in the world behind veils of abstraction. This is especially significant in the language of law, where our words touch directly on the ordering of power between people.

The problem is how to encourage students to be self-aware, since no one can really make you aware of yourself except your self. Antaki's supervisor's comment was pointed, but unusual and probably only appropriate to the fairly intimate relationship between graduate student and supervisor. I recall an experience from law school at UBC, when the professor in a legal philosophy seminar bluntly challenged a student to acknowledge his own privilege. While discussing 'affirmative action' hiring policies used to increase the presence of underprivileged people in workplaces, a student commented that he thought it was unfair that in applying for a job another candidate who demonstrated less 'merit' would get the job over him because of an affirmative action policy. In response, the professor stated in a raised voice and irritated tone that if you are going to argue against a policy designed to help the underprivileged, because of how it affects yourself, you have to have something to say about how to make things better for the less privileged person or your argument is self-serving and therefore unconvincing. In this case, the professor 'taught' the student about privilege in a pretty direct and abrasive way. What the student took from this encounter I cannot say. But in a very assertive way, the professor shifted the focus of discussion from policy to privilege. The student had personalized the discussion himself, by saying he thought it was unfair that his own chances of getting a job would depend on something other than merit, but his argument relied on a notion of 'fairness' as every applicant being treated the same in the hiring

process. The professor tried to raise self-awareness in the student by pointing out the politics behind the student's position, much like Orwell suggests we need to do in revealing the meanings behind our use of words. We cannot honestly talk about 'fairness,' our seminar professor seemed to be saying, without reflecting on our own place, and recognizing how a supposedly fair application of uniform standards works to perpetuate worse outcomes for people belonging to different groups than us that cannot be said to be a fair result simply because someone, at some time, created some standards of merit.

Among law students, personal characteristics that privilege members of certain groups in society over others have an impact on the educational experience. Brenna Bhandar, in an essay on the 'persistence of privilege in legal education,' says that '[t]hese imbalances of power reaffirm the sense of entitlement that law students from historically privileged communities tend to enjoy and the concurrent sense of profound insecurity experienced by most "Others".'<sup>4</sup> Legal education, Bhandar notes, 'reflects and reinforces the dominant political ideologies' that law functions to maintain; this is facilitated by 'fictitious divisions between law/politics, law/morality, and law/social relations' that for the most part leave 'critical legal discourses on the periphery of what is considered to be "real," or substantive law, rather than incorporating them into the very legal discourses that they are seeking to deconstruct.'<sup>5</sup> For students who do not take elective courses with a critical bent, law can be learned as if it is simply 'objective' or 'neutral' and the role of law in maintaining systems of power can simply be ignored.<sup>6</sup> Legal education, as Duncan

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<sup>4</sup> Brenna Bhandar, 'Always on the Defence: The Persistence of Privilege in Legal Education' (2002) 14 *Can. J. Women & L.* 341 at 341-342.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* at 347-348.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid* at 350.

Kennedy says in his famous article on law school as training for hierarchy, can often be an experience of ‘surrender...to a passivizing classroom experience and to a passive attitude toward the content of the legal system.’<sup>7</sup> For students who are not privileged by the dominant discourses maintained by law, this passivity translates into the insecurity of having to prove oneself to be a competent student within a system that marginalizes them.

While many law schools and professors incorporate critical reflection into the teaching of ‘core’ law courses, the challenge of raising self-awareness remains an obstacle, and critiques of the systemic causes of injustice do not immediately instill humility in privileged students or empower students who are underprivileged. As Bhandar says, ‘if we accept the proposition that social relations, and one’s position within these relations impact how and what we learn,’ then students are likely to have very different relationships with their legal educations depending on their privileges, and students who ‘because of their lived experience and relationships to the law’ do not ‘view and experience the law as universal, rational, or neutral’ are the ones most likely to suffer as a result of this pedagogical structure.<sup>8</sup> Offering criticism of dominant views of law is one way towards a more empowering educational experience for underprivileged students, but it is difficult to overcome the social entitlement that being white, heterosexual, middle-class, male, able-bodied, cis-gendered, or otherwise privileged, lends to certain students. Privileged students ‘may have the confidence to speak authoritatively and voice their various questions and viewpoints,’ while underprivileged students may feel compelled to ‘assimilate’ or ‘drop out and quit,’ or voice their concerns

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<sup>7</sup> Duncan Kennedy, ‘Legal Education as Training for Hierarchy,’ in David Kairys, ed, *The Politics of Law: A Progressive Critique, Revised Ed* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1990) at 41.

<sup>8</sup> Bhandar, *supra* note 4 at 350.

at the risk of ‘being labeled as hyper-sensitive, paranoid, irrational, or crazy.’<sup>9</sup> Students who see the forces of their own disadvantage at work in the law being taught to them bear an unfortunate burden if more privileged students are unable to see how the same forces work to their own advantage. Privileged students may become defensive, like the student in my legal philosophy seminar, when confronted with a challenge to systems that work in their favour. The alienation felt by underprivileged students who have to deal with the oppressive dynamics at work in their legal education, Bhandar thinks, has a serious impact on these students’ ability to learn, since it is difficult to succeed when one feels worn down, and has ‘little or no attachment’ to the subject they are being taught.<sup>10</sup> Empowerment for underprivileged students thus requires more than a professor providing critiques of the legal system in their lectures and seminars: it must be a collective endeavor involving all students and faculty inhabitants to become conscious of the layers of privilege that impact everyone, to their advantage or disadvantage, before, during, and after their placement in law school.

Clearly, teaching privilege seems to require space for students to share their experiences and express their own feelings about law, in order for a common understanding to be gained. But, as Professor Shauna Van Praagh stated in a talk at the ‘D.C.L. Coffee Hour’ series at McGill Law, just because you identify in a certain way does not mean you will be good at teaching about that identity.<sup>11</sup> This means, on the one hand, that professors who belong to an underprivileged group should not bear the responsibility of teaching privilege or be expected to be effective at teaching it because of

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* at 351.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* at 352-353.

<sup>11</sup> Shauna Van Praagh, ‘Diversity’ (D.C.L. coffee hour presentation, delivered at the Faculty of Law, McGill University, March 2015) [unpublished] [‘Diversity’].

their identity, and on the other hand that students who belong to underprivileged groups should not be seen as the only ones willing and capable of pointing out the oppressive and alienating aspects of their education. Advocates for storytelling as a part of legal education believe that personal experience is a valid source of knowledge.<sup>12</sup> Experiential stories pose challenges for learning and discussion, however: Van Praagh notes that the ‘highly individual and personal’ nature of storytelling ‘can negate the possibility of responsive and constructive dialogue,’ creating silence rather than communication since it is difficult to respond effectively to an experience one has not had, and risking fragmentation among students of different backgrounds.<sup>13</sup> As a response to these challenges, Van Praagh suggests employing a ‘narrative methodology’ that connects stories to less personalized sources of learning, so that a pattern of experience for members of certain groups can be depicted and students’ stories are not left as ‘personal anecdotes’ but become part of a ‘wider picture’ that can be conveyed to all students.<sup>14</sup> Van Praagh describes several teaching methods employed by law professors that are designed to connect stories to a wider picture; while all stories are valid expressions of students’ experiences, these methods encourage the telling of stories that are more than personal, and have a substantive connection to the area of law being discussed.<sup>15</sup> In order to enable this effective form of storytelling, Van Praagh argues, students require a safe space and a deliberate pedagogical commitment to theoretical and practical reform of the law that functions to place stories in context.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Van Praagh, ‘Stories in Law School: An Essay on Language, Participation, and the Power of Legal Education’ (1992) 2:1 Columbia J. Gender & L. 111 at 116.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* at 119-120.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid* at 126.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid* at 137.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid* at 138-139.



The creation of safe spaces for constructive storytelling, if done effectively, has the potential to raise self-awareness in privileged students and engage them in critical reflection on the sources of their own privilege. Relating lived experience to ‘the common social and political terrain that everyone occupies’ relieves underprivileged students of the burden of ‘testifying’ about the realities of belonging to a marginalized group, and avoids absolving privileged students from ‘creatively and productively engaging with this field of inquiry.’<sup>17</sup> The constructive use of stories in wider narrative context can help students and professors overcome the challenges of analyzing privilege, which is complicated by the fact that ‘each of us lives at the juncture of privilege and subordination...privileged in some respects while being subordinated in others.’<sup>18</sup> The complexity of our placement in a social universe of advantages and disadvantages attached to various characteristics can make it hard to accept how others have suffered so that we can benefit. Stephanie Wildman holds that ‘awareness and honesty about systems of privilege’ is essential for teaching students of different backgrounds, and since ‘race, gender, and sexual orientation are in the room whether we make them explicit or not,’ we should realize that it is okay to notice this difference.<sup>19</sup> How to notice it and talk about it effectively is an ongoing challenge in every classroom, but focusing on the common social and political terrain that everyone in (and outside) of the room inhabits allows us to talk about privilege in a way that does not focus on some individuals as ‘victims’ and others, implicitly, as ‘perpetrators.’<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bhandar, *supra* note 4 at 354.

<sup>18</sup> Stephanie M. Wildman, ‘Privilege and Legalism in Liberal Education: Teaching and Learning in a Diverse Environment’ (1995) 10 Berkeley Women’s L.J. 88 at 91.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid* at 92-93.

<sup>20</sup> Bhandar, *supra* note 4 at 356.

Wildman sees the key issue to be ‘creating a classroom environment where *all* our students feel safe and feel able to talk about these issues.’<sup>21</sup> This means a space where underprivileged students feel safe relating their own experiences of oppression, and privileged students feel able to respond constructively to the telling of these stories. It means that awareness of privilege is raised collectively, as a common understanding that we are all woven intricately into patterns of privilege by systems of power that shape all of our lives concurrently but in different ways. It also means recognizing that in talking about privilege we are likely to make mistakes, but this is okay. Wildman describes a personal teaching experience in her torts class, in which she told the story of Professor Jerome Culp, an African-American man who wrote about an incident when walking down a street in a predominantly white community in the 1970s he crossed paths with a white woman who ‘literally curled up into a ball in fear of him.’<sup>22</sup> The legal question for the class was ‘whether it would have been an assault for him to say boo to her,’ and Wildman asked the class whether by subjectivizing the standard we are taking away Culp’s right to walk down the street. Only after the class was over did Wildman realize that she had not said anything about the fact that the subjective reaction of the woman, her fear of a person of colour, was not reasonable.<sup>23</sup> In the next class, Wildman raised this realization with the students, acknowledged that she felt she had made people feel excluded, and stated that she wanted ‘to make the process of creating a safe classroom environment more visible.’<sup>24</sup> In discussing this incident with students and colleagues, Wildman encountered ambivalence about whether she had done anything wrong in the

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<sup>21</sup> Wildman, *supra* note 18 at 94.

<sup>22</sup> Jerome McCristal Culp, Jr, ‘Autobiography and Legal Scholarship and Teaching: Finding the Me in the Legal Academy’ (1991) 77 Va. L. Rev. 539 at 552-553, in *Ibid* at 94.

<sup>23</sup> Wildman, *supra* note 18 at 94-95.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid* at 95.

first place, and about whether her response was appropriate or too personal; as a result she has now set ‘very modest goals’ of simply getting students ‘to see that racism is not something done solely by evil people “out there”.’<sup>25</sup> This story shows the difficulty of teaching privilege when we speak from our own position of privilege, which can prevent us from seeing certain aspects of privilege in the moment. Wildman’s self-doubt, however, reflects her own self-awareness, and her vocalized commitment to making the creation of a safe space more visible indicates that she is consciously engaging the complexity of the common social and political terrain everyone in the class inhabits rather than avoiding it.

Bhandar describes the acknowledgement of ‘how my experiences are shaped by my privilege and how, in turn, my privilege shapes the experience of others’ as ‘a form of responsibility’ to those ‘whose experiences of exclusion are intimately connected to my experiences of entitlement and inclusions.’<sup>26</sup> I read this as both an intellectual responsibility to be conscious of the dominant assumptions underlying what we treat in law school as knowledge, and a social responsibility to confront the systems of domination that make it more difficult for some people to engage with law than others. The pedagogical objective for Bhandar is to work toward changing relationships between students, and between students and teachers, thus changing ‘the ways of learning and knowledge production;’ this connects learning in the classroom to the creation of social change and the displacement of dominant power relations.<sup>27</sup> The goal of un-doing power dynamics in the classroom is intimately connected to the un-doing of power dynamics in the world at large. In order for legal education to engage in the conjoined goals of

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid* at 96.

<sup>26</sup> Bhandar, *supra* note 4 at 357.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid* at 359.

changing the classroom and changing the common social and political terrain, Bhandar concludes that ‘it is necessary to seek out potential faculty members who not only represent marginalized communities but who also bring to bear perspectives on their scholarship that have hitherto been marginalized.’<sup>28</sup> This means bringing critical reflections that are commonly marginalized to the center of legal education, by assessing candidates for teaching positions not merely on their identity, as if to fill quotas for members of marginalized groups, but on their engagement with narrative methodologies that reveal the systems of power at work in law and in law school. A faculty that seeks out these critical professors integrates study of the common social and political terrain into the heart of its pedagogy, and has the potential of becoming on the whole a safe space for constructive storytelling, rather than leaving it up to a few professors and students to create smaller safe spaces on the margins.

In recognizing that we all inhabit a common social and political terrain we must also recognize how as legal scholars we are privileged in our relationships with the law in ways that people without a legal education are not. This is true even of students and professors who are relatively underprivileged within the law school community. Many who pursue a legal education may see it as a means of getting a high salary job, or of opening doors to places of social and political power. Even students who go to law school for ‘social justice’ reasons enter a world of power, and most have been enabled to get to this place because of certain privileges. When these students become equipped with legal skills and credentials, they may assume that they ‘have much to offer low income and marginalized communities, but little to gain or learn from these communities that might

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid* at 361.

inform or even transform their work.’<sup>29</sup> This view privileges those who have had the means to get a legal education, and depicts outsiders in need of legal representation as helpless without the aid of someone who has been empowered by access to legal knowledge. Sarah Buhler advocates for a ‘community’ based approach to lawyering that adopts ‘a contextual and politicized understanding’ of the forces as at work in creating legal issues for underprivileged clients, and ‘leads to an awareness that social mobilization, community activism and political advocacy are necessary tools for access to justice.’<sup>30</sup> This view of lawyering is akin to the contextualization of stories within a common social and political terrain that the previously mentioned authors advocate for in the classroom. Rather than seeing underprivileged clients as unfortunate subjects of a legal system over which they have no power, community lawyering sees the ways that marginalized actors are already working to displace dominant power relations, and sees the role of the lawyer as contributor to this ongoing community work, rather than as savior holding the only set of keys to the door of justice. Buhler writes that this approach ‘decentres and de-privileges the focus on access to courts and lawyers and instead invites lawyers to explore the ways in which they can work collaboratively on these issues.’<sup>31</sup> Fostering a community lawyering mindset in students thus has the potential to extend self-awareness in the classroom out into all places where law intersects with the common social and political terrain.

This community approach recognizes that the ‘space’ of the law school is an enclosed space, in which ‘the transformation of law students from “outsiders” to

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<sup>29</sup> Sarah Buhler, ‘The View from Here: Access to Justice and Community Legal Clinics’ (2012) 63 U.N.B.L.J. 436 at 440 [‘The View from Here’].

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid* at 442.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*.

“insiders” takes place; Buhler sees the law school functioning ‘as a space of privilege and elite knowledge’ that produces professional identities that ‘tend to be reflective and supportive of dominant power relations.’<sup>32</sup> In this space, underprivileged students may resist such domination, but studies show that ‘many students respond by actively shaping their identities and ideologies to conform to status quo expectations,’ alienating them from activist approaches that see lawyers as having a role to play in tackling systemic social injustice.<sup>33</sup> It follows from this spatial understanding that fostering consciousness in law students of how they have been professionally privileged requires engagement outside the walls of the law school. A prominent means of engaging law students in the outside world is through participation in community legal clinics. In these clinics, law students apply their acquired skills to assist low income and marginalized clients with their legal problems. While this exposure can help break down dominant notions of professional identity, Buhler notes that encounters in legal clinics ‘can serve to reinforce dominant understandings’ because students bring with them ‘preconceived stereotypes’ about marginalized clients.<sup>34</sup> The journey back and forth between the elite space of the law school and ‘degenerate’ spaces where students encounter marginalized actors with legal problems can reinforce ideas about the personal failings of low income clients, and ‘lead to conceptions of superiority, control, and a desire to implement acontextualized legal solutions in their clinical work.’<sup>35</sup> Unless students come to community legal clinics shed of stereotypes and preconceptions about marginalized clients, these encounters can

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<sup>32</sup> Buhler, ‘Journeys to 20<sup>th</sup> Street: the Inner City as Critical Pedagogical Space for Legal Education’ (2009) 32 Dalhousie L.J. 381 at 389 [‘Journeys to 20<sup>th</sup> Street’].

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid* at 394.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* at 400.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* at 401.

function to work against a community lawyering approach that is based on consciousness of privilege.

In contrast, a genuine commitment to community lawyering involves seeing the ways that marginalized actors are already engaged in struggles for social justice, breaking down notions of ‘professional expertise and privilege,’ and ensuring that lawyers are invited to assist in community efforts at justice rather than acting as if they have a ‘right’ to enter these spaces to ‘help’ the underprivileged.<sup>36</sup> Community lawyering replaces a ‘lawyer-centred perspective’ with a ‘community perspective,’ and focuses on collaboration with community groups rather than the supposed ‘technical dominance and privileged knowledge’ of people with a legal education.<sup>37</sup> In much the same way as stories in the classroom are linked to analyses of the common social and political terrain, a community approach to participation in legal clinics links ‘the individual circumstances of clients with the larger situation of poverty and marginalization’ that contributes to their legal problems, and leads students to question how much ‘justice’ clinical legal representation can actually achieve for these clients.<sup>38</sup> Often, students come to see that while their representation of clients in clinics is important, it ‘does not in any real way change the material conditions of their clients’ lives;’ Buhler suggests that this realization can create opportunities for critical reflection on the limits of legal practice and ‘the general inability of the legal system to promote broad or systemic change.’<sup>39</sup> Community legal clinics, if approached from a community lawyering perspective, can thus serve as a means of generating self-awareness for students who in the privileged space of the law

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* at 406.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid* at 408-409.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid* at 412.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid* at 413.

school rarely turn the ‘spotlight’ on themselves to engage in ‘critical exploration of the role of lawyers in the perpetuation of power relations and the status quo in society.’<sup>40</sup>

Of course, in much the same way that it can be difficult for students to accept how their personal advantages are related to the disadvantages of their less privileged colleagues, it can be hard for law students to accept that their education does not grant them a special status in the quest for social justice. McGill Law Professor Alana Klein describes how reading Buhler’s views on legal clinics elicited a strong reaction among students in her law and poverty course. At first, most of the students were put-off by Buhler’s negative language about the ability of lawyers to help marginalized actors access justice; but after a thorough discussion of the context within which Buhler was writing, the students came to appreciate Buhler’s perspective in a better light, and to understand that the point of the readings was not to make students or lawyers feel guilty.<sup>41</sup> Buhler’s writing, much like my legal philosophy professor’s retort to the student who opposed affirmative action measures on the grounds of his own personal merits, may seem harsh to many students, but it is engagement with a common social and political terrain through thoughtful discussion that enables students to see that different voices come from different places, and that there is no uniform way to understand the relationship between law and privilege; except, perhaps, through self-awareness. Buhler notes that experience at community legal clinics can help to place students who feel like ‘outsiders’ in the space of the law school at the ‘the centre’ of discussion when back in the classroom, and their perspectives may be seen by the rest of the class as offering

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid* at 414.

<sup>41</sup> Interview of Professor Alana Klein (April 2015) in person, Faculty of Law, McGill University, Montreal.



valuable insights for lawyering in different communities.<sup>42</sup> Thus active engagement with communities outside the law school and intellectual engagement with social and political discourses in the classroom together have the potential to empower underprivileged students, and to generate critical self reflection among all law students on the sources of their own professional privilege.

The literature and stories I have referred to in this paper have a common theme of engagement with the complex social and political forces that enmesh everyone, whether student, professor, lawyer, client, or otherwise situated in the field of law, within layers of privilege. None of us live without some privileges, and none of us live without some disadvantages. The only way we can see how our particular privileges, or lack of privileges, relate to those of the people around us is by seeking self-awareness through critical reflection on our shared world. Sometimes, even well intended efforts to listen to or help those who are less privileged than us can have the effect of reinforcing our own privilege. Buhler describes how the ‘moral anger’ compassionate student legal clinicians feel when struggling to represent marginalized clients against forces of oppression can function to fuel self perceptions that lawyers and law students are in a privileged position on the quest for social justice – what is important is to reflect on our own position, and channel our feelings into understanding of our limited role in supporting underprivileged communities.<sup>43</sup> The same reflection and troubling of our feelings should be applied in the classroom, as students and professors, so that voices of difference do not provoke us to become defensive but rather open our eyes to new perspectives on our world and on ourselves. The self-awareness we gain from these critical reflections will make us better

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<sup>42</sup> Buhler, ‘Journeys to 20<sup>th</sup> Street,’ *supra* note 32 at 415.

<sup>43</sup> Buhler, ‘Troubling Feelings: Moral Anger and Clinical Legal Education’ (2014) 37 Dalhousie L.J. 397 at 413 [‘Troubling Feelings’].

lawyers, colleagues, students, and teachers. Social justice lawyers who work in close collaboration with communities describe ‘love and hope as more important than outrage and anger’ in the face of injustice.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, as my masters supervisor was once reminded by his supervisor, love for oneself allows us to make better use of our words and produce work that is more honest and that we can be more proud of. Let the future of legal education be one where professors have the will and the tools to be open to honesty, and students have the courage and sense of safety to be who they are, with love.

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid* at 419.

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