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Symposium

Introduction

By ANGELA P. HARRIS*

PROFESSOR STEPHANIE M. WILDMAN doesn't act like a radical.

Her personal manner—slightly anxious, slightly self-deprecating, hoping for the best but expecting the worst, like a character in a Woody Allen movie—typically inspires her colleagues to trade gossip and confidences with her rather than to yell slogans or storm the barricades. Yet Stephanie is a radical in the best sense of the word: someone who goes to the root of things and brings them up entirely new and fresh. Stephanie tells me that when she arrived at Stanford Law School in 1970 as a first-year student, she was shocked to discover that law school was not all about social justice. She has never entirely recovered from that shock. She has used it, instead, to re-imagine legal education and legal scholarship from within. It is, then, both odd and entirely fitting that the University of San Francisco Law Review should be dedicating a symposium to her and her work. Odd, because Stephanie has spent most of her career subverting traditional legal education and scholarship. Fitting, because during Stephanie's time at USF she worked—as she continues to do—to bring justice back to the center of our vision of the law. The essays in this Symposium are a testimony to the influence of her work.

Stephanie joined the USF faculty in 1974, after Professor Steven F. Shatz discovered her teaching part-time as an adjunct at McGeorge Law School in 1973 and encouraged her—actually, twisted her arm a bit—to enter law teaching full-time. She has been a radical ever since. Consider, for example, her career-long commitment to collaboration in teaching, writing, and service. As a teacher, Stephanie has pursued collaborative work both with other faculty and with students.¹ As a

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1. See, e.g., Stephanie M. Wildman, *The Classroom Climate: Encouraging Student Involvement*, 4 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 326 (1989) (discussing ways to encourage students to participate in their own learning); Stephanie M. Wildman, *The Question of Silence: Techniques to*

scholar, some of Stephanie's most powerful contributions to the literature on privilege have been co-authored.² And in her service to the profession, Stephanie has been an innovator in collaboration: she recently stepped down from a successful year as co-president, with Professor Phoebe Haddon of Temple University School of Law, of the Society of American Law Teachers. In each of these endeavors, Stephanie has demonstrated a remarkable gift for facilitating the mysterious process by which a group becomes larger than the sum of its parts.

Stephanie's gift is not only remarkable, but subversive. Collaborative work violates the deeply individualist norms of law professing and the myth of personal "brilliance" that these norms perpetuate. In their research, law professors are expected to put in long hours alone in the pursuit of the "brilliant" insights that will prove their individual merit. Indeed, co-authored work is deeply suspect in the tenure process at most law schools, because, "How can we tell who wrote what?" The norms of the classroom are an extension of this vision, for professors usually work alone and are expected to present (largely passive) students with the fruits of their brilliant individual insights. This vision of law professing is in keeping with the larger world of the arts and humanities, where scholars are primarily valued for their individual accomplishments, not for their work on committees or on research teams. Yet this individualistic focus obscures the extent to which most academics are not lone geniuses, but, rather, spend their careers in figurative and literal conversation with others. Indeed, the individualist focus of academic life hinders truly transformative work in both teaching and research. Lone geniuses can offer insights here and there, but the major intellectual revolutions of our time—law and economics, critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory—have been collective efforts. The history of social justice movements teaches that long-lasting social change can only be achieved by collective action.

Ensure Full Class Participation, 38 J. LEGAL EDUC. 147 (1988); see also Catharine Wells's essay in this Symposium (discussing the joint efforts of Wells, Trina Grillo, and Stephanie Wildman to bring issues of gender and race into their teaching). This semester, I am co-teaching a seminar called "Law and Social Justice" with Stephanie, and she has been a regular auditor of my other course, "Race and American Law."

2. See, e.g., JUAN F. PEREA, RICHARD DELGADO, ANGELA P. HARRIS, AND STEPHANIE M. WILDMAN, *RACE AND RACES: CASES AND RESOURCES FOR A DIVERSE AMERICA* (2000); STEPHANIE M. WILDMAN (WITH MARGALYNNE ARMSTRONG, ADRIENNE D. DAVIS, AND TRINA GRILLO), *PRIVILEGE REVEALED: HOW INVISIBLE PREFERENCE UNDERMINES AMERICA* (1996); Trina Grillo & Stephanie M. Wildman, *Obscuring the Importance of Race: The Implication of Making Comparisons Between Racism and Sexism (or Other -isms)*, 1991 DUKE L.J. 397; Dolores A. Donovan & Stephanie M. Wildman, *Is the Reasonable Man Obsolete? A Critical Perspective on Self-Defense and Provocation*, 14 LOY. L.A. L. REV. 435 (1981).

Stephanie's open, continuous, and notorious engagement in collaborative work points to the possibility of a different way of being in the academy: a way in which one functions as a member of a community of scholars, teachers, and activists, and in which *changing* the rules—not simply playing by them better than anyone else—is the goal. And, in this way, Stephanie's commitment to group process demonstrates her radical instincts.

Stephanie's contributions to legal education have been radical in substance as well as method. As all the essays in this Symposium make clear, Stephanie's greatest intellectual contribution has been to explicate and emphasize the importance of privilege, particularly, but not only, white privilege. As she herself has pointed out, this focus runs directly counter to the focus of contemporary anti-discrimination law, in which the effort has been the inclusion and assimilation of groups marked as "other" to a preexisting norm.³ The focus on privilege requires sweeping changes in the way law schools admit and teach students and, especially, hire faculty.⁴ The focus on privilege, finally, requires self-examination of an extremely uncomfortable kind. Whereas the liberal discourse of "discrimination" creates many innocent bystanders, a few guilty perpetrators (usually people wearing KKK regalia) and several wronged but righteous victims, the discourse of privilege forces the innocent bystanders to recognize themselves as the beneficiaries of structural oppression. This is something that is very hard to do because: privilege by its very nature tends to be invisible; we are taught, correctly, to abhor oppression and identify with its victims rather than its perpetrators; and, finally, the recognition of privilege runs counter, again, to the individualistic norms of American life. We are used to thinking of ourselves as responsible only for what we personally do and say. It is very hard in such a society to live with responsibility for something—a system of privilege—we didn't create and never asked for. Yet Stephanie's work asks us to do just that. Moreover, Stephanie's work asks us to take responsibility for privilege, not by guilt-tripping or moralizing, but by telling stories: stories about ordinary life as lived by ordinary people, stories not about bigots or

3. See Stephanie M. Wildman, *Privilege in the Workplace: The Missing Element in Antidiscrimination Law*, 4 TEX. J. WOMEN & L. 171 (1995).

4. See Stephanie M. Wildman, *Democratic Community and Privilege: The Mandate for Inclusive Education*, 81 MINN. L. REV. 1429 (1997); Stephanie M. Wildman, *Integration in the 1980s: The Dream of Diversity and the Cycle of Exclusion*, 64 TUL. L. REV. 1625, 1626–27, 1629, 1676 (1990); Stephanie M. Wildman, *Privilege and Liberalism in Legal Education: Teaching and Learning in a Diverse Environment*, 10 BERKELEY WOMEN'S L.J. 88, 96–97 (1995).

victims but about ordinary privileged people trying to do the best they can, ordinary people like herself—and like us.⁵

This brings me to the last sense in which I will argue that Stephanie's work is radical. Stephanie's work, in teaching, writing, and service, consistently makes the intellectual, and the political, personal. A constant theme in Stephanie's work on privilege is how privilege manifests itself in daily interactions, in ways both obvious and seemingly insignificant. The personal narratives that weave through Stephanie's writings disarm the reader by encouraging us to know and identify with her as an individual. And, as Beverly Horsburgh notes in her contribution to this Symposium,⁶ throughout her career Stephanie has worked behind the scenes (and in front of them) to promote the interests of people of color and to make her own privilege visible. Stephanie's intellectual work, then, does not exist only on paper; it is part of who she is in the world. As John A. Powell says, Stephanie's project "is not simply to name privilege but to destabilize and change it."⁷ She is committed to doing this in her own life as well as on the printed page.

Stephanie, then, is that all-too-rare bird: a tenured radical. But she is a radical of a special sort. The stereotypical radical is a marcher and a protester, a lover of in-your-face confrontation. Stephanie is the sort of radical who is far more dangerous. She is the woman next door who can deconstruct systems of power and subordination while showing you a great place to buy chocolate. She doesn't act like a radical. But those of us who know her, know better.

5. See, e.g., Stephanie M. Wildman & Adrienne D. Davis, *Language and Silence: Making Systems of Privilege Visible*, 35 SANTA CLARA L. REV. 881, 896–98 (1995); STEPHANIE M. WILDMAN ET AL., PRIVILEGE REVEALED, *supra* note 2.

6. See Beverly Horsburgh, *The Voices of Silence: Cognition, Culture, and Racism*, 34 U.S.F. L. REV. 497 (2000).

7. See John A. Powell, *Whites Will Be Whites: The Failure to Interrogate Racial Privilege*, 34 U.S.F. L. REV. 419 (2000).