**Final Reflective Journal (this is a second take on the first journal entry)**

The critical event occurred during the week 2 family law seminar. Anne asked us to draw a portrait of our family. I drew my father, my mother, my 2 sisters and I. I expected other students to include only their immediately family members as well. However, I noticed that other students included their grandparents, their aunts, uncles, their pets, their house and their properties.

This got me thinking as to the reason for my drawing (with just immediate family members). This is especially interesting because my parents have divorced and I am living with my father, my 2 sisters and my grandmother. I wonder why do I include my mother instead of my grandmother. Most students included the family members that they live with.

After some careful thoughts, I think that I included my mother in the group because I thought that family law regulates only matters between immediate family members. (I think the reason Anne asked us to draw the portrait was to determine our notion of family, which would be regulated under the family law). This means that other students possibly think that all the things/people that they have drawn in their picture comes under the regulation of family law as well. Besides, based on their description of their picture, all of them seem really passionate about everything that they have drawn inside the picture as well, because as they said, it is part of their family.

I feel that family law does not encompass other things outside of the immediate family due to my experiences through my parent’s divorce. I was well protected from what was going on behind the scenes. In fact, I do not feel like I am a part of the whole process at all. Life goes on normally for me (credit to my parents) besides the fact that my mother moved out of the house. Even the fact that my mother moved out of the house did not have such a big impact on me because my grandmother was there for me. To date, I am not certain what happened behind the scenes [in the resolution of the family law dispute about property and where we were to live]. Therefore, I feel that family law matters are really personal, which involves only immediate family members and not uncles, aunties or grandparents. Furthermore, I did not move to live elsewhere even after the divorce. Therefore, the only difference that I can see after divorce is just the fact that my mum had moved out and that is the biggest change to my life.

However, the fact that many students think that family law encompasses many aspects besides immediate family members will serve as a valuable lesson to me. As a family law student, I should know that people want to have considerations given for other things/people they consider family like their pets, properties and their non-immediate family members. If I ever become a family law practitioner, it would alert me to these factors that may be of utmost importance to my clients.

After going through the whole family course, it made me realise that there are so many more dimensions to family law than what I thought. Although legally speaking, family law matters rarely involve family members other than immediate family members, considerations are given to other family members as well. For example: how a parenting order may affect a child’s relationship with their relatives)

Furthermore, I was also exposed to issues of poverty affecting parents after separation. This made me realise the possible hardship that my mother had been going through after the divorce. My mother had been staying at home since my sisters and I were born. I would imagine that it is hard for her to get back to the labour force after 15 years of staying at home. Furthermore, I did not think how hard would it be for her to separated from her children and has the court or the law in anyway try to relieve all these hardships facing her after separation Maybe I was too young to realise at that point in time or maybe she hid it well from me and therefore I was not alerted to this important dimension of family law.

In my opinion, to achieve equity, the law must necessarily include all these different dimensions of family law. This would be a difficult task for the courts considering even a class of 15 students have such different notion of what family and equity is. However, I think this is what the law should strive to achieve.