RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Introduction: Radical Teaching About Human Rights

by Michael Bennett and Susan O'Malley

POSTERS AND GRAPHICS COURTESY OF THE UN

When the idea of devoting an issue of *Radical Teacher* to Human Rights Education (HRE) first came up at a meeting of the Editorial Collective, some members were not enthusiastic. As self-proclaimed radicals, many of us were suspicious of the discourse of human rights (Whose rights? How are they defined, and by whom? Who enforces them, and how?); suspicious of HRE (or any educational movement that has become an acronym often invoked uncritically by adherents with a sometimes unclear political agenda); just plain suspicious (Isn't it the job of radicals to be critical of mainstream discourses and movements, including self-criticism when our own ideas become mainstreamed?) Co-editor Susan O'Malley, who since her retirement has worked with the NGO Committee on the Status of Women at the UN, suggested that human rights was much more complicated than the discussions at *Radical Teacher* meetings indicated, although she admitted that she knew little about how human rights was being taught. At MLA in 2013, she organized a panel on "Women and the Language/Literature of Human Rights" that elicited great interest and produced a number of excellent papers, one of which by Amy Levin has already been published by *Radical Teacher*. When we wrote the call for articles on teaching about human rights, we had no idea that we would receive so many proposals that we are now planning a second issue on "Teaching About Human Rights."

We took the Editorial Collective's suspicions seriously as co-editors while we delved into the many proposed essays from a wide variety of teachers engaged with the HRE movement, with which neither of us were very familiar when this process began. We learned that HRE has a long and complicated history, and that lately the HRE movement has become larger and more active than we were aware. Most histories of HRE begin with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was passed unanimously by the UN in 1946. Signatories to the UDHR pledge that they "shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms." Article 26 of the UDHR states that "Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages . . . Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms." These initial declarations were followed by the 1974 United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) document that recommitted the UN to HRE; the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna reaffirming that "States are duty-bound . . . to ensure that education is aimed at strengthening the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms"; the establishment of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights shortly thereafter; the declaration of the United Nation Decade for Human Rights Education 1995-2004; and the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training (DHRET). Felisa Tibbitts traces the concomitant development of HRE in the United States from Amnesty International-USA and their Human Rights Educators Network to the relatively recent U.S. Human Rights Educators Network (HRE USA) (12-13).

One of the most important divisions in the discourse of human rights is between those activists and educators who emphasize the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and those who focus on the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). The former covenant has historically been emphasized in the Global North by those devoted to individual civil rights but less interested in communal socio-economic rights. The opposite has generally held true in the Global South. This contrast in the content of HRE is often mirrored by a contrast in form between educators who address legal violations of universal human rights in traditional hierarchical classrooms and those who practice some variety of critical or transformative pedagogy in exploring specific cultural contexts. Radical teachers have emphasized the latter in terms of both form and content.

This historical context reinforces our sense from reading through a few dozen essays and proposals for this issue on "Teaching about Human Rights" that HRE is not necessarily radical and often has been greatly influenced in practice by neoliberalism. Many of the proposals that we rejected seemed naively to assume that merely mentioning human rights is a radical act. These essays fell into several categories: those that felt it was enough to point to a series of human rights atrocities and condemn them; those that acted as a kind of advertising campaign for the far-sightedness of particular institutions or departments addressing human rights in some fashion; and, most perniciously, those that wanted the United States to point fingers at others for violating human rights without considering our context as citizens of an imperializing settler colonial state.

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The following essays, which we were pleased to read and excited to publish, don't necessarily agree with each other or with our own commitments to HRE, but they avoid the obvious pitfalls of the essays we rejected, and they create a useful dialogue between those who are sure that there is a radical way to engage students in learning about human rights and those who are less sure and more critical of the HRE movement even as they participate in the movement. In the former category of educators/activists who have dedicated all or most of their careers to building platforms for HRE, perhaps the foremost is Nancy Flowers, whose essay "The Global Movement for Human Rights Education" along with accompanying tools for "Taking the Human Rights Temperature of Your School" and finding "Resources for Human Rights Education" provide an overview of the global movement for HRE—its impetus, challenges, and contrasting developments in different
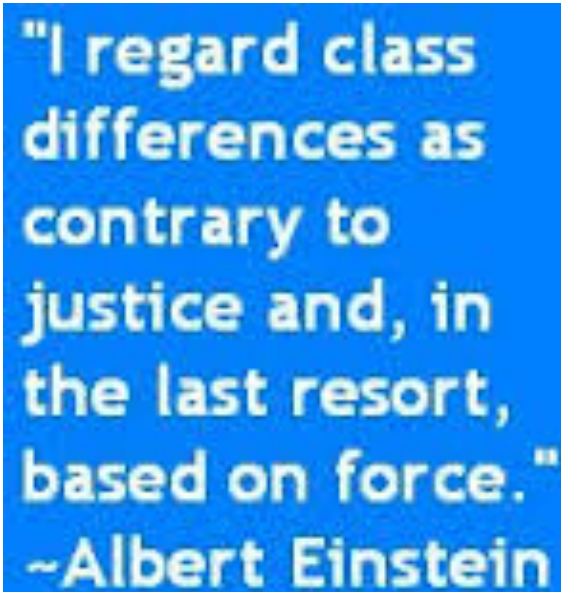
regions of the world, focusing especially on Latin America, the Philippines, South Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Flowers seeks to put HRE in the United States into an international perspective, exploring the variety of goals that inspire HRE and how methodologies have evolved to meet specific regional and political cultures and needs. We were happy to see that this overview focuses on the most useful forms of HRE not as an imposition of the Global North on the Global South, but as growing out of indigenous movements for human rights.

While some critics have complained that the discourse of human rights is too easily coopted by neoliberalism, Gillian MacNaughton and Diane F. Frey maintain the opposite in "Teaching the Transformative Agenda of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights." They believe that the norms and aspirations elaborated in the UDHR provide a framework for a radically different world than the one we have today. MacNaughton and Frey revisit the content of the UDHR, beginning with the right to a social and international order in which everyone's rights can be realized, and consider other key provisions that conflict with neoliberalism, including the rights to the benefits of science, to full employment and decent work, to progressive realization of free higher education, to nondiscrimination on the grounds of economic status, and to solidarity. They also share some activities that they use in the classroom and online to make the transformative agenda of the UDHR visible to students and demonstrate how far neoliberalism has strayed from the aspiration of a world in which everyone enjoys their human rights. The article concludes that teaching a holistic vision of the UDHR in a neoliberal world is central to a radical human rights curriculum.

By contrast, Robyn Linde and Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur are troubled by the ways in which the new human rights regime that grew out of the UDHR is consistently presented as a progressive teleology that contextualizes the expansion of rights within a larger grand narrative of liberalization, emancipation, and social justice. In "Teaching Progress: A Critique of the Grand Narrative of Human Rights as Pedagogy for Marginalized Students," Linde and Arthur examine the disjuncture between the grand narrative on international movements for human rights and social justice and the lived experiences of marginalized students in urban environments in the United States. They advocate for a critical and transformational approach to human rights pedagogy to counter and overcome the pervasive individualization that undergirds the grand narrative of human rights, arguing that a critical (and radical) human rights pedagogy must evaluate the

position of the individual in modern life if liberation through human rights law and activism is to be possible.

Similarly, Melissa Canlas, Amy Argenal, and Monisha Bajaj discuss radical approaches, pedagogies, and practices for a weekly high school human rights club that serves immigrant and refugee youth who have come to the United States within the past four years, many of whom had experienced forced labor and food scarcity in their home countries and in the migration process. In "Teaching Human Rights from Below: Towards Solidarity, Resistance, and Social Justice," they discuss some of their curricular and pedagogical strategies and students' responses to lesson plans and activities that aimed to build solidarity, resistance to dominant and assimilative narratives, and action towards social justice. This article discusses a radical approach to teaching Human Rights along three key themes: student-centered human rights pedagogy, cultural wealth and HRE, and students' articulation of human rights language into action.

The final two essays are most critical of the HRE movement, even as they participate in it. Molly Nolan's "Teaching the History of Human Rights and 'Humanitarian' Interventions" explores how she teaches about human rights and so-called humanitarian interventions to MA and Ph.D. students. The course has three main themes or foci. First, what are human rights and why have the social and economic human rights laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights been so neglected or rejected, especially by the United States? Second, how has American foreign policy used and abused human rights? Third, why have liberal or humanitarian interventions of a militarized sort become so prevalent since the end of the Cold War and why are they so damaging? Nolan's goal is to get students to look critically at the meaning and uses of human rights, about which many display a naive enthusiasm.

Finally, Shane McCoy's "Reading the 'Outsider Within': Counter-Narratives of Human Rights in Black Women's Fiction" focuses on the function of literary counter-narratives as a useful pedagogical strategy for teaching about human rights in the composition classroom. McCoy examines the ways in which contemporary black women's writing problematizes the rhetoric of 'women's rights as human rights.' McCoy argues that Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*, Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* are cultural productions that interrupt the totalizing effects of neocolonial and imperial discourses so often produced in dominant Western literature. McCoy argues that the counter-narratives produced by these writers make privy the position of the cultural outsider to

"I regard class differences as contrary to justice and, in the last resort, based on force." ~Albert Einstein

American students who have "taken-for-granted assumptions" of human rights discourses as cultural insiders in the United States. With insights drawn from critical pedagogy, he constructs a counter-curriculum that intervenes in a reproduction of global human rights policies constructed through neoliberal ideologies.

Topping off this issue on "Teaching About Human Rights" are two book reviews of current literature on Human Rights Education and a reprinted Teaching Note by Janet Zandy on teaching the Declaration of Human Rights.

> *We and our contributors would agree that radical teaching about human rights isn't only based on knowledge about such rights but also on classroom praxis that is based on students' enjoying and exercising their rights in the process of upholding the rights of others.*

Despite the criticisms levied at HRE by many of our contributors, it would be difficult to deny that there is something at least potentially radical in the insistence in the *United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* that such education needs to be *about*, *through*, and *for* human rights. That is, HRE is a matter of content, form, and goal. It relies, in other words, on a combination of understanding, process, and empowerment. We and our contributors would agree that radical teaching about human rights isn't only based on knowledge about such rights but also on classroom praxis that is based on students' enjoying and exercising their rights in the process of upholding the rights of others. One may, of course, critique any form of rights-based discourse, but there does seem to be a radical way to engage such discourse.

Our experience in editing this first issue of "Teaching About Human Rights" is that for many of us the understanding of and the possible usefulness of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights has been compromised by the refusal of the United States to sign on to human rights documents such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (we are the only country that has not signed) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (here the United States is in the company of Iran, Somalia, and the Sudan), while using human rights to justify "humanitarian interventions." The articles in this issue have convinced us that many teachers are effectively exposing both the contradictions and usefulness of the practice of human rights in educating students about social justice.

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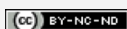
RADICAL TEACHER

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The Global Movement for Human Rights Education

by Nancy Flowers

THE WORLD AS IT COULD BE PROGRAM TOWN HALL PRESENTATION ON THE UDHR BY STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE LEADERS OF SOCIAL CHANGE ACADEMY OF ARROYO HIGH SCHOOL, SAN LORENZO, CA. ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF NANCY FLOWERS

The 1948 *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) exhorts "every individual and every organ of society" to "strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms." Despite this clear mandate, human rights education (HRE) got off to a glacially slow start everywhere in the world. The Cold War brought about a long delay: the Soviet Union and its allies regarded the civil and political rights proclaimed in the UDHR as a threat to their one-party governments, while many western countries regarded its social and economic rights as "leftist" or "communistic." It was, in fact, radical teachers in the Global South who showed the world the power of HRE to further both civil-political and social-economic rights.

HRE in Latin America

During the 1970s, opponents of the oppressive dictatorships that dominated Latin America found in HRE a tool for nonviolent social change. Especially in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Peru, activist educators used both popular education and the existing formal education system to reach the working class and the urban and rural poor with grassroots programs that emphatically condemned the violation of human rights and called for a restoration of democracy, along with the recognition of popular and political organizations. HRE became an essential component of popular resistance.

Describing these early efforts, Peruvian activist educator Rosa María Mujica Barreda recalls:

> We felt that violence and human rights violations worsened every day . . . We needed to work against violence, to develop opportunities for peace, and to accept that education was an important element in this purpose. . . [W]e decided to work mainly with teachers, for they can be found all over the country, have a key role in their communities, and are in charge of developing consciousness and awareness. Also the teaching profession had become one of the places where those who defended a violent solution to the problems of Peru confronted those who stood for human rights.[1]

Deeply influenced by Brazilian educator Paolo Freire's *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his concept of critical pedagogy, human rights educators across Latin America understood HRE as much more than a conceptual or curricular content like math or history. For them, HRE was a task of political and cultural awakening that required personal transformation, as Argentine educator Mónica Fernández describes:

> The skills necessary for the promotion of human rights education are more cultural than curricular. There is a clear epistemological

difference between teaching human rights and promoting human rights education. The former is linked to theoretical transfer. The latter tries to develop cultural habits. The strategies of cultural transformation need an ethical and political commitment with constant criticism and reflection.[2]
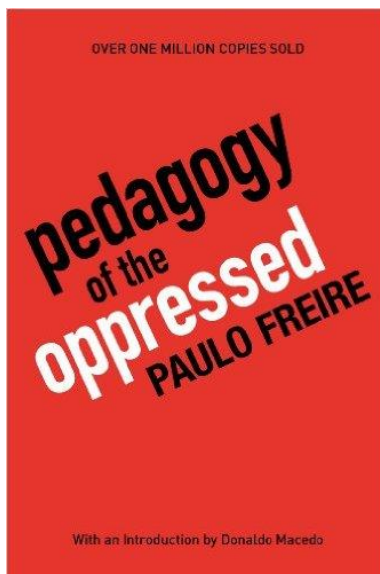
As more democratic governments began to replace these dictatorships in the 80s, many of these courageous students and teachers went on to became leaders for educational reform in their respective countries, working to integrate HRE concepts and methodologies developed through political struggle into national curriculums and teacher-training institutions. They built important national and international networks that continue to train teachers and social justice advocates.[3] This on-going movement for HRE has received strong support from the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights, an autonomous international academic institution dedicated to the teaching, research and promotion of human rights among the countries party to the *American Convention on Human Rights* (1969).

As the cycle of political persecution came to an end, the fight for human rights in Latin America has shifted to become a struggle for economic, social, cultural, indigenous, and environmental rights. Here too Latin American educators continue to lead the rest of the world in theory, policy, and methodology.

HRE in the Philippines

HRE in Latin America provided both inspiration and models for young activists in the Philippines opposed to the authoritarian regime of Ferdinand Marcos. In the early 1980s, teams of students went out into slums and rural areas to teach human rights to fisherfolk, farmers, and the urban poor. Their efforts directly contributed to the so-called People Power Revolution, the sustained campaign of popular, nonviolent resistance that culminated in 1986 with the overthrow of Marcos.[4]

The new Philippine government immediately passed legislation requiring HRE in schools, for the civil service, and for all "arresting and investigating personnel." The new Constitution of 1987 introduced many new human rights provisions including the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights, an independent office with responsibility to "establish a continuing program of research, education, and information to enhance respect for the primacy of human rights."[5] Such a constitutional mandate for HRE was a global landmark, but it has also served to illustrate a global conflict between top-down and bottom-up efforts: sustained HRE requires both that grassroots movements be institutionalized and that legislative mandates be implemented.


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pedagogy of the oppressed
PAULO FREIRE

With an Introduction by Donaldo Macedo

Everywhere in the world, HRE requires time to be fully realized.

HRE in Asia

The imperative of substantial time for effective HRE is nowhere better demonstrated than in some abortive efforts of the UN to use HRE in post-conflict situations, of which Cambodia is a prime example. In early 1992, HRE was specifically mandated in the peace accords that ended decades of civil war and established UNTAC, the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia. The time frame was ridiculously short— eighteen months— and the circumstances dire: most educated people who might have served as teachers or interpreters had been murdered or forced to flee. Furthermore, HRE on such a scale had never been attempted. As Stephen Marks, who headed UNTAC's Human Rights Component, observed, there was neither sufficient time for laying long-term foundations nor sufficient "experience by which to judge the effectiveness of such campaigns."[6]

The fact that a peace treaty would explicitly call for HRE was another milestone. At the same time, it illustrates a kind of optimistic naïveté that continues to bedevil HRE: programs are often designed and goals set without a realistic understanding of what it takes to do effective HRE.
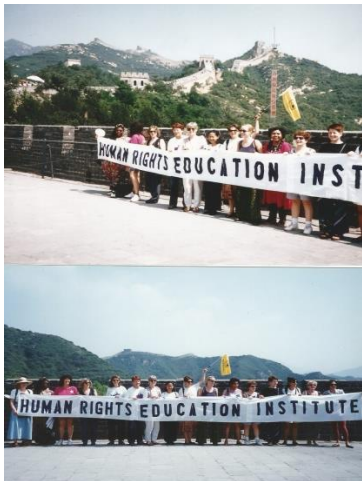
Another example of HRE-in-a hurry were efforts in Thailand to educate about the new Constitution of 1997, which conferred new powers to the Thai people, explicitly acknowledging many human rights for the first time and establishing the National Human Rights Commission. Several NGOs, such as the Canadian Human Rights Foundation and Amnesty International, collaborated with the Thai Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice to design programs to educate the general population about these new rights. However, although the intentions were genuine, the investment in time and resources was insufficient to do more than provide information. Building a culture of human rights requires decades, not years.

Both the Thai and Philippine experience illustrate the importance of national human rights institutions in furthering HRE, especially in Asia. Unlike most parts of the world, Asia lacks a regional human rights treaty with a transnational body to monitor that governments respect, protect, and fulfill human rights. Perhaps more than in any other part of the world, cultural differences among individual countries and attitudes toward human rights as "western values" create a prevailing resistance to HRE in formal education. As a Chinese presenter at a 2001 national HRE conference in Beijing declared, "Why do we need the Universal Declaration? The constitution of the People's Republic and our Confucian tradition provide us with all the human rights education we need!"[7]

HRE in Africa

Changes in law and/or regime are often the impetus for HRE programs. For example, the Ethiopian Constitution of 1995, which expressly provides for a set of basic human rights to be interpreted according to the Universal Declaration, initiated a nationwide effort to teach about the new constitution and the UDHR. However, as in Thailand and other HRE initiatives that focus on legalities, these were informational and short-lived rather than inspirational and sustained.

In dramatic contrast to short-term, legalistic HRE is the example of South Africa. Although HRE was a relatively new concept within post-apartheid educational discourse, it had roots in the long struggle for a non-racial and democratic education system, especially the People's Education (PE) movement, which shared with HRE the Freirian principles that education is political and should be personally empowering and transformative.

Even before 1994 and the first universal adult suffrage

election that brought in the Mandela government, NGOs like Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), the Street Law Project, and Amnesty International were already working to prepare South Africans for participatory citizenship and to lay the foundations for building a culture of human rights. With the establishment of a new regime, HRE, especially in the formal sector, became a major strategy for nation building:

Transforming the education sector and the curriculum has been a central and complex priority within the broader scheme of things since 1994 because educational sites represent the most peopled social space in the country. . . In South Africa the notions and ideals of nation building,

reconciliation, social solidarity, social cohesion, inclusivity and anti-discrimination seem to provide the basis for the rationale, purpose and structure of HRE in the curriculum, and are linked to the PE movement and the broader anti-apartheid struggle.[8]

Andre Keet and Nazir Carrim trace the complex development of HRE as a national priority in South Africa, concluding with valuable lessons learned, especially their appreciation that HRE must be a long-term institutional commitment and their recognition of the need for more nuanced strategies for infusing human rights into all subject areas and the environment of the whole school community. Although still evolving, HRE in South Africa provides valuable learning for human rights educators everywhere.

Beyond South Africa, a lack of information, as well as concrete socio-political structures, still prevent most African people from claiming and exercising their human rights, and most governments are doing little or no HRE to address this problem. Although Africa has a regional right treaty, the *African Charter on Human and People's Rights* (1981), it remains unknown to most Africans.

Most HRE in Africa has been initiated by UN agencies or NGOs and has generally been in responses to specific issues or crises like civil war and the AIDS epidemic. For example, before independence in Southern Sudan, UNICEF undertook extensive HRE aimed at curtailing child marriage and child soldiers. Outstanding among issue-focused NGOs is Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF), a pan-African network with members in thirty-one countries, which uses HRE as a capacity-building tool to further women's rights especially on issues like inheritance, political participation, domestic violence, and education.

HRE in the Middle East

Because many tenets of human rights law contradict Sharia law, HRE in most Muslim countries has had little implementation, especially with the contemporary rise of fundamentalism. For example, the UDHR affirms the right to change one's religion whereas Sharia denounces this as

apostasy, a capital crime in some countries. Similarly the consistent affirmation of the equality of the sexes in human rights documents contradicts traditional practice in some Muslim countries that make, for example, a woman's court testimony worth half that of a man, as well as other discriminatory cultural practices. In fact, as in Africa, some of the most effective HRE in the Middle East and other Islamic areas has been in the field of women's human rights. Organizations like Sisters in Islam and Women's Learning Partnership have sought to harmonize human rights concepts with the Koran and Hadith and distinguish custom and tradition from the teachings of the Prophet. These HRE efforts rarely reach the public schools, however.

A shining exception to the general resistance to HRE in the region has been the work of the Shafallah Center for Children with Special Needs, a Quatari NGO. Shafallah has led a global alliance for the rights of persons with disabilities and supported the development of HRE materials and trainings to teach people with disabilities and their allies about the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (2006).[9] Here too, however, HRE has a limited, issue-specific target audience.

HRE in Europe

The *European Convention on Human Rights* (European Convention, 1953) is generally regarded as the strongest of all regional human rights treaties. The Council of Europe, which furthers cooperation among its forty-seven European member states, oversees enforcement of the European Convention through the European Court of Human Rights and actively promotes HRE throughout the region. As its 2010 *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* proclaims:

Education plays an essential role in the promotion of the core values of the Council of Europe: democracy, human rights and the rule of law, as well as in the prevention of human rights violations. More generally, education is increasingly seen as a defense against the rise of violence, racism, extremism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance.[10]

As a result of the efforts made by the Council of Europe, which are supported by the human rights institutions of individual European countries, human rights are an integral part of the elementary and secondary education of most European children. Certainly, standards and degree of integration vary among countries, with newer Council members from the former Soviet bloc necessarily lagging behind Western European countries with an established tradition of HRE. However, the Council continues to provide training and curriculum resources that address pressing regional human rights issues such as homophobia, bullying, and racism, especially against Roma and immigrants.

Although Europe has the world's most comprehensive HRE programs, supported by both governmental and intergovernmental institutions and NGOs, it still faces

challenges typical of the rest of the world, especially push-back from conservative elements and a lack of adequate teacher training. The most high-profile case of opposition to HRE in Europe was the 2006 firing of Mirosław Sielatycki, Director of the Polish In-Service Teachers Training Centre, for distributing Compass, a Council of Europe HRE curriculum that includes lessons on discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Although Poland is a State Party to the European Convention, the Polish Minister of Education justified this dismissal on the grounds that Mr. Sielatycki had disseminated materials

that could be regarded as promoting homosexuality and were contrary to "patriotic education" in Polish schools. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe protested, saying "I do not understand how teaching tolerance can be grounds for dismissal." This case underscores how teachers of HRE can be vulnerable to censure, and even the support of a powerful IGO like the Council of Europe is no guarantee of protection.[11]

Despite strong institutional support for HRE, European teachers continue to feel themselves inadequately prepared to teach about human rights. Recent countrywide assessments of HRE by national human rights institutions consistently report that while teachers are interested and willing to bring human rights into their classrooms and school environments, most feel they never received sufficient background, either in school or in their teacher training.[12] The hope is that new generations of teachers, with human rights as part of their basic education, will come to the classroom with more confidence in their understanding of human rights.

The United Nations and Human Rights Education

Since the Universal Declaration in 1948, the UN has been the principal originator, monitor, and defender of the evolving framework of human rights documents, every one of which has called for education to make rights known. For example, Article 29 of the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which has been ratified by every UN Member State with the stunning exception of the United States, describes the education every child should receive:

States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to: . . . (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

However, the UN itself did not actively promote HRE until the establishment of the UN Decade for HRE, 1995-2004. Largely a response to pressures from NGOs at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, the Decade called upon "all States and institutions to include human rights, humanitarian law, democracy and rule of law as subjects in the curricula of all learning institutions in formal and non-formal settings."[13]

With a few stellar exceptions (e.g., the Philippines, Costa Rica, Latin American countries), most governments responded half-heartedly, with many, including the United States, simply ignoring the Decade.[14] However, the Decade did provide a much-needed international forum for practitioners to engage with each other, which along with the advent of the Internet made for a rich cross-fertilization among human rights educators in different parts of the world.

Since the UN Decade for HRE, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has continued to play a significant role in encouraging HRE around the world. In 2005, it established the ongoing World Programme for Human Rights Education, which has set forth guidelines for effective HRE initiatives and activities. Structured in consecutive phases, the Programme has focused thus far on primary and secondary school systems, higher education and professional training programmes, and training for media professionals and journalists.[15]

In 2011, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training*, the first instrument in which international standards for human rights education are officially proclaimed by the United Nations. Although the Declaration stops short of recognizing a "human right to human rights education"—

Rights Education and Training.

The OHCHR continues to promote HRE, providing financial and technical assistance for the development of educational and training materials and the continuing development of resources (e.g., the Database on Human Rights Education and Training).[16] Most recently, the OHCHR has issued a web resource, The Right to HRE, a compilation of

language that was lost in the negotiation process between states at the Human Rights Council—it does recognize for the first time governments' specific commitments to promote HRE. It also provides an important tool for civil society to advocate for HRE. For example, HRE 2020, a coalition of fourteen organizations from five continents, was founded in 2013 to ensure a systematic monitoring of states' implementation of HRE requirements in human rights documents, including the *Declaration on Human*

provisions of international and regional instruments dealing with human rights education, a valuable tool for advocating HRE as essential to a basic education.[17]

Non-Governmental Organizations and Human Rights Education

At the same time as the UN took up HRE as a strategic goal, established NGOs also began to develop important

HRE programs. Foremost among these was Amnesty International, especially its "Teaching for Freedom" and "Rights Education Action Program" (REAP), which involved bilateral cooperation with more than thirty different local Amnesty organizations in all parts of the world.

Initiated as a fund-raising campaign by Norwegian students, "Teaching for Freedom" supported HRE projects in twenty-six countries between 1991 and 1999. Its overall goals were to educate a new generation of human rights activists and to build towards a society where basic human rights are respected. Building on the successes and lessons learned from "Teaching for Freedom," Amnesty International Norway initiated the Rights Education Action Programme (REAP). At the core of REAP was the training of human rights education "multipliers"—individuals who, through their roles or positions in society, are able to influence a larger audience or groups of people. These multipliers included teachers, journalists, youth, and religious leaders. Operating in countries as diverse as Israel, Malaysia, Moldova, Morocco, Nepal, Peru, the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Poland, Russia, Senegal, Slovenia, South Africa, Thailand, Tunisia and Turkey, Amnesty had a profound impact, often providing educators their first exposure to HRE.

During the same period, the first international NGOs dedicated solely to HRE were established, such as the People's Decade for HRE (PHDHE) and Human Rights Education Associates [HREA]. As HRE has spread, national and regional HRE networks have evolved,[18] including the newly established Human Rights Educators USA (HRE USA) in the United States. Important international coalitions of NGOs also focus on particular human rights issues, notably the Right to Education Project, a collaborative global initiative, supported by ActionAid International, Amnesty International, Global Campaign for Education, Save the Children, and Human Rights Watch.[19]

Global Challenges to HRE

As a burgeoning new field, HRE is still defining itself and discovering new learners and methodologies. About some aspects there is global consensus, such as the importance of critical thinking, the limits of a strictly legal approach, and the need for "vernacularization": for local
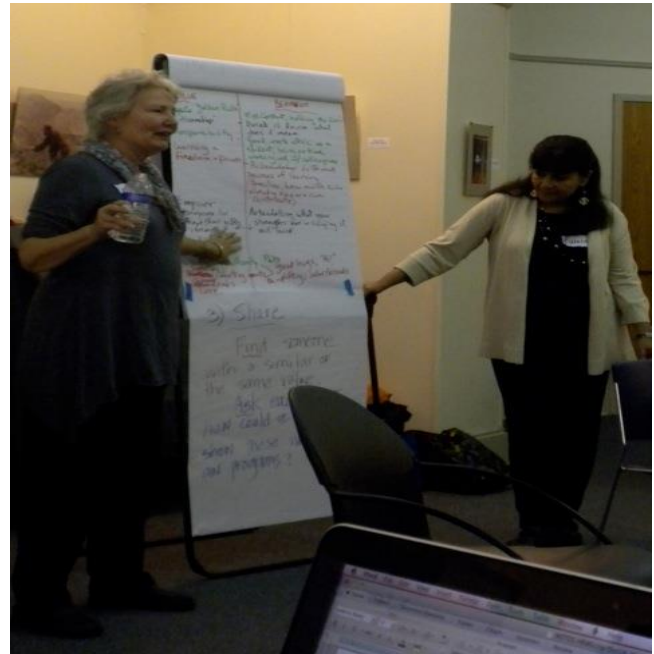
educators to translate human rights concepts into their own contexts and include pedagogy that respects diverse backgrounds and opinions, such as religious beliefs and values. Carol Anne Spreen and Chrissie Monaghan illustrate this "vernacularization" in their work with an intentionally wide spectrum of American high school students: native-born, refugee, migrant, gifted, and remedial students. Through shared personal narratives, students were able to connect abstract concepts of human rights and social inequality and apply them to their own varied experiences.[20]

Around the world, HRE faces some common challenges. On one extreme, governments may regard human rights information, values, and skills as potentially disruptive or even adversarial:

> One reason why . . . governments might not be fully committed to systematic HRE is the fear that it will fuel peoples' desires for rights and make rights claims on their governments that governments perceive as unwanted and disruptive.[21]

On another extreme, governments may co-opt HRE for their own ideological ends, denying the interdependence of rights by "cherry picking" those rights it wishes to endorse and omitting or ignoring others that may challenge its policies and priorities. Unfortunately, propaganda can easily disguise itself as HRE.

Even where the motivation for HRE is genuine and the initiative has the support of the relevant authorities, the institutionalization of HRE in schools is still a work in progress. If teachers are to feel safe addressing controversial topics and local issues, especially those that might be construed as political, religious or gender-related, they also need community support, which can only come from opportunities for human rights learning of parents and community members themselves.

As well as educational institutions, HRE needs to be incorporated into all relevant state-sponsored systems, especially supports for poor community members whose most basic needs are not being met:

> [H]uman rights education is not a stand-alone activity but rather needs to be linked with, and integrated into, the entire gamut of human needs and social services.[22]

However, such integration into state structures clearly constitutes a huge challenge for future HRE, which naturally encourages a critique of state policies and evaluates how well governments respect, protect, and fulfill human rights.

Another challenge to the practical application of HRE is the nature of rights learning itself. Educators know well how to convey a body of information, but imparting a framework of values presents daunting difficulty. Minds are difficult to change and hearts even more so, especially when that change is undertaken with respect for learners' culture and identity and stresses individual critical thinking. We know well how to indoctrinate but are only now evolving effective methodologies to convey human rights values in human rights terms.

Another challenge is the ineluctable fact that HRE takes time. Michalinos Zembylas proposes a "pedagogy of discomfort" for HRE that demands time to establish trust in the classroom, strong relationships, and compassionate understandings among people. Indeed, to develop what Zembylas calls "strategic empathy" is an admittedly long and difficult task that needs the full continuum of a child's school years:

> But mere understanding is clearly not enough; students will become more susceptible to affective transformation when they enact compassionate action early on in their lives starting with simple things such as learning to be more patient and tolerant with peers who do not grasp a 'difficult' concept in language or mathematics. As they grow up, children are offered opportunities to enact more complex manifestations of compassion that include action to alleviate the suffering of people who experience difficult times, no matter which community they come from.[23]

Clearly to be successful, HRE requires a commitment to years of continuous effort on the part of sponsoring institutions, an investment of resources few are willing or able to make. Few school systems have the vision or the means to create and sustain HRE from pre-school through high school. All involved—funders, administrators, educators, parents, and learners alike—need to be convinced that HRE is effective and be willing to wait for its long-term results. This wait often strains patience because the field continues to lack reliable means of evaluation or clear benchmarks for progress.

Bringing Human Rights Home

As this global survey makes all too clear, the United States lags behind much of the world in the realization of HRE. Indeed in its periodic review of human rights in the United States, the UN Human Rights Council recommended increased efforts to promote HRE.

If human rights are ever to become a part of basic education in U.S. schools, activist teachers are needed in both classrooms and schools of education. We need committed pioneers like those in Latin America who used HRE to topple dictatorships and revise ossified educational systems. We already consider the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights essential learning, but human rights go much further: they extend to every human being everywhere and include social and economic rights not mentioned in the Constitution such as education, housing, health care, and a living wage.

The challenge for American educators is to apply these universal principles of human rights to the cultures, power structures, and social justice issues of their own neighborhoods and communities. As Eleanor Roosevelt, the founding mother of the Universal Declaration, famously said:

> Where, after all, do universal rights begin? In

small places, close to home

> . . . Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seeks equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination.

Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere.[24]

TAKING THE HUMAN RIGHTS TEMPERATURE OF YOUR SCHOOL

One of the ultimate goals of human rights education is the creation of a genuine human rights culture. To do so, students must learn to evaluate real-life experience in human rights terms, starting with their own behavior and the immediate community in which they live. They need to make an honest assessment of how the reality they experience every day conforms to human rights principles and then to take an active responsibility for improving their community. This activity provides an excellent introduction to human rights, stimulates discussion about differences in evaluation, can be repeated at intervals during the school year to measure progress, and is equally effective as a faculty exercise. Teachers should feel free to adapt it to suit their individual learning environments. A version is available in all UN languages: see http://www.humanrightseducation.info/primary-material/317-abc-teaching-human-rights.html.

Ask students to evaluate their school's human rights climate, i.e., take its "temperature", by completing the survey below.

Record and discuss their findings:

In which areas does your school seem to be promoting human rights principles?

In which areas do there seem to be human rights problems?

How do you explain the existence of such problematic conditions? Are they related to discrimination? To participation in decision-making? Who benefits and who loses/suffers from these human rights violations?

Have you or any other members of the community contributed to the existing climate, either to improve or to worsen it?

What needs to be done to improve the human rights climate in your school? Develop an action plan as a class, identifying goals, strategies and responsibilities.

Note: Each statement cites the relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human rights (UDHR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Directions: Read each statement and evaluate how accurately it describes your school community. Keep in mind all members of your school: students, teachers, administrators, staff. Add up your score to determine the overall assessment for your school

RATING SCALE:

1	2	3	4	DN
Never	Rarely	Often	Always	Don't Know
(No/False)			Yes/True	

1. _ Members of the school community are not discriminated against because of their race, sex, family background, disability, religion, lifestyle, or sexual orientation.

   (UDHR Articles 2, 16; CRC Articles 2, 23)

2. ___My school is a place where I am safe and secure.

   (UDHR Articles 3, 5; CRC Articles 6, 37)

3.___All students receive equal information and encouragement about academic and career opportunities.

   (UDHR Articles 2, 26; CRC Articles 2, 29)

4.___My school provides equal access, resources, activities and accommodations for everyone.

   (UDHR Articles 2, 7; CRC Articles 2)

5.___Members of my school community will oppose discriminatory actions, materials or words in the school.

   (UDHR Articles 2, 3, 7, 28, 29; CRC Articles 2, 3, 6, 30)

6.___When someone violates the rights of another person, the violator is   helped to learn how to change her/his behavior.

   (UDHR Article 26; CRC Articles 28, 29)

7.___Members of my school community care about my full human as well as academic development and try to help me when I am in need.

   (UDHR Articles 3, 22, 26, 29; CRC Articles 3, 6, 27, 28, 29, 31)

8.___When conflicts arise, we try to resolve them through non-violent and   collaborative ways.

   (UDHR Articles 3, 28; CRC Articles 3, 13, 19, 29, 37)

9.___The school has policies and procedures regarding discrimination and uses them when incidents occur.

   (UDHR Articles 3, 7; CRC Articles 3, 29)

10.___In matters related to discipline, everyone is assured of fair, impartial treatment in the determination of guilt and assignment of punishment.

   (UDHR Articles 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 CRC Articles 28, 40)

11.___No one in our school is subjected to degrading treatment or punishment.

   (UDHR Article 5; CRC Articles 13, 16,19, 28)

12.___Someone accused of wrong doing is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

   (UDHR Articles 11; CRC Articles 16, 28, 40)

13.___My personal space and possessions are respected.

(UDHR Articles 12, 17; CRC Article 16)

14.__My school community welcomes students, teachers, administrators and staff from diverse backgrounds and cultures, including people not born in this country.

(UDHR Articles 2, 6, 13, 14, 15; CRC Articles 2,

29, 30 ,31)

15.__I have the liberty to express my beliefs and ideas without fear of   discrimination.

(UDHR Articles 19; CRC Articles 13,14)

16.__Members of my school can produce and disseminate publications without fear of censorship or punishment.

(UDHR Article 19; CRC Articles 13)

17.__Diverse   perspectives(e.g.,   gender. race/ethnicity, ideological) are   represented in courses, textbooks, assemblies, libraries and classroom instruction

(UDHR Articles 2, 19. 27; CRC Articles 17, 29, 30)

18.__I have the opportunity to participate in cultural activities at the school and my cultural identity, language and values are respected

(UDHR Articles 19. 27, 28; CRC Articles 29, 30,

 31)

19.__Members of my school have the opportunity to participate in democratic decision making to develop school policies and rules.

(UDHR Articles 20, 21, 23; CRC Articles 13, 15)

20.__Members of my school have the right to form associations within the   school to advocate for their rights or the rights of others.

(UDHR Articles 19. 20, 23; CRC Article 15)

21.__Members of my school encourage each other to learn about societal and   global   problems   related   to justice, ecology, poverty and peace.

(UDHR Preamble, Articles 26, 29; CRC Article 29)

22.__Members of my school encourage each other to organize and take action to address problems related to justice, ecology, poverty and peace.

(UDHR Preamble, Articles 20, 29; CRC Article 29)

23.__Members of my school community are able to take adequate rest/recess time during the school day and work reasonable hours under fair work conditions

(UDHR Articles 23, 24; CRC Articles 31, 32)

24.__Employees in my school are paid enough to have a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families.

(UDHR Articles 22, 25; CRC Article 27)

25.__I take responsibility in my school to ensure that people do not discriminate against others.

(UDHR Articles 1, 29; CRC Article 29)

TEMPERATURE POSSIBLE = 100 HUMAN RIGHTS DEGREES

YOUR SCHOOL'S TEMPERATURE = _____ HUMAN RIGHTS DEGREES

RESOURCES FOR HRE

These are some of the principal human rights education (HRE) sources for U.S. teachers. They approach familiar social justice issues like racism, homophobia, poverty, or gender discrimination from the powerful but often unfamiliar perspective of international norms and standards.

The Advocates for Human Rights

http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/curricula_links

Consistently outstanding, easily searchable, and U.S.-specific curriculum materials.

- Human Rights Toolkits offer background readings, lesson plans for all levels, and action ideas. Topics include children's, migrants', workers', women's, and indigenous peoples' rights; the environment; the death penalty; and U.S. social-economic rights like health, food, housing, and education: http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/toolkits_2.html

- Lesson Plans to introduce human rights topics into the classroom are organized by grade and focus on participatory learning: http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/lesson_plans

Human Rights Education Associates (HREA)

http://www.hrea.org

- An international on-line archive of over 3,000 human rights education and training materials in 9 languages that includes formal, and non-formal education, professional training, and research and policy documents. Although searchable by grade level and topic, its sheer volume may be overwhelming to teachers new to the field: http://archive.hrea.org/index.php?doc_id=221

- For teachers wanting to learn more about human rights, HREA offers tutored e-learning courses and self-directed courses: http://www.hrea.org/learn/

Human Rights Educators USA (HRE USA)

http://www.hreusa.net

This new network to promote HRE in the USA offers:

- Curriculum resources: Each social justice topic is provided with an introduction from a human rights perspective; carefully selected curriculum materials and videos from a variety of U.S. sources; and action ideas: http://www.hreusa.net/materials_teaching.php

- A "starter kit" for teachers new to HRE: http://www.hreusa.net/get_started_hre.php

- News, updates, and opportunities for U.S. human rights educators to communicate and learn from each other: http://www.hreusa.net/news_updates.php

University of Minnesota Human Rights Resource Center

http://www.hrusa.org

Creates and distributes HRE resources via electronic and print media. Especially useful to teachers are:

- The *HRE Series*: full curricula on topics like economic and social justice, GLBT, disability and indigenous rights: (http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/default.shtm).

- The 5-part *Close the Gap* documentary series on ways to recognize and eliminate race, class, and place disparities: http://hrusa.org/closethegap/main.php

- *This is My Home*: a statewide HRE curriculum for K-12:

  http://www.hrusa.org/thisismyhome/project/about.shtml

Notes

1.   Rosa María Mujica Barreda, "Utopia Makes the Journey Possible," in *Towards a Just Society: The Personal Journeys of Human Rights Educators*, ed. Abraham Magendzo, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, 2015), 13. See http://www.law.umn.edu/humanrightscenter/program-areas/education-program/human-rights-education-series.html.

2.   *Towards a Just Society: The Personal Journeys of Human Rights Educators*, ed. Abraham Magendzo, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, 2015), 52.

3.   Notably *Consejo de educación popular de América Latina y el Caríbe* (The Council for Popular Education in Latin American and the Carribean, or CEAAL) and *Red Interamericana de Intercambio de Experiencias Educativas para Promover la Educación en Derechos Humanos* (Inter-American Network for the Exchange of Educational Experiences to Promote Human Rights Education, or RIIEEEPEDH).

4.   For a detailed account of this movement, see Richard Pierre Claude, "Human Rights Education: The Case of the Philippines," *Human Rights Quarterly,* 13, no. 4 (1991): 453-524.

5.   *The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines*, Section 17, Article 5.

6.   Stephen Marks, "Human Rights Education in UN Peace Building: From Theory to Practice," in *Human Rights Education for the 21st Century, ed.* George Andreopolous and Richard Pierre Claude (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 35.

7.   Author's personal recollections as a member of the UN delegation to the National Workshop of Human rights Education in Primary and Secondary Schools, Beijing, China, November 8-9, 2001.

8.   Andre Keet and Nazir Carrim, "Human Rights Education and Curricular Reform in South Africa," *Journal of Social Studies Education* 5, no. 1 (2006), 87-105.

9.   See *Human Rights. YES! Action and Advocacy on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, 2013). http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/edumat/hreduseries/HR-YES/index.html.

10.   *Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education* (Council of Europe, 2010) 3. See https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016803034e5.

11.   Mr. Sielatycki appealed to the District Court in Warsaw on grounds of unfair dismissal and discriminatory treatment in employment because of his political opinions. The Court found in Mr Sielatycki's favour and awarded him approximately 20,000 PLN (5,700 Euros) in damages, the maximum sum claimed. Subsequently Mr. Sielatycki was appointed deputy director of the Office of Education of the City of Warsaw and later Secretary of State in the Ministry of Education.

12.   These surveys were conducted in response to the Plan of Action of the UN Programme for Human Rights Education and Training: Denmark, 2013, *The Danish Institute for Human Rights: Mapping Human Rights Education in Danish Schools*; Ireland, 2011, The Center for Human Rights and Citizenship Education: *Teachers, Human Rights and Human Rights Education: Knowledge, Perspectives and Practices of Primary School Teachers in Ireland*; Scotland, 2013, BEMIS Scotland: *A Review of Human Rights Education in Schools in Scotland.*

13.   Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, 1993: Section I.D, para 79. See http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Vienna.aspx

14.   Summary of national initiatives undertaken within the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004). See http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Initiatives.aspx.

15.   For more on the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education see http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Pages/Programme.aspx.

16.   http://hre.ohchr.org/hret/intro.aspx.

17.   http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Education/Training/Compilation/Pages/Listofcontents.aspx

18.   For example: *Consejo de educación popular de América Latina y el Caríbe* (The Council for Popular Education in Latin American and the Carribean, or CEAAL); the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Information Center (HURIGHTS OSAKA); The Democracy and Human Rights Education Network in Europe (DARE).

19.   See more at: http://www.right-to-education.org/page/about-us#sthash.YKaS1orT.dpuf.

20.   Carol Anne Spreen and Chrissie Monaghan, "Leveraging Diversity to Become a Global Citizen: Lessons for Human Rights Education" in *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* ed. Monisha Bajaj. Forthcoming 2016.

21.   Tracey Holland and J. Paul Martin. "HRE's Role in Peace Building: Lessons from the Field," in in *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* ed. Monisha Bajaj. Forthcoming 2016.

22.   Holland and Martin.

23.   Michalinos Zembylas, "Emotions, Critical Pedagogy and Human Rights Education," in *Human Rights Education: Theory, Research, Praxis* ed. Monisha Bajaj. Forthcoming 2016.

24.   Eleanor Roosevelt, "In Our Hands," (Speech delivered at the UN on the 10th anniversary of the UDHR, March 27, 1958).

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching the Transformative Agenda of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

by Gillian MacNaughton and Diane Frey

Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (UN/DPI Photo/ Artwork by Brazilian artist Octavia Roth (c) Octavia Roth)

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Neoliberalism has dominated the world for over three decades and now permeates our laws, policies, and practices at the international, national, and local levels. At the international level, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the European Union all support trade liberalization, privatization of public services, and the primacy of markets over people. At the national level, the United States, the United Kingdom, China, and many other countries similarly support this neoliberal agenda, despite the violations of human rights that result from, for example, austerity measures imposed on those worse off to subsidize the risks taken by those with the greatest wealth. Many of our students have grown up in this neoliberal context and fail to recognize that the current world order was created by our laws, policies, and practices, and that this world order is not inevitable.

Indeed, neoliberalism has become so ingrained that it has become invisible and many of us no longer notice when new agendas conflict with international human rights laws and principles to which almost all countries in the world have committed themselves. In this context, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) enshrines a transformative agenda—a framework for moving from a world order designed by a few elites for their own benefit to a world order for the benefit of everyone.

Adopted in 1948, immediately after World War II, to implement one of the four goals of the new United Nations Organization, the norms and aspirations elaborated in the UDHR provide a framework for a radically different world than the one we have today. Although the United States initially played a central role in supporting the UDHR—Eleanor Roosevelt chaired the UN Commission on Human Rights responsible for drafting the instrument—the content of the UDHR is not well-known in this country. Indeed,

myths about "international human rights" abound. It is not uncommon in the United States, for example, for people to believe that human rights are about abuses that occur in other countries, not here in the United States. This belief is often linked to the perception that human rights are largely about war crimes, genocide, apartheid, and criminal prosecutions for such gross violations of human rights. Otherwise, human rights, as understood in the United States, are often limited to individual civil rights, such as freedom of speech, and freedom of religion, as well as the prohibitions against slavery and torture. Little is known in the United States—or in much of the rest of the world for that matter—about, for example, the right to the benefits of science (article 27), the right to human rights education (article 26), or the right to periodic holidays with pay (article 24), which are enshrined in the UDHR as well as other international human rights instruments.

Anglo-American countries have traditionally focused on individual civil and political rights, while largely ignoring economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as collective rights (Neier 2006). The UDHR, in fact, includes a full array of individual, family, community, societal, and international level rights. Individual rights include, for example, the right to freedom of opinion (article 19) and the right to be free of hunger (article 25). Family rights include the right to protection of the family as the fundamental unit of society (article 16) and the right to an adequate standard of living for a family (article 25). Community rights include the right to form trade unions (article 23) and the right to participate in the cultural life of the community (article 27). The rights of the people of a nation include the right to a government that represents the will of the people (article 21). Finally, article 28 of the UDHR—addressing the rights of all of humanity—provides: "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized."

> *Many of our students have grown up in this neoliberal context and fail to recognize that the current world order was created by our laws, policies, and practices, and that this world order is not inevitable.*

Much of this holistic vision of human rights in the UDHR has been lost after decades of neoliberal governance. In this article, we revisit the content of the UDHR, beginning with the right to a social and international order in which everyone's rights can be realized, and consider other key provisions that conflict with neoliberalism, including the rights to the benefits of science, to full employment and decent work, to progressive realization of free higher education, to nondiscrimination on the grounds of economic status and to solidarity. We also share some activities that we use in the classroom and online to make the transformative agenda of the UDHR visible to students and demonstrate how far we have strayed from the aspiration of a world in which everyone enjoys his/her human rights. The article

concludes that teaching the holistic vision of the UDHR in a neoliberal world is a radical human rights curriculum.

Before delving into the less well-known provisions of the UDHR, we should introduce ourselves and the context of our teaching. Diane Frey is a social scientist with a PhD from the London School of Economics (LSE) in International and Comparative Employment Relations. Gillian MacNaughton is an international human rights lawyer with a DPhil in Law from the University of Oxford. Together we have taught undergraduate and graduate students in Europe at LSE, Oxford and the University of Sarajevo, and in the USA at Northeastern University, Brandeis University, the University of Massachusetts Boston, the National Labor College, Harvard University Extension School, and San Francisco State University. The students in our courses have been diverse and come from many countries around the world. For example, up to 80 percent of the students in the course on human rights-based approaches to development at Brandeis University were from developing countries. The class in Sarajevo was the least diverse in that all students came from European countries. We mention this diversity because it has played an important role in teaching the holistic vision of the UDHR. The following ideas for teaching the transformative agenda of the UDHR have been successful in all these contexts, despite the varied understandings and misunderstandings of human rights across countries and regions.

The Right to a Social and International Order

Many introductory courses in human rights begin, quite naturally, at the beginning of the UDHR and may or may not get to the economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) located in articles 22-27. We like to begin with a broad overview of the UDHR. We introduce it by asking students to read the full document, which is only 30 brief articles long, and then vote for the five rights that are most important to them personally. Then we take a tally—either in class if it is a small group or online with a larger group—and examine the results. Inevitably, almost all the rights in the UDHR receive at least one vote. The right to rest and leisure is one right that is often overlooked, however, while the right to education is often a highly rated right. When students discuss the reasons for the disparities, it becomes clear that the right to education may have received so much support because it is a group of students voting. On the other hand, the right to rest and leisure may not have received any votes because there are no domestic workers in the class as they generally do not get any time off to take courses. Students from different countries may also prioritize different rights. Based on the analysis that is generated in the class, students draw the conclusion that the full range of rights in the UDHR must be recognized and enforced to protect the rights of all people in all circumstances throughout their lives. In this light, students see that article 28 is the umbrella right that holds this vision of a holistic human rights framework together.

Importantly, article 28 requires transformation of institutional arrangements at both the national and the international level. In this respect, it differs from the traditional understanding of human rights, which imposes obligations on national governments to respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of the people within their specific jurisdictions. The enforcement of human rights at the national level is certainly crucially important to the realization of human rights in every country. All members of the United Nations are bound under the UN Charter to promote "universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion" (article 55(c)). These human rights and fundamental freedoms are detailed in the UDHR, which applies to all UN members, and in international human rights treaties, which apply to all those states that ratify them. Enforcement of the UDHR at the international level is carried out by the Universal Periodic Review under which each country must report to the UN Human Rights Council every four years on the progress it has made in implementing its human rights obligations under the UDHR and the human rights treaties to which it is a party. In this way, the UN human rights system emphasizes the responsibility of nation states for the advancement of human rights within their jurisdictions.

However, nation states are often limited in what they can do to advance the human rights of their residents due to international rules and pressures. For example, the global trading system created under the World Trade Organization includes the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. Under this agreement, countries must abide by patent laws that protect the profits of pharmaceutical corporations and prevent the majority of people in the world from having access to affordable medicines to address life-threatening and painful health conditions. Although the TRIPS agreement ostensibly has public health exceptions for essential medicines—so-called "flexibilities" to allow policy space for countries to access affordable medicines—the pressure brought to bear by industry and their host countries upon those that seek to exercise these public health exceptions has made it almost impossible to use them (Forman and MacNaughton 2015). This is just one example of how the international regime limits what countries can do to advance the human rights of their residents.

Many introductory courses in human rights begin, quite naturally, at the beginning of the UDHR and may or may not get to the economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) located in articles 22-27.

The stark contradiction here is that all UN members have the obligation to uphold the rights in the UDHR, and, on the other hand, the same countries create international regimes that effectively make it impossible for them to do so. Strangely, even international policy on poverty eradication and social justice is driven today by neoliberal logic. For example, under the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, economic growth is the key international policy pursued to eradicate global poverty. Thomas Pogge and Mitu Sengupta calculate, however, that it would take ninety-two years at current growth rates for the poorest people, those living on $172 per year, to double their incomes to $344 per year (Pogge and Sengupta 2014). In other words, it is international policy to continue violations of economic and social rights for ninety-two years, despite national commitments to human rights laws that demand immediate realization of the minimum essential core of the rights to food, water, housing, and health.

The current international system established by high-income countries also (1) diminishes trade opportunities for low-income countries, (2) fuels conflicts and violent oppression through arms sales, (3) allows wealthy people and corporations to use sham transactions in jurisdictions

with low-to-zero tax rates to avoid paying their fair share of the tax burden, (4) requires populations in low-income countries to pay large debts, accumulated by elites and dictators, that were not approved by and did not benefit the population, and (5) enables the natural resource outflows from middle- and low-income countries in many cases where there is no benefit to the people of the nation (Pogge and Sengupta 2014). All of these practices violate human rights standards, and yet, they operate outside the regular supervision of the UN human rights mechanisms, which focus on nation state responsibility for human rights within their jurisdictions. The WTO, Big Pharma, and Swiss banks do not report to the Human Rights Council on their progress in implementing human rights obligations and are not party to any of the international human rights treaties.

Importantly, article 28 indicates that UN members intended to implement the rights in the UDHR and recognized, at the time that it was adopted, that to achieve this goal would require structural transformation to both the domestic social order and the international regime (Marks 2009; Eide 1999). Indeed, the structural approach of article 28 requires actively changing the power relations within domestic and international structures so that they promote, rather than undermine, realization of the full

panoply of human rights (Marks 2009). In Asbørn Eide's view, the UDHR was formulated in general terms initially to provide countries with broad policy space to transform their internal systems; however, gradually this space would diminish as rights were given more substance (Eide 1999). Today, it is clear that to achieve a social and international order in which everyone could realize their human rights would require a total transformation of global ideology, power, policy, and practice. In that respect, article 28 may be the most radical provision in the UDHR.

Economic, Social Rights and Cultural Rights

To understand how far we have come from the aspiration of "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations," as expressed in the preamble to the UDHR, it is helpful to examine some of the explicit rights that have been made invisible by the neoliberal world order. The overwhelming majority of human rights abuses in the world are violations of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR). For example, globally 2,000 children under the age of five die every day from diarrhea; ninety

percent of these deaths are directly linked to contaminated water, lack of sanitation, or inadequate hygiene (UNICEF 2013). One in every nine people on the planet does not have enough food to lead a healthy life (World Food Program 2015). About 863 million people are living in urban slums and this number is rising steadily (UN Habitat 2014). Yet, ESCR—the rights to nutritious food, clean water, safe housing, equal education, universal healthcare, and decent work—continue to be marginalized as they are of concern only to marginalized populations. Teaching human rights with a focus on ESCR, thus, brings the course into line with (1) the most widespread human rights abuses globally, and (2) international standards that require prioritizing the human rights of those most disadvantaged (Chapman 2009: 14).

Importantly, ESCR have received little attention in Anglo-American jurisdictions since the adoption of the UDHR. First, the Cold War resulted in an emphasis on civil and political rights in the West. Then neoliberalism set in just as the Cold War came to an end. As a result, ESCR have never received the attention in the West that they garnered during the drafting of the UDHR. The list of ESCR that are often overlooked—in human rights courses as well as in policy-making—is long. We focus on three rights that

demonstrate the impact of neoliberalism. This choice of rights depends largely on the context. In Bosnia, we usually focus on the right to decent work, as there has been almost 60% unemployment for youth in the years we taught at the University of Sarajevo (World Bank 2013: 23). In the United States, we often look at the right to progressively free higher education, as students here are acutely aware that it becomes progressively more expensive every year. The right to the benefits of science— as broadly understood to mean knowledge about the world—is especially relevant to all university students.

The Right to the Benefits of Science

Article 27(1) of the UDHR guarantees the right "to share in scientific advancement and its benefits." Although there was no precedent for such a right in any contemporaneous constitutions, there was unanimous agreement among the drafters to adopt this provision. The USSR delegate, Pavlov, explained that "the benefits of science were not the property of a chosen few, but the heritage of mankind" (Morsink 1999: 219). The Cuban delegate, Pérez Cisneros, noted that not everyone was gifted enough to play a part in scientific advancement but that everyone should have the right to share in the benefits of science. The French delegate, Cassin, agreed, and following a brief discussion, the new right to the benefits of science was adopted unanimously (Morsink 1999). The dominance of neoliberalism over the past several decades has hollowed the core of this right by transforming science into a commercial endeavor.

When the UDHR was drafted in the post-World War II period, science was largely perceived as a public good, the government played a key role in sponsoring scientific research, and there was great optimism about scientific advancement and its potential for improving human life (Chapman 2009). At that time, the idea that the benefits of science belonged to everyone was well accepted. Chapman tells us: "According to the then dominant model of science, scientists engaged in research were motivated primarily by the desire to advance basic knowledge, receive professional recognition, contribute to human welfare and in the process further their careers" (Chapman 2009: 8). They were not inclined to patent their discoveries or use them for other economic benefits (Chapman 2009). Beginning in the 1980s, this orientation to scientific research was increasingly displaced by market-oriented considerations (Chapman 2009).

The commercialization of research has resulted in numerous changes to the research enterprise, and, therefore, the potential for enjoyment of the right to the benefits of science. First, the U.S. Congress adopted laws in the 1980s allowing scientists to own private patents they developed using government funds, greatly expanding the potential for researchers and others to profit from publically supported scientific inquiry (Chapman 2009). The profit motive has increasingly influenced the determination of research priorities, methodology, and values. This reorientation means that research is not based on the needs of people or even scientific curiosity, but rather caters to the desires of the wealthy. Simply speaking,

people living in poverty, who might benefit most from scientific advancement, are not profitable. As Chapman states: "With market-driven science, important areas of research are neglected, and promising research findings may not be translated into new products or, even if they are, brought to market" (Chapman 1999: 9). Even more fundamentally, scientific inquiry is now a private industry— generating objectives, methodologies, outcomes, data sharing and interpretation—based on the goal of producing profits for shareholders rather than benefits for humans.

The Right to Full Employment and Decent Work

Article 23(1) of the UDHR states that "[e]veryone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment." This bundle of work rights is often simplified to the right to "full employment and decent work." Importantly, the right to protection against unemployment in the UDHR derives from the UN Charter article 55(a), which obligates UN members to promote higher standards of living and full employment. As the UN Charter prevails in the event of any conflict between the obligations of UN members under any other agreement, the duty to promote full employment is an obligation of the highest order in the international legal regime (UN Charter 1945, article 103). At the time that the UDHR drafting committee—the UN Commission on Human Rights— adopted the right to protection against unemployment, there was tremendous unemployment as the war had just come to an end, soldiers were returning home, and industry was in the process of retooling for peacetime. "The presumption of the right so stated was that countries would aim at full employment, as Article 55 of the Charter bids them to do" (Morsink 1999: 162). The idea of full employment was indeed a natural extension of New Deal policy tools implemented in the United States during the Great Depression, such as the public works projects, which directly employed (mostly) men in government-funded projects to address unemployment (UNDP 2010).

Under the current neoliberal regime, there has been a complete turnabout on state policy for unemployment. Today, in times of economic recession, international

players pressure states to adopt so-called austerity measures, which prevent the government from increasing social spending when it is most needed. Indeed, austerity measures often involve cutting government staff or at least hiring freezes. Exactly at the crucial time when the ESCR, especially the right to protection against unemployment, should come into play, the state withdraws from direct action on securing these rights and instead focuses on creating conditions for private investment with the rhetoric of trickle down employment growth. The proposed Sustainable Development Goal 8 on full employment and decent work for the post-2015 international development agenda enshrines this neoliberal perspective by reducing the human rights to full employment and decent work to job opportunity growth conditioned on economic growth. Experience in many countries around the world, however, demonstrates that government can take action to protect against unemployment even in the absence of economic growth (UNDP 2010)—and under international human rights, have ethical and legal obligations to do so.

Economic policies designed to create optimum private investment conditions have also contributed to the hollowing out of the UDHR's vision of full employment for those who are fortunate enough to have work. Globally, fewer than one in four persons who are employed have standard employment relationships with stable full-time waged employment (ILO 2015: 13). In fact, a majority (sixty percent) of all wage and salaried workers are either in part-time or temporary forms of work (ILO 2015: 13). Employment growth is increasingly and persistently in non-standard work such as informal and unpaid family work. The government's duty to ensure the realization of the right to full employment and decent work for all, as envisioned in the UDHR in 1948, has been transformed into policies to improve markets and investment climates rather than people's lives.

The Right to Progressive Realization of Free Higher Education

One of the human rights recognized in the UDHR that is particularly interesting to our U.S.- and U.K.- based students is the right to the progressive realization of free higher education. Article 26(1) of the UDHR recognizes the right to education, providing as well that "[e]ducation shall be free, at least at the elementary and fundamental stages" and "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit." The right to education is further detailed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which provides that "higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular by the progressive introduction of free education." The right to progressively free higher education conflicts sharply with increasing tuition, college fees, textbooks, and other expenses related to higher education, particularly in the United States and more recently in the United Kingdom. In this respect, our students in the United States and the U.K. are subject to retrogressive measures that conflict with the human right to education. The notion that governments have undertaken obligation to progressively make higher education free almost always comes as a surprise to students.

> *These three ESCR, the right to progressively free higher education, the right to full employment and decent work, and the right to share in scientific advancement are particularly relevant to university students.*

These three ESCR, the right to progressively free higher education, the right to full employment and decent work, and the right to share in scientific advancement are particularly relevant to university students. And they are intricately related to each other. Due to advances in science and its applications, free elementary school—or even free high school—is no longer adequate to prepare people to participate in civic life or the job market. Thus, students often take on enormous debt to pursue higher education. High unemployment and underemployment levels, especially among youth, makes it difficult for graduates to find work at all much less able freely to choose employment that is meaningful to them and the full development of their personality, a key objective of ESCR (UDHR articles 22, 26(2)). Rather, many graduates are forced to take any employment, even if it conflicts with their own values (and human rights) to earn a salary adequate to repay student loans. In this way, neoliberalism undermines an array of inter-related human rights particularly relevant to the experiences of university students.

Nondiscrimination on the Grounds of Economic Position

A corollary to ESCR is the prohibition against discrimination on the basis of economic position. We are all familiar with nondiscrimination provisions, as are evident in university policies, state and national laws, and international human rights instruments. Article 2 of the UDHR provides: "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, *property*, birth or other status." The meaning of "property" in this list is "economic position," which is made clear by the Spanish version, which states "posición económica," the French version, which states "de fortune," and the drafting history, which indicates that "property" was included in the nondiscrimination provision to ensure that all people, whether rich and poor, had the same rights (Morsink 1999; MacNaughton 2009). The same language is adopted in the European Convention on Human Rights, the American Convention on Human Rights, and many international human rights treaties. Yet, very little has been said about the meaning of discrimination on the basis of economic position and the corresponding obligations that this right might impose on governments. Indeed, in his 2015 report

to the UN Human Rights Counsel, Philip Alston, the Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, maintained that to date the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has done little to explore what government obligations arise from the prohibition against discrimination based on "property" or economic position (Alston 2015: 18). The rise in economic inequality both within and between countries over the past three decades makes it crucially important for UN human rights mechanisms, scholars, and practitioners to begin to define these government obligations.

Drawing on the history in other areas of nondiscrimination law, the first step is for governments to review laws and policies with a view to repealing those that have a discriminatory intent or impact on the basis of economic position. This would include laws and policies that disadvantage, for example, people who are unemployed, low-wage workers, and people living in poverty. For example, states must repeal criminal laws that target the behavior of homeless people, such as begging or sleeping in public places, and reform social benefit systems—that have onerous requirements for costly documentation to apply for benefits and conditions requiring that recipients open their homes to government searches—to comply with human rights norms (Sepúlveda Carmona 2011). The second step is to enact domestic legislation prohibiting the private sector from discriminating on the basis of economic position. For example, the state must ensure that urban transformations and redevelopment do not undermine the housing rights and employment opportunities of low-income people. The third step is for the government to take positive measures to reduce inequality on the basis of economic position. For example, the state should raise the minimum wage to comply with the right to an adequate standard of living for a family to enjoy ESRC (UDHR article 25); provide universal entitlements—such as universal early childhood education, health care, child care, school lunches—which benefit rather than stigmatize people on the basis of their economic position; unify multi-tiered systems of education, health care, and social security; and create an enabling environment to facilitate the participation of marginalized people in the decisions that affect their lives.

In short, the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of economic position demands substantial transformation of criminal, economic, and social policies, such that states respect, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all people, including low-income people and people living in poverty. And all of these actions—and many more—are requirements to comply with international human rights obligations to which UN members have already committed themselves. The fact that ESCR have been marginalized at the same time as the prohibition of discrimination on the

basis of economic position has been ignored is again consistent with a neoliberal agenda, which not only accepts but also promotes economic and social inequality.

The Right to Solidarity

Article 1 of the UDHR is perhaps the best known article in the instrument. It states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." Although this first sentence is quoted often, the second sentence in article 1 is regularly overlooked. It provides: "They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act toward one another in a spirit of brotherhood." The "spirit of brotherhood" in article 1, along with the right to a social and international order in article 28, balances the individual freedoms in the UDHR with calls for solidarity (Glendon 1998). The drafters recognized that human beings are social beings who depend on their families, communities, and societies to enjoy their human rights and fully develop their personalities (UDHR article 22). In the world envisioned in the UDHR, governments must build infrastructures and redistribute resources to provide free education, universal healthcare, and social security to all, ensuring that all people are able to enjoy these human rights. Moreover, to ensure that these rights can be realized by people in all countries, the right to solidarity must extend beyond the borders of the nation state to influence the domestic, social, and international order. Simply, the drafters recognized that the "right to solidarity" is indeed necessary to realizing the rights in the UDHR.

Like ESCR and the prohibition of discrimination on the basis of economic position, the right to solidarity is a right that has received little attention from UN human rights mechanisms, scholars, and practitioners. As a result, the content of this right remains vague. In 2005, the UN Commission on Human Rights appointed an Independent Expert on Human Rights and International Solidarity to study this matter and prepare a draft declaration on the right to international solidarity. The Independent Expert submitted the draft declaration to the UN Human Rights Council in April 2014 (Dandan 2014), and the Council has requested that she convene regional consultations on the draft. While this indicates that some progress is being made in defining the right to solidarity, even the creation of the position of the Independent Expert was and continues to be controversial. In 2005, the mandate was created by a vote of 33 to 14, and it was most recently renewed by a vote of 33 to 14, with the United States and the United Kingdom both opposing the mandate. Moreover, the draft declaration addresses the international aspect of the right to solidarity but not the domestic implications of the right.

Conclusion

In 1948, the UDHR provided "a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations" (UDHR 1948: preamble). The global dominance of neoliberalism over the past three decades has unfortunately emphasized individual freedoms and marginalized ESCR and solidarity rights much as they were in the West during the Cold War. This is a skewed interpretation, however, of the founding document of the international human rights movement. The UDHR should be understood, as the drafters intended, from a holistic perspective that views each of the rights as a necessary part of the whole. Despite the frequent refrain at the UN that all human rights are inter-related, interconnected, and interdependent, many rights in the UDHR are still largely ignored by UN human rights mechanisms, scholars, practitioners, and teachers of human rights. By exploring with students the original understanding of the UDHR and the less visible rights that it encompasses, we hope to contribute to bringing this holistic vision back into operation. In this respect, we teach the transformative agenda of the UDHR.

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Progress:
A Critique of the Grand Narrative of Human Rights
as Pedagogy for Marginalized Students

by Robyn Linde and Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur

Pathways to Education

CREDIT FOR ALL GRAPHICS: UN

Introduction

After the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948, education about human rights became an important focus of the new human rights regime and a core method of spreading its values throughout the world. The story of human rights is consistently presented as a progressive teleology that contextualizes the expansion of rights within a larger grand narrative of liberalization, emancipation, and social justice. Most modern narratives of human rights begin with World War II and demonstrate the learning and adapting of social movements over time, from the U.S. Civil Rights movement to the Arab Spring to #Black Lives Matter.

Drawing on our experience as professors who teach human rights, social justice, and social movements courses at an urban college in Providence, R.I., with a student body that includes large populations who are of color, first

generation, economically disadvantaged, and nontraditional in other ways, we explore the relevance and impact of these grand narratives for the lives of our students and their sense of political agency. In particular, we advocate for a critical approach to human rights pedagogy to counter and overcome the pervasive individualization that undergirds the grand narrative of human rights. We argue that a critical (and radical) human rights pedagogy must evaluate the position of the individual in modern life if liberation through human rights law and activism is to be possible. By challenging the individualization that forms the basis of the grand narrative of human rights, we can unlock the power and promise of human rights and social justice education as a driver of student and community agency.

Our Institutional Setting and Students

Located in Providence, Rhode Island College (RIC) is a comprehensive four-year public college offering a variety of

degrees in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as professional and vocational degrees at the bachelor's and master's levels. We enroll just over 8,500 students, of whom about 7,500 are undergraduates. Sixty-nine percent of our students are female; sixty-three percent of undergraduates are white, eight percent black, and 14 percent Latino/a, with smaller numbers identifying as Asian, American Indian, and multiracial, and these numbers—particularly those of Latino/a students—are steadily rising. Twenty-four percent of our undergraduates are above the age of 24, and many have considerable family obligations, including caring for children, siblings, parents, and disabled relatives. Almost 86 percent of our students are from Rhode Island, with another 11.7 percent living outside of Rhode Island but within 50 miles of campus, mostly in Massachusetts; about 85 percent of undergraduates commute to campus (RIC Office of Institutional Research and Planning 19, 23, 26). Approximately half of our students are first-generation college students, and the majority work to pay their tuition. Among undergraduate degree-seeking students, twenty-four percent attend part-time (personal communication, Director of Institutional Research and Planning).

The authors of this paper are two faculty members who teach undergraduate courses in political science, nongovernmental organizations, sociology, and justice studies. Between us, we also have considerable experience teaching in other types of institutions, including flagship public research universities and selective private colleges; however, our analysis in this paper is based primarily on our collective teaching experience with RIC students in particular.

Human Rights as a Grand Narrative

Human rights education has long been a central method of diffusing human rights norms, principles, and values. As discussed elsewhere in this issue of *Radical Teacher*, education was prominently featured in the vision of global progress articulated in the UDHR after the founding of the United Nations in 1945. Human rights education became part of educational systems globally, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, and a part of curricula in the study of history, law, and the social sciences in colleges and universities (Webster 188-189).

> ***Human rights education has long been a central method of diffusing human rights norms, principles, and values.***

There are many approaches to teaching human rights. The most common is to introduce students to the legal guarantees afforded them in international human rights law (Ely-Yamin 652). In these classrooms, the story of human rights is constructed or presented as a morality tale, replete with starkly drawn heroes and villains. The heroes emerged triumphant from the horror and chaos of World War II and formed a global society with the goals of ending

impunity for gross human rights violations and applying universal jurisdiction for human rights crimes.

There is a progressive teleology that haunts most narratives of human rights, one that leads to a steadily expanding corps of rights being conferred upon ever increasing groups of marginalized peoples. Human rights museums are cropping up all over the world to tell this story, to contextualize new within old struggles. In this narrative, for example, voting rights expanded rapidly from the British reform acts of the 19th century, which empowered growing numbers of men, to the women's suffragette movement, enfranchising huge numbers of people around the world in little over a century. The rapid succession of other post-material rights and protections, such as protection from discrimination based on race, serves to further demonstrate the larger trajectory of human rights. Social movements seeking such rights learn from one another, adapting strategies and frames to suit their needs.

An important part of this narrative is the move from impunity to criminal sanctions for gross human rights violations and violators. This theme of accountability is traced from its origins at the trials of war criminals at Nuremburg to the international criminal tribunals of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia and to the ongoing work of the International Criminal Court today. The speed with which these changes occurred, mostly in the decades after World War II, lent credence to the idea of the inevitability of human progress and liberation. This master narrative of the march of progress can be seen most recently in the rapid societal acceptance and legal diffusion of marriage equality in the United States. The story's appeal is simple, strong, and obvious: it is easy to seamlessly weave these events together and see the arc of human history in high relief.

Western history also plays an important role. In Europe, the individual states, long at war with one another, joined forces to reject the fascism and barbarism of the past and spread human rights norms to the world. Europe's moral authority comes not only from its means (normative) but also from its narrative—its transcendence of the depravity of the Holocaust and other horrors of World War II. Its authority on human rights stems in large part from the strength of its story, its historical transformation from war-torn region to moral arbiter.

The American contribution to this narrative is threefold. First, the United States mythologizes its national origin as the world-changing story of a valiant underdog, a ragtag band of freedom fighters who fought the English king for independence and won. Its victory in 1776 is understood as central to global emancipation, the start of a cascade of democratization that continues to this day. Second, the United States positions itself historically not only as the victor of World War II, but as largely responsible for the more "peaceful" and "prosperous" world that followed. Third, the prevailing narrative depicts a United States that went astray after September 11, went on to be humbled and to become more humane, chastened by past failures, especially those in the Second Gulf War and Rwanda, and now seeks to (re)claim its moral authority through humanitarian intervention in Libya, Uganda, Syria, and Iraq.

What is important about the prevailing human rights narrative is not its veracity, but how it is used to contextualize European and American values, norms, and action within a larger progressive telos. We claim in this paper that this historical narrative of global history, one that "bends toward justice,"[1] has a purpose, impact, and outcome, that this narrative engenders a seamless connection between cause and effect that makes certain global futures possible and others impossible.

The impact of the grand narrative is explored in the work of Makau Mutua, who suggests that it is obscured by claims to rights and freedoms couched in neutral or universal language (206). Citing Louis Henkin, Philip Alston, and Thomas Franck, Mutua argues that the human rights script is widely recognized as "the key to the redemption of humanity" (210). The narrative itself, though grounded in a particular interpretation of history, is ahistorical, its universality and continuity evidence of its validity. Even so, it also expropriates history, neatly arranging major historical events on a linear path toward human rights (Mutua 213). Rejecting the notion that the ends justify the means in terms of human progress, Mutua contends that the narrative is rooted in European colonialism, and that it represents a continuation of the cultural dominance that has been exercised for many centuries (204, 210, 219).

The history of human rights is cast to serve an agenda, and that agenda often does not leave space for students to confront the hard truths that can provide real opportunities for critical reflection. Such reflection is aimed toward questioning an existing explanation, or causal account, for particular phenomena; it also offers other lenses through which to interpret and understand phenomena. The ability to craft a causal story is itself a type of power (Barnett and Duvall 43, Guzzini 506). For example, the grand narrative of human rights suggests that World War II broke out in response to the human rights violations perpetrated by Nazi Germany and, to a lesser extent, the Japanese, and thus after World War II, the Nuremberg Trials and the formation of the United Nations symbolized the conclusive victory over fascism and barbarity. But such an account ignores the geopolitical realities that really drive global war and the complicity of the United States and other victor nations in allowing crimes against humanity to continue (Wyman 339-40, 350).

Neoliberalism and Human Rights

The relationship between neoliberalism and human rights is complicated. While the UDHR guarantees civil and political as well as economic, social, and cultural rights, the binding international law that would emerge two decades later divided the two types of rights into separate conventions: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, mostly adopted by the United States and its allies, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), mostly adopted by the Soviet Union and its allies. The rights-focused nongovernmental organizations that formed during the Cold War (Amnesty International, Helsinki Watch/Human Rights Watch, International Commission of Jurists) focused predominately on civil and political rights. Consisting primarily of negative rights, or rights that require the state to refrain from infringement or violation (of freedom of speech, for example), civil and political rights are much easier to enforce. Economic, social, and cultural rights, in contrast, as mostly positive rights, require government action and means to create schools, provide health care, and ensure a right to work. These rights were typically couched in language like "widest possible protection and assistance," "with due regard . . . to national economy," and "progressive implementation" (ICESCR articles 2§3, 10§1, 14, and 22).

WALL STREET

THINK OF THIS AS A
JOB EVALUATION

OCCUPY

The rupture between civil and political rights *and* economic, social, and cultural rights allowed the latter rights to be largely left off the postwar international agenda. The new economic institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, were designed not to promote or implement economic rights but to avoid global instability. Human rights institutions had little to say about international economic policy, especially the principles of free trade, free markets, and private enterprise (Moyn); this silence facilitated the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s. While major human rights organizations, like Amnesty International, have in recent decades adopted economic, social, and cultural rights as part of their mission, their methods, such as post-hoc protest, diplomacy, and reporting (naming, shaming, and framing) are no match for the global exploitation by corporations and national elites.

The danger of neoliberalism for students of higher education is the prevalence of its view of the role of the individual in education policy and practice in the United States and elsewhere (Lucal 5-6), sometimes termed 'individualization' (Beck 127). Market fundamentalists—those who espouse the ability of markets to solve society's problems—have succeeded in creating an education policy in the United States where the burden of education is on the student. Bernie Grummell claims that this perspective on education "as a consumer choice" shapes learning in important ways (Grummell 190). Individuals bear the burden of acquiring skills for global competition, entering a market in which elites benefit from the flexibility of the labor force (Grummell 182, 191). Even research on higher education remains focused disproportionately on individual-level outcomes rather than considering the broad array of communal or collective gains that increased access to and engagement in higher education can produce (Hout 380-95). Yet despite this emphasis on individual responsibility, individualization leaves people dependent on organizational structures, especially corporations, for their options and opportunities, meaning that individualization is far less liberating than it may at first seem (Ebert Ch. 1).

Moreover, the individual is the central actor in the human rights corpus and in the grand narrative of human rights. In Western legal systems generally, the individual is the key subject of law, the rights bearer whose rights are his or hers by virtue of birth. It is the individual who has agency. Economic, cultural, and social rights more often require the articulation of a community or group (the homeless, the Yazidis, Yiddish speakers, etc.) in order to be realized. The failure of the grand narrative to advocate forcefully for economic, social, and cultural rights is partly due to the salience of the individual in human rights law and partly due to the nature of globalization: The same forces that spread market fundamentalism around the world also spread Western norms of civilization, including human rights. The challenge of a critical human rights pedagogy, as discussed below, is to interrupt the received story of human rights and expose the impact that individualization has for our students' sense of agency, namely, that it provides a false sense of agency via the ideology of market choice.

Critical Pedagogy and Marginalized Students

The students we often call "traditional"—those attending college full-time directly after high school, typically on a residential campus without having transferred between institutions, and without family or substantial work responsibilities—are a shrinking proportion of the overall student population (Deil-Amen 134-35). While students from all backgrounds have similar needs in terms of supportive but rigorous classroom environments, students from marginalized backgrounds often have a different set of needs with respect to the college experience. For example, many undergraduate-focused institutions require—or strongly encourage—students to live on campus, especially at the beginning of their college career, citing the importance of residential life

for students to develop important social skills and have access to campus resources. For some students, however, such a requirement means taking on unsustainable debt loads (Settersten 116). In some cases, less prestigious colleges that facilitate commuting and do not demand competitive socializing may do more to facilitate achievement of personal goals among marginalized students than attendance at an elite residential campuses would (Armstrong and Hamilton 220). Or, to consider an issue more relevant to the classroom, in a study of community college students in composition courses, "…students exhibited very low tolerance for feeling confused or making mistakes, phenomena they could easily attribute to their own inadequacy rather than to the process of learning new skills or information" (Cox 37). Yet educators know that making mistakes is often a crucial part of learning.

Marginalized students may come to higher education with "a negative sense of identity" (Taylor 16) and a lack of awareness of the structural factors that have shaped their present circumstances. While students from wealthy backgrounds are aware of the privileges their family's wealth has provided, students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may reject the role of class in shaping their educational paths (Aries and Seider 154). The rejection of class and other causal explanations for social and economic inequality further impedes efforts to develop alternative causal human rights stories.

> *This stress on the individual-level gains accruing to participants in higher education has made it easier for states and citizens to devalue and disinvest in public funding for higher education, assuming instead that individuals should bear the financial burden for an education that will benefit them individually.*

Such dynamics are particularly pronounced for students at public colleges, perhaps because lower-income students at expensive private colleges are more directly confronted with the socioeconomic disparities between themselves and their classmates, while for public college students like ours, such disparities can be more easily ignored. Even students of color from diverse urban communities may come to college unaware of the way in which structural racism has shaped their nation's history and their current opportunities (Rosen 71, 144, 300). What is needed is a human rights pedagogy that can transform students' understanding of themselves, their communities, and their history.

A human rights critical pedagogy addresses the social stratification of marginalized students, challenges hegemonic discourses, and exposes the connection between flawed social policies and inequalities in education (Giroux 14). This approach requires active learning and the participation of students to identify and expose the structural conditions that cause oppression (Grummell 182). Various authors have attempted a critical approach to human rights education, calling their approach "human rights learning," "inclusive education," or "transformative education" (Ely-Yamin 642-644; Falcon and Jacob 23-24; Liasidou 168; Magendzo 142; Lohrenscheit 176; Reardon 58). Many of these approaches draw a distinction between traditional human rights education and a pedagogy that strengthens and liberates the individual, develops initiative or a sense of efficacy, and allows students to "transcend mere critique" (Lohrenscheit 176; Reardon 62; Ely-Yamin 644).

Pedagogy Beyond the Grand Narrative

We argue that critical pedagogy in the human rights classroom is possible and desirable. According to Henry Giroux, such an approach suggests that education is not merely a "technical practice," but rather a "political intervention" (Giroux 11). A critical human rights pedagogy must be contextualized within an analysis of global corporatism and the "self-valorization" of the market

economy (McLaren and Fischman 126). Our task as educators is to challenge a market fundamentalist view, according to which democracy itself is just another market-based concept (Giroux 39).

This approach to teaching human rights must begin by taking into account the history of human rights, in particular, its historical connection to European colonialism and American imperialism. It should provide students with the historical knowledge and analytical tools to recognize and take on economic and racial injustice and gendered inequalities (Giroux 11-12). It should begin with a

discussion of empire and examine how human rights norms emerge and spread around the world. Norms diffuse in multiple ways, but one of the key methods of diffusion historically has been the spreading of norms and legal systems by empires to their colonies (Linde 555-556). British colonialism, for example, diffused its legal system throughout its colonies, institutionalizing the individual in law and expanding state authority (Linde 555-556). The United Nations spreads human rights norms through both the drafting and regulating of treaties and also in the various organs developing policy on women's rights, children's rights, the environment, discrimination, development, and other areas. Empire continues to work to spread market fundamentalism through international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Central Bank. The connection between empire, human rights, and neoliberalism needs to be explicitly drawn.

As the above discussion on neoliberalism suggests,

Knowledge is power.

this approach is all the more challenging in a system premised on the notion of education as an individual choice rather than as a shared or collective endeavor. Both scholarship and political commentary on higher education emphasize outcomes of education that accrue on the individual level, such as increased earnings and job satisfaction. Even research on the social benefits of higher education often focuses on outcomes that accrue to individuals but have economic consequences for the polity, such as improved health and family stability (Hout 393-94). This stress on the individual-level gains accruing to participants in higher education has made it easier for states and citizens to devalue and disinvest in public funding for higher education, assuming instead that individuals should bear the financial burden for an education that will benefit them individually. Indeed, even civic engagement has become a tool for the developing of professional skills among middle-class and elite students, a process that some research suggests results in the demobilization of student activism and its redirection into

the nurturing of "administrative competence" (Lee). Perhaps where vocationalized education is emphasized, such education is primarily a private good, and students in such contexts have the personal responsibility to pay for and then capitalize on the opportunity to develop marketable skills. But where critical pedagogy in liberal arts classrooms can still be found, human rights education has important collective, communal, and social benefits, promoting civic engagement, diffusing social and cultural capital to wider populations, and fostering innovation in research that benefits the public good, reduces human rights violations, and empowers people in relation to human rights law. So how do we put critical pedagogy into practice for marginalized students?

Connecting to the Local

A critical human rights pedagogy should explore the connection between systemic violence and local injury—for example, the human rights of refugees and the struggles of local undocumented students. A radical and critical classroom would focus not only on exposing imbalances of power and obstacles (both current and historical) to change, but also on linking these insights to local human rights conditions. Students would be encouraged to critically analyze their position in society, to contextualize themselves and their families within cultural practices and biases, and to develop strategies for challenging the status quo (Degener 1). The development of a critical consciousness necessitates the connection of the conditions of everyday lived experiences with the broader reality of structural and systemic exploitation. In the discipline of sociology, such connections are often an explicit part of introductory undergraduate pedagogy, as instructors rely on the frame of the sociological imagination to help students see how structural inequalities and institutional conditions—"public issues"—shape and relate to individual lives—"private troubles" (Mills 8). Such a framework readily applies to human rights education as well, in the context of such local or community-level human rights concerns as food insecurity, police violence, or environmental injustice. For example, in one of our courses, students are asked to think about disparities in neighborhood socioeconomic, social, and political capital as explanations for supermarket locations as well as for the ability of said neighborhoods to resist the imposition of toxic, dangerous, or disruptive facilities. By seeing how such phenomena work in the tangible local contexts in which students live, students develop clear conceptions of power and exploitation at the local level, which they can then use to situate their understandings of global human rights struggles.

Knowing our Students

A critical human rights pedagogy requires that teachers know their students' and their communities' struggles and create space in class for these to be shared and contextualized within larger human rights issues. Knowing the communities of our students is a strategy that is particularly well-suited to colleges like ours, with

nontraditional student bodies and relatively large student populations of color and with faculty who are predominately White. Indeed,

> *"…although faculty members hold office hours or communicate with students via email, many do not reveal their inner selves in an authentic way, which is the foundation for a meaningful human connection. Faculty members who forge authentic relationships with students often are able to connect with students at deeper levels and challenge them to previously unrealized levels of achievement and personal performance." (Kuh et al. 281)*

A longitudinal study of students at an elite residential college found that personal connections, especially with faculty mentors, are perhaps the most important factors in driving student success (Chambliss and Takacs 124-5), and if this is true for advantaged students, how much more true it is for students without the economic, social, and cultural capital to navigate the thorny pathways through college. Today, more than three quarters of instructional faculty are contingent workers, (Curtis and Thornton 7), with over half working part-time or while focusing on graduate studies. Such figures make it even more clear that students at many colleges may be largely deprived of the opportunity to build enduring personal connections with faculty. Thus, it is essential that those of us who are privileged to hold full-time tenured or tenure-track appointments be committed to knowing our students as people.

> *A longitudinal study of students at an elite residential college found that personal connections, especially with faculty mentors, are perhaps the most important factors in driving student success, and if this is true for advantaged students, how much more true it is for students without the economic, social, and cultural capital to navigate the thorny pathways through college.*

Peter McLaren and Gustavo Fishman go even further, suggesting that teachers (and programs that educate them) should ally with movements for change, "to assure that what transpires in . . . classes . . . is grounded in a well-articulated political project aimed at the transformation of asymmetrical relationships of power and privilege" (131). Service-learning projects in the community are especially conducive to the implementation of a critical human rights pedagogy. Our students, mostly from local communities, may not face the same sort of cognitive dissonance experienced by wealthier students exploring poorer neighborhoods. This type of community engagement with students' own communities can have a profound impact on students' ability to identify structural

conditions of poverty, crime, discrimination, and exploitation. They may see their neighborhoods from an altogether new perspective, not as visitors, but as residents stepping back to see the larger picture. This type of hands-on community work also fosters a sense of agency among students and strengthens the community ties required for solidarity. Indeed, in order for students to become effective change-makers, they must remain grounded in their communities to resist co-option as they gain increased legitimacy outside of their communities (Meyerson and Tompkins 319).

Service learning can provide a pedagogical opportunity to address several of these concerns simultaneously. Well-designed service-learning projects are not just about sending students out to communities on their own, but rather involve going into communities *with* our students to develop projects collaboratively that will benefit the community partner. In this process, instructors become students too, as we learn both about the community and about our students. Furthermore, such a process enables instructors to contextualize the lessons of the service-learning project within the community and fosters student engagement in social change, including skills in social entrepreneurship.

Human Rights and Higher Education Politics

A critical human rights pedagogy must face the challenges to higher education head on. Giroux argues that a transformative pedagogy must "relentlessly questio[n] the kinds of labor, practices, and forms of production that are enacted in public and higher education" (37). For example, we might focus on the exploitative labor practices of adjunctification (Tirelli 82-83), the growth of assessment and accountability cultures that emphasize quantifiable learning outcomes (Arum and Roksa 169-73; Smelser 88), political pressures driving performance funding (Dougherty and Natow ch. 8), the move away from valuing the liberal arts and towards workforce training (McPherson and Schapiro 49; Brint et al. 172; Baker, Baldwin and Makker), and government financial disinvestment in higher education driven by the increased conception of education as a private good (leading to increased tuition costs) (Ehrenberg 11-12). By making such issues transparent (Lucal 12), we show students how human rights matter even in the hyperlocal context of our own institutions and classrooms. Even where human rights education incorporates experiences that provide professional training, such as internships, the kinds of questions and ideas we grapple with in our classrooms are deeply embedded in the legacies of the best liberal arts education. For example, a recent service-learning project in one of our classes, in a poor and largely minority school district with many recent immigrants, began with discussions about why this particular neighborhood and these particular students do not go to college at the same rate as those enrolled in a wealthier district only a few miles away. We began by talking about actual local neighborhoods, why people of similar ethnicity and race live close to each other, discussing community, familial, and economic bonds but

also government policies of zoning, redistricting, and racial segregation. By emphasizing this sort of thinking in our classrooms, and by helping students to uncover its real value for them personally, our courses and classrooms can themselves become sites of the critique of vocationalization and commodification of higher education (Lucal 12).

Schooling itself can reproduce relations of colonialism, just as the human rights regime has often done. Schools, including colleges and universities, are often structured to reproduce status quo relations of power and support capitalist institutions (Carnoy 16-17; Bowles and Gintis 5, 53, 240). While liberation from colonialism required a "redevelopment of humanness and self-esteem"(Carnoy 20), current trends in higher education entail just the opposite. States and educational institutions are redoubling their efforts to diminish the liberatory potential of learning, requiring proscribed curricula (Complete College America 9, 16) linked directly to job-market outcomes as a condition for educational funding (Dougherty et al. 164-65; Dougherty and Natow 43; Arum and Roksa 182), and performance funding regimes hold colleges accountable for students' choices to pursue paths that may meander or turn out to be less lucrative. These trends are intensifying, despite the fact that over 90 percent of Americans believe that the benefits of higher education rest upon individual student initiative rather than the caliber or prestige of the institution, in direct contrast to views about K-12 education that place the responsibility for learning squarely on teachers and schools (Doyle and Kirst 203).

Such trends fly in the face of what human rights education seeks—or ought to be seeking—to achieve. A critical human rights pedagogy requires that the teaching of human rights be coupled with a real commitment to self-determination, both in general and in the specific context of education. Students need to be able to choose, within classrooms, curricula, and colleges, pathways that support their own priorities and values, rather than being shamed, cajoled, or forced onto tracks that support institutional or state preferences. This of course does not mean that human rights educators should abandon their commitment to intellectual leadership and student mentoring, but if the teaching of human rights is not coupled with a commitment to student self-determination, our classrooms simply recapitulate the internal colonialism marginalized students have faced throughout their schooling experiences.

As human rights educators, furthermore, we must recognize our own "cultural and political baggage" and be "ethically and politically accountable for the stories [we] produce, the claims [we] make upon public memory, and the images of the future [we] deem legitimate" (Giroux 37-8). As teachers, we must be aware of the effects and implications of our own human rights stories. We should also recognize that not all students have similar experiences with oppression; the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and citizenship produces multiple configurations of exploitation. Human rights pedagogy and practice can gloss over differences among rights holders for the sake of universality. Yet it is precisely this diversity of experiences and views which can enrich our students' (and our own) learning. As John Stuart Mill wrote, those who "have never thrown themselves into the mental position of those who think differently from them . . . do not, in any proper sense of the word, know the doctrine which they themselves profess" (68).

Confronting the Hegemonic Narrative

A critical human rights pedagogy must call attention to the hegemonic position of human rights itself in academia and international institutions. It should critically examine the tendency of human rights to usurp other sub-disciplines in its interpretation of history through a progressive, teleological lens and a grand narrative as well as in the menu of options available to express grievances. This is especially urgent in an environment where all social movements are framed as a continuation of human rights progress. The human rights frame has been so successful at achieving certain types of gains, including civil equality, that emerging movements adopt the frame without much debate. The cost can be dear. Recent marriage equality efforts, for example, have forestalled earlier, more inclusive movement objectives, such as economic justice and sexual liberation (Ettelbrick). The ability to critically assess the utility, value, and cost of this frame demands an intimate knowledge of the movements themselves and the willingness to endorse alternative articulations of social justice.

Change—and movements—are not always progressive, and incorporating a deeper understanding of conservative, reactionary, and/or corporatist movements into courses can go far in helping students develop a critical consciousness in relation to the hegemonic narrative of human rights progress. Our courses examine cases that are typically excluded from social justice, social movement and human rights courses such as Anita Bryant's anti-Equal Rights Amendment campaign, the English Defense League and the National Front in France. Conservative movements have utilized the strategies developed by progressive organizations to create structural support for conservative viewpoints (Teles 42-45). Even corporations have gotten in on the act, drawing on the repertoire of contemporary social movements (Walker 48) to create fake grassroots or "astroturf" campaigns to protect corporate interests (Walker 33). While claims that corporate interests are aligned with freedom are nothing new, corporate-sponsored movement-like techniques can be used just as easily to undermine human rights. For example, companies can utilize public affairs consultants (Walker 48) to mobilize local residents in support of energy exploitation

(which might gravely imperil their health) or the development of new big-box stores (which might destabilize local economies and reduce local wages).

There are both costs and consequences to a continued reliance on the progressive teleology of human rights. This progressive narrative calls attention to problems and offers a single solution: activism through law and civil society. Human rights NGOs, accustomed to such a perspective, remain tightly coupled to the human rights legal establishment, thus perpetuating a hegemonic legal frame. But law is not the only way to make change, and indeed sometimes legal change is ineffective or impossible. There are a variety of important arguments that challenge the hegemonic legal frame, and incorporating a discussion of such arguments into the human rights classroom has the potential to reshape and expand students' conceptions of the potential of social change.

For example, Kenji Yoshino has persuasively argued that many experiences of oppression are enacted not by states or employers but by those whom the law cannot hold accountable—one's parents, neighbors, lovers, friends, or indeed one's self (8). Thus, human rights regimes can require that parents send their daughters to school and reserve spots in advanced degree programs for women, but the law cannot make parents see their daughters and sons as equally intelligent, protect young women from social pressure to choose traditionally-gendered fields of study, or abolish the stereotype threat that reduces women's performance in advanced math (Spencer, Steele, and Quinn 21). Our students find Yoshino's message particularly powerful, and often comment on how surprised they were to find so much value in an assigned reading. Even where law can and does play a role in promoting social change, a focus on legally oriented strategies can distract from other ways of seeking change and even backfire. Courts in particular are much more limited in their ability to enable lasting social and political change than is often realized, and, in some cases where legal change does occur, it may be better seen as a culmination of broader social change than as a catalyst (Rosenberg 239, 427).

Thus, we argue for a more open-ended conception of rights that does not assume a pre-conceived endgame. Beyond the study of progressive movements for legal change, human rights classrooms can and should expose students to the wide array of actors and actions that move social change in both progressive and reactionary directions. Such a pedagogy helps our students come to see that their own voices can matter in creating cultural change on the most local level, within their own communities and families, and even within themselves.

Conclusion

A critical human rights pedagogy should have as its goal a vibrant critique of the impact of the grand narrative of human rights, its individualization, its refusal to challenge or engage critically with neoliberalism, and its neglect of economic, social, and cultural rights. In mounting such a critique, this pedagogy enables our

classrooms to serve as sites of resistance (Lucal 10-12) against neoliberalism's encroachment into both higher education and human rights. Along with this goal of resistance, a critical human rights pedagogy cannot limit itself to providing students with the tools for transformative and liberatory critiques, but furthermore must enable students "to become the authors of their own lives" (Ayers and Ayers 37). Such authorship is obviously constrained in a context in which the grand narrative of history is predetermined, and it is also constrained when educators—or, for that matter, human rights professionals—believe that we and our institutions know best what is right for the people we serve. Catherine Taylor asks whether students are " . . . in need of affirming? Or are they, and the world, in need of transforming? Do educators get to decide?" (16). We argue that educators do not get to decide. Rather, a critical human rights pedagogy provides students with the tools, the experiences, and the skills to decide for themselves, and to put those decisions into action to make better lives for themselves, their communities, and the world.

Notes

[1] This is a quotation from the abolitionist Theodore Parker, which was later paraphrased by Martin Luther King in an August 1967 speech, which can be accessed at http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/documentsentry/

where_do_we_go_from_here_delivered_at_the_11th_annual_sclc_convention/

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching Human Rights from Below: Towards Solidarity, Resistance and Social Justice

by Melissa Canlas, Amy Argenal, and Monisha Bajaj

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

Introduction

The call for human rights education (HRE) in schools is growing, but there remains a large gap in empirical research around HRE, particularly in the United States. There is an additional need for increased research focusing on human rights curricula and pedagogies that serve low-income students of color, and immigrants and refugees in the United States. In this article, we discuss our curricular and pedagogical strategies and student responses to lesson plans and activities that build solidarity, resistance to dominant and assimilative narratives, and promote social justice for a high school human rights club that serves immigrant and refugee youth. We are a professor (Monisha Bajaj) and two doctoral students (Amy Argenal and Melissa Canlas), who are involved in research collaboration with a public high school in a large urban area on the west coast of the United States. Our approach focuses on combining a transformative human rights perspective with the praxes of critical pedagogies and social justice with three key themes: student-centered human rights pedagogy, cultural wealth and HRE, and students' turning human rights language into action.

Conceptualizing a Human Rights from Below

Human rights cultures have long been in the making by the praxis of victims of violations, regardless of the mode of formulation of human rights standards and instruments. The single most critical source of human rights is the consciousness of peoples of the world who have waged the most persistent struggles for decolonization and self-determination, against racial discrimination, gender-based aggression and discrimination, denial of access to basic minimum needs, environmental degradation and destruction .... Clearly, Human Rights Education (HRE) must begin by a commissioning of a world history of people's struggles for rights and against injustice and tyranny (Baxi, 1997, 142).

Human rights offers a language that speaks to the basic dignity inherent in all human beings. Human rights education may take the form of the dissemination of knowledge around international conventions and treaties, the analysis of how nation states interact with the United Nations, and the examination of the intersections of human rights with social change movements. Because HRE in the United States primarily exists in law schools, there has been a legal focus—understanding international law and how it can be utilized. This is a technocratic understanding of human rights and affirms HRE scholar Andre Keet's critique of normative HRE as being overly "declarationist" (2007). Legal scholar Marie-Benedicte Dembour (2010) identifies four "schools" of human rights scholarship (natural, deliberative, protesting, and discursive); the struggle to close the gap between rights on paper and realities on the ground characterizes the "protest" school

where we place our HRE work with scholars such as Upendra Baxi quoted above.

Agreeing with scholars who call for "critical" (Keet, 2007) and "transformative" HRE (Bajaj, 2012; Mackie, 2009; Tibbitts, 2005), we approach human rights education "from below" acknowledging the radical legacies of human rights movements that struggled against racism, xenophobia, oppressive regimes, and colonialism. For example, in the United States, American human rights history brings to light the use of human rights language in framing racial justice by such civil rights activists as Ella Baker and Malcolm X, and W.E.B. DuBois' and Paul Robeson's petition to the United Nations to investigate the widespread lynching of African Americans as a form of genocide (Anderson, 2003). Human rights offers a way to build solidarity to fight against repressive regimes and oppressive systems. Although HRE has been diluted or non-existent in education in the United States, there exists a radical history of activism and movement building using human rights language that educators can draw upon (Grant and Gibson, 2013).

> *Our approach focuses on combining a transformative human rights perspective with the praxes of critical pedagogies and social justice with three key themes: student-centered human rights pedagogy, cultural wealth and HRE, and students' turning human rights language into action.*

Human rights education from below describes how marginalized communities have used human rights in their liberation struggles and offers a way to teach about human rights utilizing participatory and community-based methods. In this approach, human rights offers a shared language of resistance and solidarity that allows groups across borders to engage in similar struggles—with differing methods and contextual conditions—in the name of equal rights and social justice. Through human rights education grounded in critical analyses of power and unequal social conditions, students are able to engage with injustices and examine how individuals, groups, and larger movements have used human rights frameworks to reclaim dignity, expand rights, and develop solidarity as forms of critical resistance both locally and globally.

In 2014 our research team launched a Human Rights Club of five to ten students meeting weekly for 1 ½ hour sessions in a high school for newcomer refugee and immigration youth. The club met over 30 times during the school year and took five field trips where students delved further into human rights issues. We developed interactive lessons related to human rights and prioritized students' experiences in the club's content, structure, and practice. Our curriculum was flexible and was revised to respond to students' interests and concerns. The research team also participated in school events as part of an ongoing collaboration rooted in the principles of community-

engaged scholarship (Giles, 2008). As educators, we incorporated into our practice community building, self-reflection (for students and educators), critical dialogue, and "reading the world" (Freire, 1970), which meant examining the social, economic, and political conditions that shaped the experiences of students and their communities. We also encouraged students to articulate their understandings of a rights-based language that were relevant to them and their transnational communities.

Positionality and Relationship to the

This statement of the African-American Policy Forum, co-founded by legal scholar Kimberle Crenshaw, theorizes intersectional analyses of power and social inequality and offers a concise statement of how we view our multiple identities and commitments in relation to human rights and racial justice. We are women of color, each with over ten years of experience teaching and working with immigrant, refugee, or international populations, and share a commitment to a radical and inclusive politics of human rights reflected in our educational, organizing, and scholarly work. Each of us is the child or grandchild of immigrants to the United States and has family stories of rights violations and discrimination both in our countries of

Research

We want a loving community across difference. . . . We commit to a vibrant, inclusive, and intersectional social justice movement that condemns racist patriarchy and works to end its daily brutality and injustice. Anything less is unacceptable.

(excerpt from African-American Policy Forum Statement on the Charleston massacre, 2015)

origin (the Philippines, Nicaragua, and India respectively) as well as in the United States. This is significant because in the United States most educators in public education do not reflect the identities of their students. In 2011, 82 percent of teachers in public schools were white (www.nces.ed.gov) even though students of color are the largest growing demographic in public schools, especially in large urban areas. The three teachers had shared experiences with the participants of the club: one of us came from the same country as one of the participants, another had spent time in the countries of origin of our students, and the third shared connections to the students'

immigrant communities and neighborhoods outside of the school.

Our students were immigrants or refugees who had arrived within the past four years to the United States (the criterion for attending the newcomer high school), and all were English Language Learners. Their countries of origin were the Philippines, Bhutan, Burma, and Nepal. Many had experienced severe hardship in their home countries and in the migration process. The neighborhoods that the students lived in were marked by high levels of poverty; all students in the human rights club received free lunch, an indicator of low socioeconomic status. Many students also acted as the linguistic and cultural interpreters for family members. Each of our students aspired to attend college, and a few students were enrolled in community college classes in addition to their high school course load.

As critical educators, we understood that we could not teach human rights meaningfully (or any subject) if we did not gain the trust of our students by creating a nurturing classroom environment that honored their experiences and strengths. Rather than adopt an assimilationist approach in the classroom where students are expected to discard their home cultures in order to be absorbed into the dominant culture, our approach invited students' experiences as a source of cultural wealth and from which we all could learn. Students' experiences and personal histories were invited into class activities and dialogues, and these personal narratives allowed us to engage more deeply with the curriculum. We were fortunate that the ethos of the school valued students' cultural wealth, and through a collaborative research partnership with the school, the human rights club was welcomed and supported.

HRE offers a global vision, utilizing a shared language of rights that can speak to all students, regardless of their immigration status and country of origin. For immigrant and refugee students, who have varying degrees of citizenship and legal status in the United States, human rights provides an alternative to civil rights language, which may be understood as relevant only to legal citizens of a nation. HRE not only provides a lens for all students to understand their experience within the United States but also allows students to connect a "rights language" to their experiences prior to arriving in the United States. Our curriculum focused both on global and local issues, representing the experiences of our students so that they could "see themselves" in the curriculum, not only as members of communities that have experienced human rights violations but also as people who could fight in solidarity for the fulfillment of human rights.

The Human Rights Club
Student-Centered HRE

The weekly club sessions began with a check-in question, which allowed everyone to "bring themselves into the room" and for us to catch up on the week. The educators participated in the check-ins too. As trust grew between students and educators, this sharing time became more organic and more valuable as students grew more open to sharing their experiences. We often shifted (or even discarded) our planned activities to focus more closely on the issues that were introduced by students during the check-in.

The icebreaker or team-building activity was a physical activity that often evoked laughter among the group. We worked towards building trust within the group by allowing students to laugh, engage kinesthetically, and feel comfortable with one another. Team-building activities offered opportunities for students to assert themselves within the group and became opportunities to dialogue about issues. For example, in the "Blind Line Up" activity, students were given a number and instructed to line up in sequential order. Students, however, had to close their eyes throughout the activity and were not allowed to speak. During the activity, students improvised by using other noises (claps, foot stomps, grunts) to communicate with one another and were able eventually to construct a kind of nonverbal code to complete the task. After the activity students spoke about the challenges of communication. Students felt proud that they were able to develop a new code to communicate with each other, but one student asked, "What if someone new walks in and wants to communicate and doesn't know the code?" The conversation then became a discussion of language and access: how do we communicate in situations if we are new to the language or the culture? In what ways does language create barriers to individuals and communities in their access to rights? We were able to dialogue about ways that immigrant and refugee students experience barriers in their daily lives and ways that individuals can work collectively to address these challenges.

Beginning with check-in and team-building activities created an environment in which the participants created ownership and felt more comfortable to delve into deeper conversations. After these introductory activities, we introduced the main activity or lesson of the day. These ranged from identity exploration, introducing human rights documents (written in accessible language), watching films related to human rights, interactive role plays, preparing for field trips, and discussion of student concerns. At the beginning of the year, the curriculum focused on student

exploration and self-expression, central to both trust building and ensuring for us that the curriculum was reflecting the students' lives. We then introduced visual and artistic activities that allowed students to express themselves creatively and offered an accessible avenue of expression for students who struggled with written English.

One of the first artistic activities conducted with the group was entitled "I am a tree." Students and teachers each drew a tree to represent themselves and to illustrate their roots, strengths, hobbies, and family histories. We then all shared our trees. This activity stressed the importance of each participant's unique experience.

In a similar follow-up activity students drew silhouettes of their bodies on large pieces of paper. They were asked to put in their silhouettes information about themselves in a designated space on the drawing: the head was to be represented by a thought, the heart by a feeling, the hands by a goal or aspiration, the stomach by a need, and the feet by an activity that they enjoy doing. Then each member of the club had a partner trace his/her silhouette on a large piece of paper, complete the statements on each corresponding body part, and decorate their silhouettes. Upon completion, the entire group placed their silhouettes around the room, and took turns reading them and physically standing in each other's silhouette.

We selected these two activities with the goal of putting the students' lived experiences at the center of the weekly activities. By beginning with the students and their histories, we were able to design future activities around their experiences, such as creating collages related to rights fulfillment and violation, and life maps. These activities revealed several common threads among the students: the importance of family, friends, community, and education. Common stresses among students included responsibilities to family and work (nearly all of the students worked nights and weekends), academic performance, and passing the state-sponsored high school exit exam. As the year progressed, students became more open to sharing other aspects of their experiences, which determined and shifted our conversations and activities in the club.

These activities allowed for students to begin practicing "heart" thinking, the human development skills of empathy and understanding. At the core of human rights is the recognition of the dignity and worth in each human being, and the core of critical pedagogy is the humanization and valuing of our students. As educators, we were sensitive to the realities of trauma that our refugee and immigrant students had experienced so we offered opportunities for students to speak from their own experience through art and dialogue. As students felt more comfortable, they spoke of the traumas of the
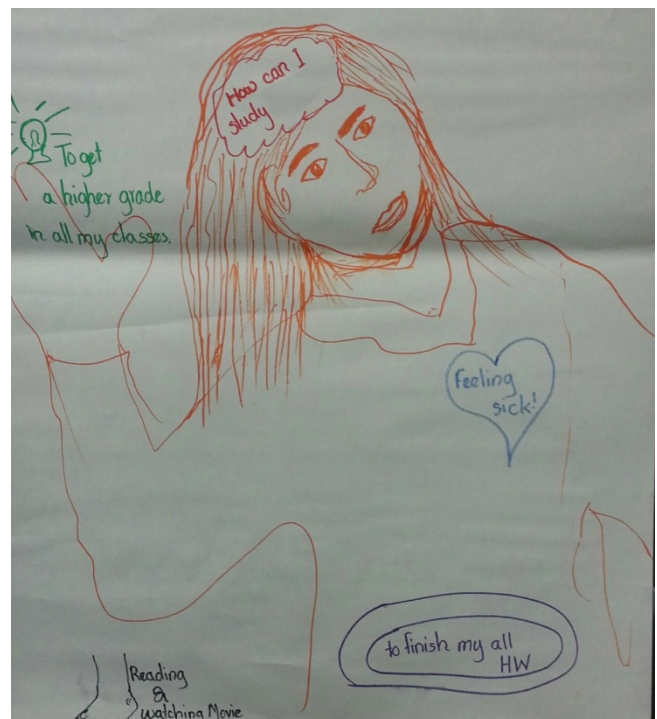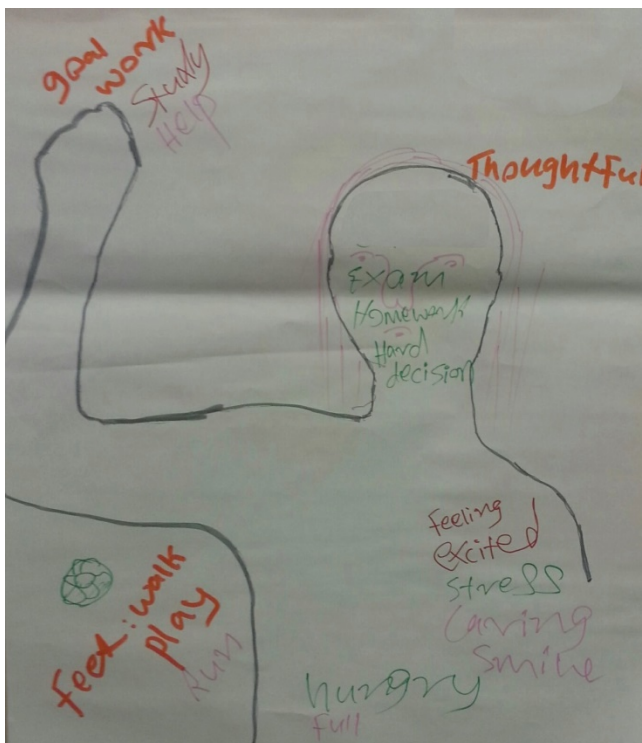
migration process, which included family separation, scarcity of food and resources, forced labor, barely escaping traffickers, interruption of their schooling, experiencing or knowing of others experiencing sexual violence, and the necessity to work to support their families both prior to and after migrating. Their stories allowed club members to engage more deeply with one another and with human rights themes.

"That's like what happened to me": Making Human Rights Education Relevant

During the club sessions we looked for images and videos as tools for discussion. Because the students in the club were English Language Learners, the use of images was helpful in engaging students in discussion and allowing students to literally "see" people like themselves in the curriculum.

One of the early activities we organized was a field trip to visit a human rights photography project at a local university campus. Prior to the field trip, we asked
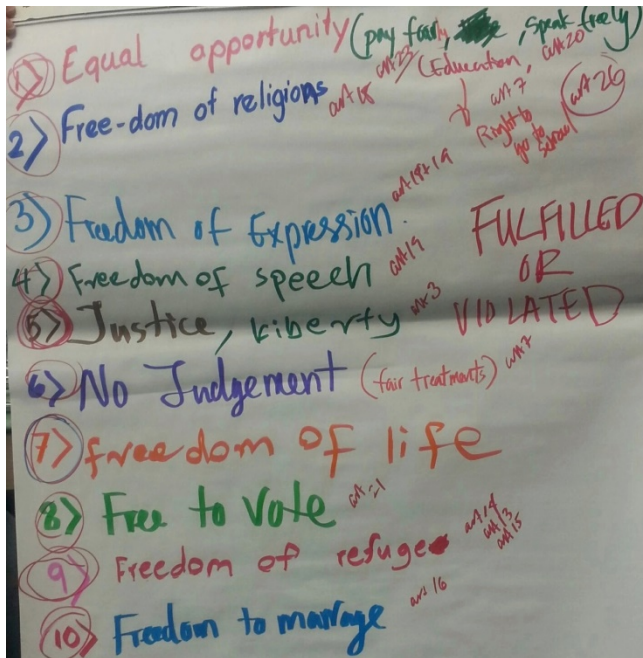
students to write their own rights document, listing ten rights they believed that all human beings should have. We introduced the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and dialogued with students about which of the rights the students identified were or were not represented in the UDHR, and what it means for rights to be fulfilled or violated. This dialogue provided an introduction to human rights language that we practiced while viewing the photography exhibit.

The photography exhibit focused on images about human rights from around the world. Many of the photographs represented the countries of origin of the students. The experience of viewing the photographs was deeply moving to the students. The organizers of the exhibit selected photographs that demonstrated not only violations of human rights but also examples of human

dignity. Students were especially engaged in the photos that represented their home countries. Zau (not his real name) pulled out his mobile phone during the tour to share a photograph from Burma, his home country that was similar to a photo in the exhibit. Students began to ask questions about the issues represented in the photographs. For example, when viewing an image of a child miner in Bolivia and another image of a conscripted soldier in Uganda, one student asked, "Are children forced to do this?"

After the tour, we talked with the students about their reactions. The photographs caused students to connect emotionally and to share their own experiences as refugees in the United States. The prevalence of child labor in the photographs and in the students' experiences was a concern. Commenting on the photo of the child soldier in Uganda, Seng, a 19-year-old Burmese student, said that there were many child soldiers in her country who were forced to fight. Another student spoke of the common practice of children being hired to work on road projects in her home country, where children as young as six years old worked to dig and carry dirt. Students who were too young to do these tasks contributed by picking up rocks. Zau spoke of his experience as a child laborer, working in mines to scout for gold. At the age of twelve, he worked in mines that were prone to collapse. He worked with a rope tied around his waist so that he could be pulled out quickly if necessary. He said that children were often selected for this work for their size and speed. These personal stories became both an opportunity to engage meaningfully with human rights issues (e.g. the right to work, children's rights) and to honor the "cultural wealth"—in this case the lived experiences—of students and their communities. The students' reflections revealed deep reserves of courage and strength that might not be acknowledged or shared in more traditional classrooms, especially when the focus is on graduation requirements and preparing for state exams.

The students expressed sadness, some crying discreetly while viewing the photographs, but they also found them inspiring. The students answered unanimously that seeing the photographs was a meaningful experience. Two students said that seeing the photos made them want to become photojournalists so that they could tell stories and help people. Another student stated that the photographs offered an engaging way to learn about other places and people, and that the photos made him more interested in learning history. A fourth student shared that visual storytelling helped him to understand that the experiences of both struggle and resistance were shared by people around the world: "It's not just us, our country, families [who experience hardship]. We can see it's not us alone."

In addition to the photographs, we viewed several films that documented both human rights abuses and human rights organizing and activism. We chose documentaries in which students could see similarities to their own families and experiences, such as the documentary *Revolutionary Optimists* (Grainger- Mosen, M. & Newnham, N. 2013) that documents how youth in India have worked on various community projects through an understanding of children's rights. During the film we

would pause to discuss vocabulary and issues that came up during the film such as "What is a slum?"; "What is going on in this situation?"; and "What issues are being addressed?" We concluded each section of the film with journaling and dialogue.

Students remarked on similarities of their experiences to the film. For example, the film shows youth working to make clay bricks in India, and focuses on a young girl who supports her family by making bricking but aspires to continue her education. While some students remarked that they had never seen bricks made in this way before, one student said that her mother worked making bricks in a similar outdoor brickyard. The same student shared that, like many of the women in the film, the women in her neighborhood in Western Burma were responsible for carrying water from the wells because they lacked running water.

Students also made connections to the structural issues that caused the poverty and human rights violations faced by the youth in the film. They asked, "Why is there so much injustice? Why doesn't the government care? Why don't they do something?" The film also spurred conversation on the rights of children, issues of gender, access to education, and, ultimately, on the agency and power of youth to organize for their communities. Students remarked upon the youth in the film who organized for better access to water and health care in their neighborhoods. One student stated that she was inspired by the youth activism and how they helped to make their neighborhood better "even though they're just kids." She stated, "If I were them, I'd think, maybe this is an adult's job," but the film offered examples of youths making change for themselves.

Upon the completion of watching the film, Kamana from Nepal asked, "Can our club start a club like [the youth organizers] in the film?" This speaks to the transformative role that HRE can play (Bajaj, 2011), particularly when students see youth like themselves represented as agents of change.

We complemented films about international human rights issues with films about poverty, rights, and organizing within the United States. The documentary film "The Oak Park Story" documents the stories of tenants in a low-income area of California and their multi-racial and multi-ethnic coalition to organize for adequate housing. The tenants of Oak Park Apartments were primarily Latina/o and South East Asian immigrants and refugees who organized together for over ten years to hold their landlord accountable for the horrific conditions of their rental units. Students were shocked to see images of the living conditions of the tenants in the film: units with collapsing ceilings; walls coated with black mold; cockroaches and vermin sharing living space with infants, children, and elders. Students expressed shock that these living conditions existed in the United States. One student stated that the living conditions from the film were worse than the conditions in the refugee camp where she and her family had lived.

Although the documentary does not explicitly frame these issues within a human rights framework, students applied the rights language they had learned and were able to view the example of a diverse group of tenants working in solidarity to achieve an adequate standard of living. In the discussion that followed, students related what they saw to their own lives; for example, Ligaya, a 19-year-old senior who had emigrated from the Philippines, said, "That was like my situation last year in the apartment where we live. The bathrooms were so clogged and the landlord didn't do anything about it. It smelled so bad. I had to go to my aunt's house to shower." The discussion moved on to why individuals are afraid to speak up, and Mireh, who is 16 and from Burma, offered, "People are scared to go to the police because of their immigration status." Mangita, who is 19 years old and from Nepal, said that the tenants, as bad as the living conditions were, were afraid they might get kicked out of the apartment and have nowhere else to go.

The discussion ended with focusing in the film on the solidarity between the Latino/a and Southeast Asian tenants organizing together for decent living conditions. Students discussed tensions in their own neighborhoods between ethnic groups, as well as in school, and the necessity for solidarity. "Something that inspired me about this story," Seng said, "is that if the Latino and the Cambodian tenants stayed separate, if they didn't come together, there would be no achievement. They came together to fight for something bigger and they accomplished that." Zau concluded, "If you want to make change, you have to talk to other people even if they are different from you."

"We all have the same rights": Solidarity and Human Rights in Action

As the year progressed, students demonstrated an increased desire to move beyond discussions and engage in human rights actions. The club participated in a school-sponsored May Day march in support of migration as a human right. The solidarity demonstrated was significant

since most of the students in the human rights club had

legal status in the United States through political asylum, as opposed to the majority of the students in the school who were Latino/a and undocumented. They chose to march in solidarity with the undocumented students and community members who are at risk for deportation, incarceration, and separation from family. One of the many student-led chants asserted:

"Who are we? Immigrants!

What do we want? Rights!

When do we want them? Right now!"

A group of Burmese students, including some from the Human Rights Club, held signs asserting that no human being is "illegal" and were active in leading the march through the neighborhood. Earlier in the year, Ms. Denise, a teacher at the school, had mentioned that some of the refugee students were asking many of the undocumented and some youth who came as unaccompanied minors why they would take such a risk without knowing if they could stay in the United States. Pan-immigrant solidarity was emphasized and the universality of human rights discussed by the Human Rights Club led to more understanding, empathy, and collective action as demonstrated in the march.

At the school's International Spring Festival, some of the youth decided to sing the song "Glory" from the movie *Selma* that 65 students, including the Human Rights Club, had seen on a field trip. The students wore t-shirts that read "Black Lives Matter"; the participating students were from the Congo, El Salvador, Honduras, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Philippines. Given the fact that there were no native-born African-American students because of the newcomer school's focus on recently arrived immigrants and given the fact of the inter-ethnic tensions in the low-income communities the students lived in, the articulation of a politics of solidarity—sometimes not practiced given the messiness of everyday life in multi-racial and unequal urban communities—was a notable demonstration of students' developing a commitment to equal rights and social justice.

Concluding Thoughts

Students' increased engagement with human rights and social justice issues became more apparent as the year progressed, and students began to arrive at club meetings eager to discuss issues that arose in their lives or in other classes. A closing activity for the club asked students to create a group mural that represented three things: "something I learned, something that touched my heart, and something I want to do next." The format for this group mural echoed the "head, heart, and hands" structure of the group silhouette activity previously described. Students' responses demonstrated that they had internalized not only that they had human rights but also that they needed to defend these rights for themselves and

others. One student wrote: "I had got destroy[ed] all my rights by other[s], but now is the time for me to fight for my rights back." Another wrote, "I want the world to know what we now know about Human Rights."

There are several components that we believe are central to a "human rights education from below" that distinguish it from only teaching about conventions and international norms. First, students—whether operating from social locations of privilege or marginalization—must be able to feel human in the learning process. Through identifying their personal relationships to ideas of rights, dignity, and empathy, students can explore how their rights and those of others have been fulfilled or violated.

Second, for all students but especially for those who occupy the margins, it is important that they see themselves in the curriculum and see examples of people from their backgrounds as agents of individual or collective change. Honoring what students and their communities have done and have brought to the global terrain of human rights is important in countering some of the "white savior complex" that pervades the field of international human rights in industrialized countries (Cole, 2012). Human rights work in the Global South—where all our students hailed from—is a much more diverse and engaged endeavor and these were the perspectives we privileged in order to have students "see" themselves in the curriculum, in the films, and in the examples they were exposed to.

Third, our experience with a Human Rights Club stresses the relational dimension of teaching about human rights. Creating reciprocal bonds with students as well as with the institutional setting can create a context in which discussions can go deeper. Human rights education has been critiqued for being introduced in a superficial manner by adjusting textbook content or adding an exam question here or there; transformative human rights education requires creating a pedagogical space for authentic conversations that traverse the personal and political, engaging students in meaningful discussions about their histories and their lives.

Lastly, human rights activism—and arguably education based on and rooted in it—has a long history in the United States (Grant & Gibson, 2013). As social service providers seek to integrate newly arrived youth and their families into life in the United States, educators have a role to play in initiating students into a legacy of critical and engaged participation in their new society. Learning about the role of civic actors working towards change allows students to see themselves as part of a global and local community working towards the larger social good. Rather than dislocation and alienation, human rights education offers youth who have already seen many examples of human rights violations the chance to embody a critical global citizenship where their belonging and identity is affirmed, and their commitment to solidarity and justice is nurtured.

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RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching the History of Human Rights and "Humanitarian" Interventions

by Mary Nolan
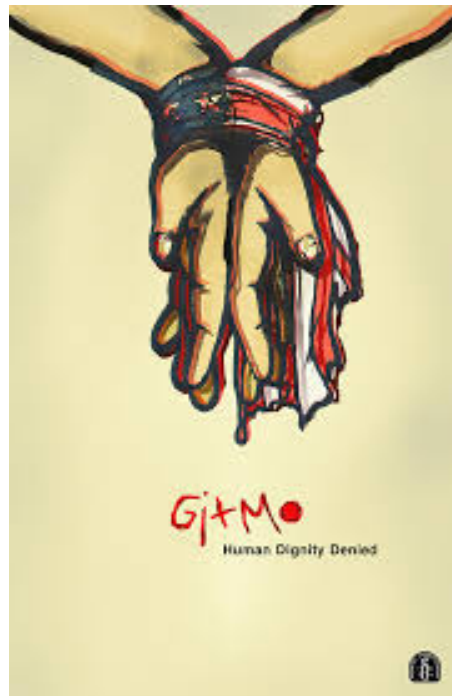
ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE UN

It took me a long time to pay attention to human rights and an even longer time to want to read and teach about them. I was a child of the 1960s, immersed in the antiwar movement, student protests, and the women's movement. The languages we spoke in the last decades of the Cold War were ones of class, race, and gender, of possible socialisms and the problems of capitalism. In my teaching on twentieth-century European history during the 1970s and 1980s, human rights hardly figured at all, for the Cold War, economic recovery, European integration, Americanization, Social Democracy, and new social movements took center stage. In the 1980s, when some of my students started talking enthusiastically about Helsinki Watch and the need to defend the human rights of Eastern Europeans, I was surprised and puzzled. I didn't know a lot about the socialist regimes there, but wasn't this a return to cold war binaries and crude anti-communism? Criticisms of Latin American dictatorships for human rights violations and the various UN Women's Conferences suggested other possibilities for a language and politics of human rights, but they were not hegemonic before 1989.

By the 1990s human rights were everywhere. Human rights have deep and very complex origins, which are the subject of much scholarly contestation, but they unquestionably gained new prominence during the multifaceted economic, political, and social crises of the long 1970s. There was the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, drawn up by the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe, with its famous Basket III that called for "respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief," and contained human rights language affirming freer human contacts, family reunification, and educational and cultural exchanges.[1] While the immediate impact of Helsinki was limited, its rhetorical appeal was great, both among dissidents in Eastern Europe and their supporters in the West. Governments in Europe and the United States devoted greater attention to human rights violations in both Europe and Latin America, although with limited ability to curb or punish violators. There was a proliferation of NGOs devoted to human rights, as groups like Human Rights Watch, Doctors without Borders, and the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo joined older ones like Amnesty International. Women's rights as human rights were hotly debated at UN Women's Conferences, in development projects, and among women's NGOs.

In the wake of the collapse of communism, human rights (along with neoliberalism) became hegemonic. In the post-Cold War global order human rights are widely invoked, although much less often respected. They provide the privileged language in which demands can be made, good causes advocated, legitimacy claimed, and interventions of all sorts justified. States have to take account of human rights in their policies at home and in terms of their reputational status and possibilities for aid and alliances abroad.

Scholarship followed politics and there has been a flood of books and articles, academic conferences, UN reports, and NGO activities devoted to analyzing, publicizing, praising, and criticizing the human rights conventions and treaties and the UN, governmental and nongovernmental organizations devoted to human rights activism. Such activism ranges from promoting women's human rights to punishing war criminals in international criminal tribunals, from condemning torture to elaborating a human right to development, from protecting indigenous cultures to bolstering democracy. Closely associated with human rights activism are the varied humanitarian interventions around issues of famine, epidemics, and refugees. Finally, after 1989 there have been the so-called "humanitarian" interventions of a militarized sort, such as in Kosovo, Libya, and now Syria. These are justified in part on the grounds that countries have a Responsibility to Protect citizens of another country if it is held to be violating their human rights.

Given the prevalence of human rights discourses, institutions, organizations, and interventions and given the widespread, if often uncritical, enthusiasm for human rights among students, it seems imperative to teach about human rights. Marilyn Young and I teach a course on Human Rights and "Humanitarian" Interventions to a diverse group of MA and PhD students from History, Journalism, and interdisciplinary humanities and social science programs. Some of them work with human rights NGOs. The first thing we try to convey is the sheer diversity and messiness of the history and contemporary practice of human rights. Since we are historians, we put current human rights debates, policies, and activism in a longer historical context. The resulting narrative is hardly a triumphalist story of the gradual but inevitable rise of human rights or the unambiguous goodness of human rights activists and activism, as many Americans are prone to assume. Rather, it is a complex and contradictory story, filled with people acting from complicated and often self-interested motives and with laws and interventions producing unintended consequences. There are multiple actors and institutions, political, legal and economic, involved in disputing every aspect of the origins, definition, and implementation of human rights as well as the punishment of violators. The meaning and practice of human rights are fought over and worked out on multiple levels—in international institutions, regional human rights courts, national governments, and local and national NGOs.

The intention is not to criticize human rights across the board, for much that is useful has been and can be defended and claimed in its name. Nor is it to discourage students from human rights activism. Rather, it

is to warn against facile assumptions about which rights are and are not human rights, about who does and does not defend human rights, and about the consequences of "humanitarian" interventions, especially of a militarized sort. Before exploring these assumptions and how we complicate them, let me say a few words about the overall structure of our course.

The course opens with an exploration of where and when to locate the idea of human rights—an issue of ongoing and lively dispute. Is it in the Enlightenment? The American and French Revolutions? The anti-slavery movement? Nineteenth- and twentieth-century debates about internationalism and global governance? And what about humanitarian movements such as the Red Cross? This section of the course concludes with an examination of how and by whom the key human rights documents of the late 1940s and early 1950s were drafted. Were they an American "New Deal for the World," as Elizabeth Borgwardt has argued, or a product of international collaboration among European, Latin American, and U.S. participants?[2] Did they come out of a Christian right or a progressive left? The aim is to tease out differences between civil rights and human rights, to distinguish human rights and humanitarianism, and to ask what is intellectually and politically at stake in claiming different genealogies for twentieth-century human rights.

Three themes . . . run through the course: how are human rights defined; who defends them; and why have "humanitarian" interventions proven problematic?

Section two explores the problems of defining and enforcing basic political and civil human rights and punishing their violation. War crimes, bombing civilians, and torture form our three case studies; each has richly documented historical precedents as well as troubling contemporary manifestations, such as Boko Haram, drone warfare, and Abu Ghraib. Each raises questions about who gets to define human rights violations and to punish them.

Section three looks at the rise to prominence of human rights since the 1970s. It examines the uses and abuses of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, focusing primarily on Eastern Europe and Latin America. This section also examines efforts by the Global South to put economic, social, and cultural rights on the human rights agenda with the 1975 New International Economic Order resolution of the UN General Assembly and the 1986 resolution on the Human Right to Development and attempts by the First World to limit the effective claims to such rights. Finally, the successes and failures inside and outside of the UN in promoting women's rights as human rights are investigated. This provides a rich opportunity to see how cultural relativism and human rights collide and to see how women in different parts of the world rank and relate civil and political versus social and economic rights.

The final section of the course examines what situations have been defined as human rights violations and whether and how governments, the UN, and NGOs have responded to them. We look at the Genocide Convention and the limited reactions to examples of genocide, such as Rwanda. Contemporary humanitarian aid and its similarities to and differences from nineteenth-century humanitarianism are examined with students reporting on an NGO or humanitarian intervention of their choosing. The last class looks at liberal humanitarian interventions in the Middle East, reading proponents and critics of such military (mis)adventures. The first time we taught the course, the public debate centered on Darfur; the second time Libya was all over the news. Syria is our all too relevant case study this fall.

Let us return to the three themes that run through the course: how are human rights defined; who defends them; and why have "humanitarian" interventions proven problematic?

Which rights are human rights? I always ask my students that in the first class and the responses are generally limited to a few civil and political rights, such as freedom of speech and religion, freedom from torture and unjust imprisonment. Yet, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the foundational document of the subsequent human rights movement, lays out a capacious array of social and economic rights. These include the rights to own property, to social security, to education, to work—and to equal pay for equal work. There is the right to "an adequate standard of living for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services." "Everyone . . . is entitled to the realization, through national effort and international cooperation . . . to the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality." Article 28 states, "Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized."[3] From the late 1940s through the 1960s these rights were repeatedly discussed within the UN and finally embodied in the 1966 Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that went into force in 1977.

Yet, the existence, nature, desirability, and feasibility of social and economic human rights have been contested to a degree unmatched with such civil and political rights as the right to life and due process, freedom of speech, religion, movement and association and freedom from torture and slavery. UN officials and national politicians and diplomats, the IMF, World Bank, and an array of NGOs, development experts and advocates of women's rights, legal scholars and economists have been involved in these debates at various times. A central aim of our course is to recover the discourses, debates, and declarations about social and economic human rights and the usually unsuccessful efforts to implement them. By so doing, we greatly expand the usual definition of human rights, illustrate how limited and economically

unprogressive the practice has often been, and show how conservative the U.S. understanding of human rights is

The course looks at the diverse defenders of economic and social human rights over the last 65 years—from socialist states and national and international women's movements, to third world nations and some, but hardly all, development experts, from a shifting set of UN agencies and institutions to some NGOs—those dealing with women, for example, have played a key role while the UNDP, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch initially kept a distance. The UN has been a particularly important locus of debate, planning, and attempted implementation. Initially, the Economic and Social Commission took the lead, then it was the UN Conference on Trade and Development, and now the two key actors are the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and its various agencies and committees; UNDP, and the UN women's conferences and their follow-up activities, most recently the Beijing plus 20 initiatives.

A shifting cast of characters with diverse motivations have critiqued or rejected or simply neglected economic and social human rights. The United States, initially deeply ambivalent, has been since Reagan openly hostile, due to its own weak social and economic rights and to the growing commitment to neoliberalism. The EC/EU, despite its commitment to generous postwar welfare states, did not include social rights in the European Convention on Human Rights that went into effect in 1953; the 1961 Social Charter, however, did, as does the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty. European powers in the late 1940s and 1950s refused to extend the social and economic rights accorded in the metropole to their colonial subjects. From the 1970s, they have supported North-South dialogue and development, a position long favored by the Socialist world, but deploy a language of solidarity and dignity rather than of human rights. In the 1950s and 1960s, the decolonizing world gave priority to self-determination over social and economic rights, or saw that as a prerequisite for any realization of them.

Criticisms of social and economic human rights have been couched in a variety of rhetoric, ranging from anti-communism and anti-totalitarianism to defenses of religious and cultural beliefs and practices. Academics favor legal and philosophical arguments; many politicians and corporations prefer economic ones. Since the 1980s, neoliberal arguments have taken center stage, insisting that social and economic benefits—the language of rights is avoided—can best be realized by giving priority to the market over the state, the individual over society. Thus, for example, it is argued that women's economic position is best improved by microcredit loans to promote individual entrepreneurship, not by state economic policies and

FUCK HUMAN RIGHTS

Defending Freedom takes priority

social protections. Civil and political rights which contribute to good "governance" and a probusiness economic climate are emphasized, while the legitimacy of entitlements owed by a state to its citizens or the obligations of developed and richer states to aid less developed ones are emphatically denied. Human rights, as we try to show in our course, are not simply a front for neoliberalism; but neoliberalism and human rights share a hostility to the state, a focus on the individual over the social, a suspicion of collective rights, and a tendency to see both human rights and the market as not gendered. Both claim not to be ideological and above politics. Our course calls all of these assumptions into question and seeks to show the complex and often detrimental ways in which neoliberalism has shaped the definition and practice of human rights.

Social and economic human rights provide one entrée into the issue of who does and does not defend human rights; American foreign policy provides another. From the 1970s on the U.S. government and governing classes, like so many others, have instrumentalized human rights for a variety of diplomatic and domestic purposes. In the 1970s politicians like Senator Henry Jackson and Congresswoman Millicent Fenwick wielded human rights as a cold war weapon to attack the Soviet Union for its refusal to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate. But politicians like Henry Kissinger cared little for the Helsinki process, which was first and foremost a European project, not a transatlantic or American one. He gave priority instead to superpower détente and nuclear limitation. U.S. Liberals like Donald Frasier focused not on the Soviet Union but rather on torture and political imprisonment by military regimes in South America, but they failed to limit seriously American aid to those regimes or their counterparts in Central America a decade later. For the U.S. government and military, cold war priorities and economic interests were more important than human rights violations. And their embrace of human rights, in the wake of Vietnam, was motivated primarily by a desire to "reclaim American virtue" in Barbara Keyes' apt phrase.[4] By the 1980s American human rights language had diminished, sometimes being replaced by "democracy promotion," a less clear and entitling concept. Where human rights were defended seriously, it was by Europeans involved in the Helsinki Process or women and developing countries in various UN bodies.

The United States regards human rights less as universal rules than as obligations which others need to adopt or must be punished for violating. The United States has consistently assumed that human rights violations are only committed by others, never by the United States, despite recent torture, extraordinary rendition, and Guantanamo. The Bush Administration torture memos, which we have students read,[5] provide a classic example of how American

human rights violations are rationalized away. The United States has a long and growing record of refusing to ratify human rights treaties, arguing that they threaten to violate American sovereignty or cultural norms. The United States has not signed on to CEDAW, the Convention to End All forms of Discrimination Against Women, for example, putting us in the select company of countries such as Sudan, Somalia, and Iran. The United States is not a party to the International Criminal Court, making that institution a limited enforcer of human rights, one which punishes only African violators. The United States is not the only state to narrowly define and selectively defend human rights, but it is the most powerful and prominent one to do so. That shapes how the United States and its human rights record are viewed by others.

The United States is the principle champion of so called "humanitarian interventions." But as with ICC prosecutions, human rights violations are singled out and punished only when it suits American economic interests or perceived security needs. The primary commitment of the United States has been the creation of a neoliberal economic order, one that preserves as much as possible dwindling American economic influence. If countries that embrace market fundamentalism—or have it imposed by IFM and World Bank conditionality—are at least sort of democratic, that is fine, but not essential. If they avoid violations of civil and political human rights, that is good; if they try to enforce social and economic ones, that is bad. The priority is a neoliberal economy. The unilateral U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation, set up in 2002 in response to the multilateral, UN sponsored Millennium Development Goals, for example, offers aid to countries committed to "good governance, economic freedom, and investments in their citizens" and "sound economic policies that foster enterprise and entrepreneurship." [6] The language of human rights and democracy is missing. Good governance is more about ostensibly apolitical management than about rights or democracy.

"Humanitarian" or liberal interventionism of a militarized sort is even more problematic, as discussions of the motives for and results of the U.S. war in Afghanistan and Iraq and the European and U.S. intervention in Libya show. We ask students to read both supporters and critics of liberal interventionism in the Middle East as well as to read debates about whether countries have a Responsibility to Protect the citizens of another country from their own government. These have provoked some of the most heated discussions in the course. Going into Iraq might have been done with lies and destroyed the economy, society, and state there, students admit, but how can one not help the beleaguered civilians of Gaddafi's Libya or Assad's Syria? If Americans believe in human rights, how can they not act? If students think twice about endorsing military interventions, if they ask why human rights are being invoked here and not elsewhere, if they question the impact of liberal interventionism on social and economic human rights as well as civil and political ones, the course will have achieved some of its key aims.

Notes

1 https://www.osce.org/mc/39501?download=true

2 Elizabeth Bordwardt, A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2007).

3 http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

4 Barbara J. Keys, Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 2014).

5 http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/02.01.09.pdf

6 Millennium Challenge Corporation website, "About mcc" https://www.mcc.gov/pages/about.

Syllabus

HIST-GA 2606

Human Rights and "Humanitarian" Interventions

Fall 2015, Wed., 2-4:45

Human rights and "humanitarian" interventions are surrounded by a web of good intentions and contradictions. This course will explore them. We begin with selected metanarratives about the history of human rights. We will then read some of the founding documents on which human rights theory rests. Defining human rights is difficult, enforcing them even more so, as will be clear when we examine issues of crimes of war, torture, economic and women's rights. Additional topics include human rights in Eastern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s, bombing civilians, and humanitarian aid. We conclude by looking at genocide and at liberal interventionism and the Responsibility to Protect in the contemporary Middle East.

Students are expected to do the reading before each class and write weekly response papers to be posted on Blackboard by 6 pm on the evening before class. Students will write a longer term paper on a topic of their choice.

I. Sept. 2 Introduction

Part I: Origins and Interpretations

II. Sept. 9 International Law and International Governance

*Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: the History of An Idea*

III. Sept. 16 When and How did Human Rights originate?

Kenneth Cmiel, "The Recent History of Human Rights," *American Historical Review,* 109:1 (2004).

Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Introduction: Genealogies of Human Rights," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, ed. *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century*.

Lynn Hunt, "The Paradoxical Origins of Human Rights," in Wasserstrom, et al, *Human Rights and Revolution.*

Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility," *American Historical Review*, 90(1985), 339-61, 547-566.

Eric Weitz, "From the Vienna to the Paris System: International Politics and the Entangled Histories of Human Rights, Forced Deportations, and Civilizing Missions," *American Historical Review* 113:5 (2008): 1313-43.

Samuel Moyn, "Personalism, Community, and the Origins of Human Rights," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* or a newer piece from his book.

Declaration of Rights of Man and the Citizen, http://www.constitution.org/fr/fr_drm.htm.

IV. Sept. 23 Nineteenth Century Humanitarianism and International Law

*Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: a History of Humanitarianism.* Introduction and chapters 1-4.

Davido Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815-1914.* Introduction, chapters 1-4.

Martii Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: the Rise and Fall of International Law, 1870-1960.* Introduction, Chapters 1-2.

V. Sept. 30 Post World War II Human Rights: American and European Inputs, Soviet Responses

Universal Declaration of Human Rights http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf.

European Convention on Human Rights http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/D5CC24A7-DC13-4318-B457-5C9014916D7A/0/ENG_CONV.pdf.

Elizabeth Borgwart, *A New Deal for the World,* pp. 1-45, 141-93.

Elizabeth Brogwardt, " 'Constitutionalizing' Human Rights: The Rise and Rise of the NurembergPrinciples," in the *Human Rights Revolution,* ed by Akira Iriye et al.

Jennifer Amos, "Embracing and Contesting The Soviet Union and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948-1958," in Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, *Human Rights in the Twentieth Century.*

Mark Philip Bradley, "Approaching the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," in the *Human Rights Revolution,* ed by Akira Iriye et al.

Part II: Defining and Enforcing Human Rights

VI**.** Oct. 7 Laws of War and War Crimes

Geneva Conventions, http://www.cfr.org/human-rights/geneva-conventions/p8778.

Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity,* chapters 5-6.

Isabel Hull *A Scrap of Paper: The Making and Breaking of International Law in the Great War.* (on line at Bobst or buy Kindle)

VII. Oct. 14 Laws of War and Bombing Civilians

Bombing Civilians, ed. By Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young.

Nick Turse, The Change Face of Empire: Special Ops, Drones, Spies, Proxy Fighters, Secret Bases, and Cyberwarfare, chapters 3 and 6.

Speech by Harold Koh, advisor to President Obama, http://www.state.gov/s/l/releases/remarks/139119.htm.

Movie*: The Good Kill*

VIII. Oct. 21 Torture

UN Convention against Torture
http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html.

Al McCoy, "Torture in the Crucible of Counterinsurgency," in *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam,* ed. by Lloyd Gardener and Marilyn B. Young.

Barbara Keys, "Anti-Torture Politics: Amnesty International, the Greek Junta, and the Origins of Human Rights 'Boom' in the United States," in *Human Rights Revolution,* ed by Akira Iriye et al.

Paraguay case: Court ruling plus two articles.

http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ rutlj37&id=1&size=2&collection=journals&index=journals/r utlj.

http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ rutlj37&id=1&size=2&collection=journals&index=journals/r utlj.

Documents: Torture Memos.
http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/02.0 1.09.pdf.
http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/ 02.01.25.pdf.
http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB127/ 02.01.26.pdf.
Bybee memo.

Part III: Human Rights since the 1970s

IX. Oct. 28 Putting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the Agenda

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,
http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESC R.aspx.

*Alain Supiot, *The Spirit of Philadelphia: Social Justice versus the Total Market.*

"Human Rights and Market Fundamentalism," http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/31206/MWP_ LS_Nolan_2014_02.pdf?sequence=1.

Articles on the NIEO *Humanity.*

"In Search of Social and Economic Human Rights."

X. Nov. 4 Women's Rights as Human Rights

CEDAW, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women,

http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/text/eco nvention.htm.

Women, Gender and Human Rights, ed. by Marjorie Agosin, essays by Fraser, Dauer, Merry, Gaer, and Afkhami.

Joan Scott, "Symptomatic Politics: The Banning of Islamic Head Scarves in French Public Schools," *French Politics and Culture,* 38 (2005).

Rhonda Copelon, "Surfacing Gender: Re-engraving Crimes against Women in Humanitarian Law,"

Amatrya Sen, *Development as Freedom,* intro, Chapters 8 and 12.

Jocelyn Olcott, "Cold War Conflicts and Cheap Cabaret: Sexual Politics at the 1975 United National International Women's Year Conference," *Gender and History* 22:3 (Nov 2010).

Article on microcredit or film clips

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism

and Its Others"
http://org.uib.no/smi/seminars/Pensum/Abu-Lughod.pdf.

XI. Nov. 11 Human Rights and American Foreign Policy

Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia,* Chapter 4.

Daniel Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights and the Demise of Communism* Chapters 1-4.

Barbara Keyes, *Reclaiming American Virtue,* excerpts.

James C. Peck, *Ideal Illusions,* Chapter 2-3.

Brad Simpson, "'The First Right': The Carter Administration, Indonesia, and the Transnational Human Rights Politics of the 1970s," in *Human Rights Revolution,* ed by Akira Iriye et al.

Part IV: Responding to Rights Violations.

XII. Nov. 18 Genocide

UN Convention on Genocide.
http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html.

*Ronald Suny, "*They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else": A History of the Armenian   Genocide.*"

Samantha Powers, *The Problem from Hell*, chapter 10.

Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity,* Chapter 8.

Sunil Khilnani, Review of Gary Bass, *the Blood Telegram.*

Romeo Dallaire, art or chapter from *Shake Hands with the Devil.*

XIII. Dec. 2 Humanitarian Aid

Students will choose and report on one of the following: Doctors Without Borders, Haiti after the earthquake, 1990s famine in Somalia, Hurricane Katrina.

*Michael Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: a History of Humanitarianism*, chapters 5-10.

Pierluigi Musaro, "Living in Emergency: Humanitarian Images and the Inequality of Lives," and "Post-Humanitarian Narratives: Politics, Media and the Marketing of Humanitarianism."

Africa for Norway. Radi-aid video.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJLqyuxm96k.

Didier Fassin, "Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life," *Public Culture*, vol. 19.

XIV. Dec. 9 Liberal/humanitarian Interventionism in the Middle East

*Peter van Buren, *We Meant Well: How I helped loose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People.*

Stephen Wertheim, "A Solution from Hell: the United States and the rise of humanitarian interventionism, 1991-2003, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 12:34 (Sept. Dec. 2010).

Michael Ignatieff, "The Burden," *NewYork Times,* 2003.*http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/05/magazine/05EMPIRE.html?pagewanted=all.*

Michael Ignatieff, "Getting Iraq Wrong," *New York Times,* 2007

http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9F01E6DD1E31F936A3575BC0A9619C8B63.

Niall Ferguson, The Empire Slinks Back," *New York Times Magazine,* 2003.

http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/27/magazine/27EMPIRE.html.

International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect: *Report of the International Commission on Intervention and   State   Sovereignty* (http://www.iciss.ca/pdf/Commission-Report.pdf).

Secretary General Ban ki-Moon's Report *"Implementing the Responsibility to Protect"* (PDF) (http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/%20http://www.re sponsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php?module=uploads&func =download&fileI d=655)plus.

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Reading the "Outsider Within":
Counter-Narratives of Human Rights
in Black Women's Fiction

by Shane McCoy
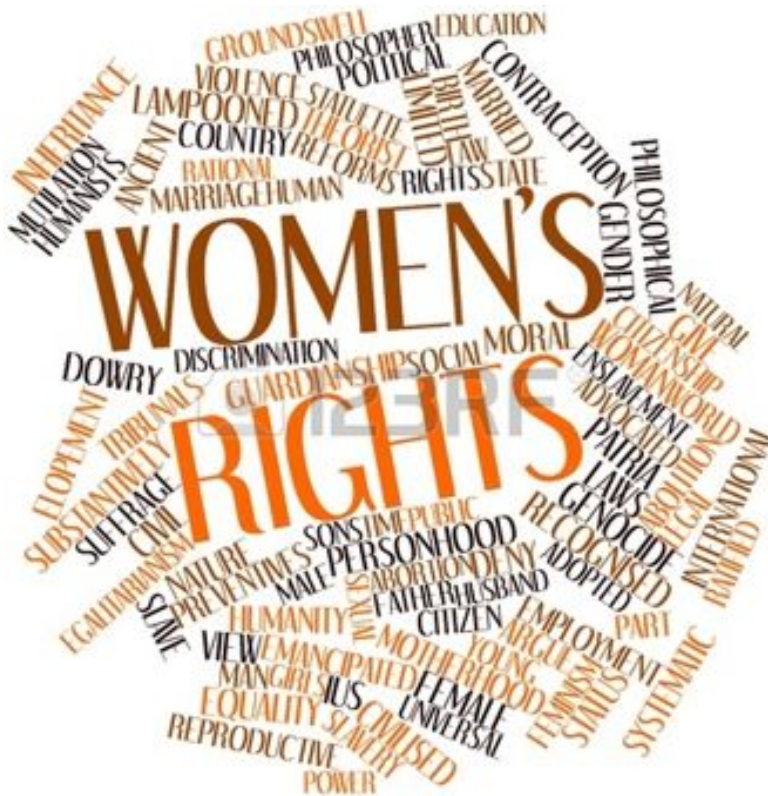
In *Pedagogies of Crossing* (2005), M. Jacqui Alexander asserts that human rights are not rights at all; in fact, human rights do little to mitigate the violence perpetuated by late capitalism and the legacies of imperialism and colonialism. Alexander's point of contention brings to bear the fact that passing a declaration of human rights and condemnation of human rights' abuses by the United Nations, among other groups, institutes a "dominant knowledge framework" that continues to perpetuate unequal power structures (2005; 124). Writing for *The Guardian*, Eric Posner makes the case that international human rights laws have shown little evidence that the top-down approach is even effective ("The Case Against Human Rights" 2014). The hegemonic ideological framework of human rights is largely controlled and dictated by the United States and other Global North nations in an exercise of paternalistic control in defining 'freedom' and autonomy for the Global South.[1]

> ## *Patriotic education also reproduces stereotypical images of foreign nations that has a profound influence on how students construct cognitive schemas of racialized women in post-colonial contexts*

As a teacher of literature and composition at an elite public institution, I often encounter students who have taken-for-granted assumptions about global politics and human rights. In order to intervene in the post-feminism/post-racism world of many undergraduates in the United States, the cultivation of skepticism in the literature and composition classroom becomes a primary pedagogical responsibility for radical teachers who desire to disrupt rights-based discourses that perpetuate neoliberal ideas of social justice and normalize stereotypes of the Global South. How do we as teachers cultivate skepticism in our students regarding the exceptionalism of the United States as ideal purveyor of social justice and human rights? How might counter-narratives in post-colonial black women's fiction function as a pedagogical tool that disrupts students' naïve assumptions about human rights, in general, and women's rights, in particular? Finally, how might counter-narratives affect students' perceptions of racialized women in the Global South? To intervene in this dominant narrative, my essay focuses on the function of counter-narratives in black women's fiction as a useful pedagogical strategy for teaching about human rights in the undergraduate composition classroom. I frame my analysis within theoretical debates in critical pedagogy and turn to what Stephen Slemon (1992) defines as the "primal scene of colonialist management"—the literary studies classroom—in order to examine the ways in which contemporary post-colonial black women's writing problematizes the rhetoric of "women's rights as human rights." Despite the common belief that white middle-class undergraduate students are consuming "exotic" literature when reading post-colonial or immigrant fiction, as noted by scholars Kanishka Chowdhury (1992) and Inderpal Grewal (2005), I maintain that counter-narratives are useful for intervening in the reproduction of a "patriotic education" (Sheth 2013) that undergirds rights-based discourse, in general, and human rights, in particular, as desirable global policies that mitigate the violence of social injustices. Michelle Cliff's *Abeng* (1984), Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* (2013) perform a counter-"cultural technology" in teaching about human rights in literary studies through the lens of, what Jodi Melamed calls, "race radicalism," that is cultural production that interrupts the totalizing effects of neocolonial and imperial discourses so often produced in dominant Western literature (*Represent and Destroy* 47)[2].

Patriotic education also reproduces stereotypical images of foreign nations that has a profound influence on how students construct cognitive schemas of racialized women in post-colonial contexts (Bracher 2013). In the post-9/11 era, the "woman question" becomes even more salient as a cause for war in attempts to rescue "brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1995) in Afghanistan.[3] While much of the feminist literature on human rights has focused on the Muslim *hijab*[4] and female genital mutilation[5], a focus on the pedagogical function of teaching about women's rights through literary texts that feature the perspectives of "outsiders within" deserves attention. In "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought" (1986), Patricia Hill Collins argues that the "outsider within" status "has provided a special standpoint on self, family, and society for Afro-American women." The field of Black feminist literature "reveals that many Black intellectuals, especially those in touch with their marginality in academic settings, tap this standpoint in producing distinctive analyses of race, class, and gender" (1986, S14-S15). Through intersectionality, the "outsider within" lens exposes the limits of singularity in gender analysis and allows for distinctive analyses of "nation" for, as I argue throughout this essay, counter-narratives produced by post-colonial black women writers make privy the position of the cultural outsider to American students who often hold naïve views of human rights discourses as cultural insiders in the United States, specifically the complexities of lived realities within local contexts and the need for community-based practices that allow women agency over their own lives. 'Black' has traction as a transnational political category; thus, 'black,' in this essay, functions as a category of analysis in connecting *Abeng*, *Lucy*, and *Americanah* and the critical material brought to bear on these texts. Through critiques of structural and institutional inequities, Cliff, Kincaid, and Adichie strategically produce oppositional "outsider" narratives that are wholly unfamiliar to American students and trouble the hegemonic narrative of 'women's rights as human rights,' which implicitly positions the 'third world woman' in a subordinate position (Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1995).[6] With insight drawn from black feminist thought and critical pedagogy, I construct a counter-curriculum that intervenes in a reproduction of global human rights policies constructed through neoliberal ideologies.

Texts that Teach: Counter-Narratives of 'Women's Rights as Human Rights' in the Composition Classroom

Each text I examine throughout this essay offers several teachable moments for enabling students with a critical consciousness that critiques mainstream narratives of human rights. What these texts show young undergraduate students are the local and global social, political, and cultural milieus that complicate rights-based discourses. The political function of black women's fictions interrupts the totalizing effects of hegemonic narratives that speak *for* women in the Global South. To explain further, 'women's rights as human rights' is explicitly concerned with *only* gender difference; single-issue politics do not attend to differences of race, class, sexuality, citizenship status, and geographical location. To account for racialized women's lives in post-colonial and transnational contexts, intersectionality must be deployed *as a reading practice* by students and teachers in order to account for "the importance of race, class, gender and sexuality as interlocking and mututally constitutive" (Hong ix). First theorized by Kimberlé Crenshaw, intersectionality focuses on the "ways in which race and gender intersect in

way, 'woman' is thought to be "a normative European or 'American' subject gendered as woman, who is white and heterosexual" (Grewal 351). Claims to universality and universal suffrage in human rights discourse presuppose how oppression manifests culturally, socially, and politically within post-colonial civil society. Only through an intersectional reading practice can racial, ethnic, class, and geographical location be recuperated as sites of difference.

Pedagogically, the historical frames that *Abeng*, *Lucy*, and *Americanah* feature bring in to focus for student readers how black women's counter-narratives can be self-reflexive and critical of both local and global contexts; counter-narratives, as a tool, disrupt the hegemonic stories that participate in the erasure of post-colonial subjects' agency through interrogations of the local sociopolitical contexts from which these stories emerge, especially as they brush up against interlocking oppressions, such as sexism, racism, and classism, within the aftermath of colonialism and the on-going enterprise of imperialism. What I hope to show students through the use of both intersectionality as a reading practice and these particular texts is how the internal strife that plagues post-colonial nations in both the past and present speak to the pernicious effects of colonialism and imperialism even
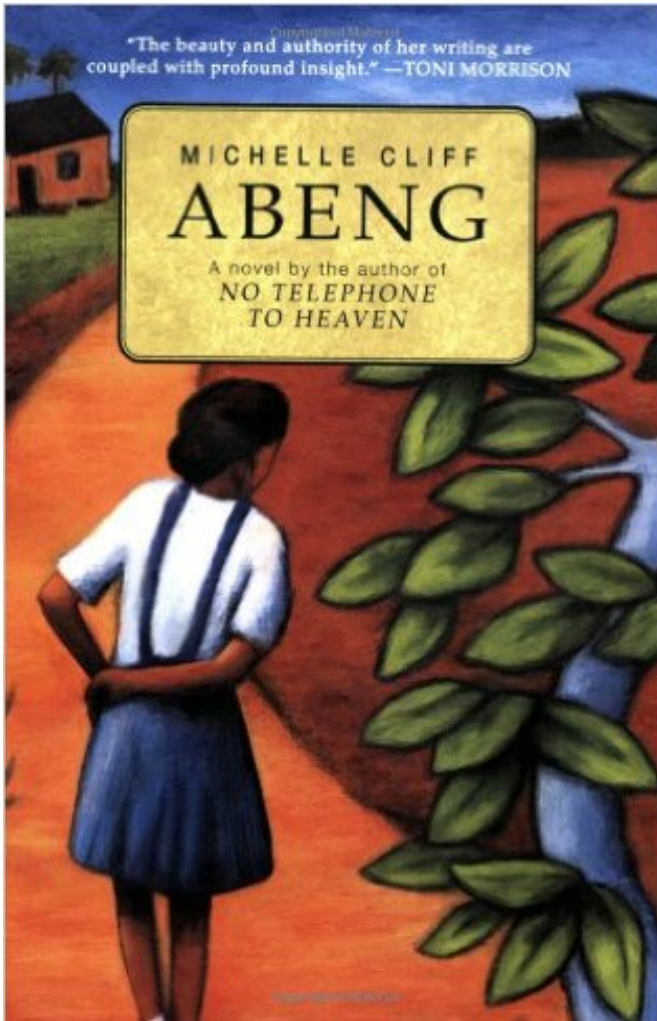

COURTESY OF THE UN

shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color" (1991, 1244). The failure to deploy intersectionality and account for the "interlocking nature of oppressions" (Hill Collins S20) by the Global North, in general, and Western feminist organizations, in particular, influences a single-narrative for women's rights. [7] Inderpal Grewal argues that this discourse "attempts to universalize and stabilize the category of 'women,' at the same time as it addresses their situations in important though limited ways" (342). In this

when the Global North crafts neoliberal social justice initiatives in human rights legislation that attempts to mitigate this historical violence. I contend that literature, in general, and post-colonial black women's fiction, in particular, affects how undergraduate students perceive racialized women in post-colonial contexts. Through intersectionality as a reading practice, I aim to affect how undergraduate students uncover "homogenizing and universalizing theories" in human rights policies that perpetuate unequal relations of power and render

racialized women in the post-colonial context voiceless and invisible (Grewal 351). By exposing the complexities of local sociopolitical contexts, I advocate *for* a bottom-up approach through community-based practices and *against* top-down approaches through rights-based discourses and policies.

In my freshman composition course Reading the "Outsider Within," I begin the first class with Hillary Clinton's 1995 speech at the UN's Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing. As a text, Clinton's speech advocates the quintessential liberal perspective that privileges top-down approaches. Furthermore, because of the current

presidential campaign season, Clinton is a familiar figure to American students. As radical critiques have shown, liberal mainstream human rights fails to be effective in mitigating violence against women on a global scale. In this speech, then-First Lady Hillary Clinton made famous the rhetorical stance, "If there is one message that echoes forth from this conference, it is that human rights are women's rights . . . and women's rights are human rights" (*UN.org*, emphases added). For the first class activity, I randomly select students to read parts of the speech, and while reading, I ask students to begin practicing rhetorical analysis (typically the first skill taught in introductory composition classes) as they listen to their peers. After

they read aloud, we discuss the rhetorical analysis components, and as a 'devil's advocate,' I ask students to think of counter-arguments to Clinton's own argument—that women's rights are human rights—and to critique her rationale for her argument. Few students can fathom a counter-argument to Clinton's because, for them, criticism of human rights is inconceivable thanks, in part, to a culture of schooling that socializes students to intellectually and politically consent to an educational system that upholds American exceptionalism. Indeed, their failure to counter Clinton's argument is testament to the fact that American patriotism affects how schools actively work to produce consenting students. Thus, this pedagogical exercise is effective for both initiating the process of inquiry that is needed to be successful in a composition

course *and* focusing my students' attention to counter-narratives of human rights in black women's fiction that intervene in their common assumptions of human rights, in general, and stereotypes of racialized women in post-colonial contexts, in particular.

To transition to our discussion of the primary literature, I employ Kaisa Ilmonen's essay "Rethinking the Past, Rewriting the History: Counter-Narratives in Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*" to frame the discussion of *Abeng* for the second and third weeks of class. Ilmonen theorizes the ways in which counter-narratives intervene in dominant narratives. Therefore, this essay frames both the first novel for the course and the course material. In her essay, Ilmonen asserts that the use of counter-narratives by Cliff intervenes in the reproduction of a dominant Western

historiography that subsumes colonial and imperial histories (110). Together, my students and I extrapolate Ilmonen's thesis in relation to the specific histories divulged in *Abeng*. We contextualize how these histories counter hegemonic human rights discourse. As told from the perspective of a racialized and gendered colonized subject, *Abeng* offers my students a foundation for understanding how the historical legacies of colonialism shape and condition the present project of imperialism. Furthermore, *Abeng* offers my students an account of how heteropatriarchal civil society in the post-colonial context impedes equality for racialized women and sexual minorities. In "Human Rights—A Movement in Search of a Theory," Rajni Kothari makes the case for why civil society must be accounted for within human rights policies. For him, human rights policies are "essentially state-centred," which only account for state-sponsored oppression and not cultural and social oppression within civil society (25). As he puts it, without a more robust understanding of the diversity of civil society, the "imported theory of human rights" from the Global North will continue to produce

counter-productive effects (1991, 29). Thus, Cliff effectively resurrects for undergraduate students a lost history of civil society and state-sponsored colonialism that disrupts the 'official' history of colonial Jamaica as taught in its churches, schools, and bourgeoisie families, all "ideological state apparatuses" (Althusser 1971) that disseminate normalized and naturalized discourses of race, class, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.

In addition, *Abeng* illuminates for my students how educational institutions (such as St. Catherine's School for Girls) inculcate pupils with normative sexual and gender roles. For instance, we discuss how the school socializes Clare to perform the role of the chaste Anglican girl. In *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (2002), Ann Laura Stoler explains that sexual matters in the colonies were not just "a metaphor for colonial inequities"; rather, sexual matters in the colonies were "foundational to the material terms in which colonial projects were carried out" (14). As an extension of the Church of England, St. Catherine's School for Girls prescribes the tenants of chaste womanhood

dictated by the virtues of Victorian sexuality. The Church of England's heteropatriarchal position towards marriage, the family, gender, and human sexuality teaches students what is and is not acceptable within the boundaries of the Anglican faith. St. Catherine's School for Girls was responsible for producing, what Homi Bhahbha might call, "mimic [wo]men," who represent the reach of colonial authority and "surveillance," but "poses an immanent threat to both 'normalized' knowledges and disciplinary powers" ("Of Mimicry and Man," 123). In this way, "mimic [wo]men" represent "[t]he success of colonial appropriation" by disciplined colonial subjects, such as the pupils of St. Catherine's. Bhabha writes, "It is this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its
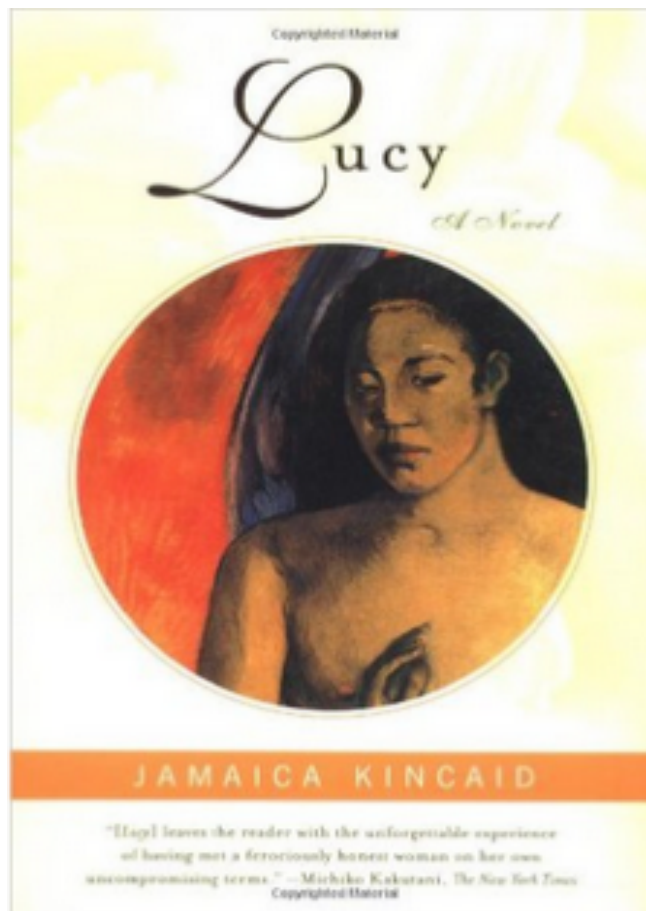
disciplinary double." (1984, 127). As a "twelve-year-old Christian mulatto girl," (71) Clare and other colonial subjects at St. Catherine's School for Girls are, simply put, "not quite/not white" (Bhabha 132).[8]

As a counter-narrative to heteropatriarchal civil society, Michelle Cliff inserts female characters into the story who assert agency by transgressing normative sexual and gender roles. I focus students' attention to speculate on the purpose of the many female characters throughout the text and how they might counter the narrative of normalized and naturalized female gender and sexuality. One indigenous character in the novel, Nanny, pre-dates the colonial era and was responsible for training indigenous Maroon communities; another female character, Mma Alli,

continues the traditions of teaching resistance (*Abeng* 35). She empowers other Caribbean women for the purposes of "reclaiming their bodies" (*Abeng* 48). In order to contextualize this for students and to put in conversation with Ilmonen, I assign Jennifer Springer's "Reconfigurations of Caribbean History: Michelle Cliff's Rebel Women." For homework, students summarize and synthesize Springer's contention that Mma Alli and Nanny are exemplary of the ways in which Cliff "probes the West Indian Creole woman's version of radical women's consciousness as she evenly explores the African Caribbean and Amerindian female Caribbean experiences" (2007, 44). Through Springer's lens, we discuss how the counter-narrative exposes the twin legacies of colonialism and imperialism and ruptures the reproduction of both dominant gender and sexual norms. We discuss how Cliff's narrative positions racialized women as active agents who define and control their own lives, which is an important distinction for countering the rhetoric of universalism in human rights discourse. From this angle, my students and I grapple with how to use secondary literary criticism in the service of an arguable claim (another course objective for the class). More important, we attend to the ways in which *Abeng* as a text confers an oppositional historical outline of colonialism and imperialism and gender and sexuality as seen from the perspective of a racialized and gendered cultural outsider, which affects how readers perceive racialized women in the Global South.

> ***What is important for student readers to notice is how Mariah's narcissism fails to register Lucy's personal history of memorizing Wordworth's poem in a colonial setting. Mariah's universal standpoint invalidates Lucy's historical experience of being forced to memorize a poem about a flower she will never see until much later in her life.***

After spending the first two weeks of the quarter on *Abeng*, we transition to Jamaica Kincaid's novel *Lucy*. *Lucy* complements *Abeng* due to its similar focus on heteropatriarchal civil society, in particular, how heteropatriarchal civil society impedes equality for racialized women in both U.S. and post-colonial contexts. In this novel, Kincaid contextualizes for students how both formal colonial education and informal education by the white nuclear family takes place within a historical narrative of globalization and its antecedents. As a "novel of education" (Shlensky 44), *Lucy* extends and complicates the broad history offered in *Abeng* and exemplifies for young readers a female narrative of immigrant working-class life. Furthermore, Kincaid's portrayal of Lucy speaks to the concerns of transnational female labor and the instrumental role that the 'Third World' woman plays in transnational circuits of capital. More importantly, *Lucy* offers undergraduate students a quintessential anti-progress narrative that offers no happy endings. All

together, these aspects of *Lucy* affect a non-stereotypical narrative of racialized women in and from the Global South and stand to counter the harmful implications of a "patriotic education" that views immigrants to the United States as burdens to society and racialized women in the Global South as without agency.[9]

In our first discussion of the novel, we closely read the episode where Mariah, Lucy's employer, introduces Lucy to her favorite flower—the daffodil. Lucy's reaction to Mariah's affection for the daffodil becomes the focus of our conversation, as many students tend to be surprised by Lucy's anger towards Mariah. To put Lucy's reaction in context, my students and I focus on causality—why Lucy reacts the way she does to Mariah. My students begin to understand how Lucy's affective relationship is conditioned by her colonial education. We discuss how, as a colonial subject at Queen Victoria Girls' School, Lucy was made to perform a recitation of William Wordworth's poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud." While remembering her experience, Lucy angrily explains to Mariah, "*I had been made to memorize it*, verse after verse, and then had recited the whole poem to an auditorium full of parents, teachers, and my fellow pupils." (*Lucy* 18, emphases added). She recounts that afterward, the audience stood and "applauded with an enthusiasm that surprised me, and later they told me how nicely I had pronounced every word, how I had placed just the right amount of special emphasis in places where that was needed, and how proud the poet, now long dead, would have been to hear his words ringing out of my mouth" (*Lucy* 18). Mariah's question triggers Lucy's latent anger: ". . .to me it felt as if something that I had not been aware of had been checked" (19). Lucy's colonial education at Queen Victoria Girls' School conditions her affective relationship to the daffodil, which is an experience that Mariah fails to grasp emotionally and intellectually.

What is important for student readers to notice is how Mariah's narcissism fails to register Lucy's personal history of memorizing Wordworth's poem in a colonial setting. Mariah's universal standpoint invalidates Lucy's historical experience of being forced to memorize a poem about a flower she will never see until much later in her life. Lucy's education "centered on training her to be a good subject of the British Crown" (Nichols 198). The protagonist's having to memorize Wordworth's "Daffodils" was "an event that epitomizes for her the relationship of colonizer to colonized, since, in lieu of learning her own history and culture, her education centered on training her to be a good subject of the British Crown" (Nichols 198). This passage in time, roughly nine years, signals how post-colonialism, in general, and colonial education, in particular, are about both material and psychical trauma and exploitation. Colonial education's aim was to discipline colonized subjects into proper citizens of the Empire. The affective dimension of colonial education is instantiated in Lucy's disaffection for the daffodil. Lucy's experience at Queen Victoria Girls' School is, in part, responsible for her trauma. Her reaction might be what Ogaga Ifowodo calls "postcolonial trauma," which remained latent and unconscious until it was triggered by Mariah's affection for the daffodil (2013, 131). Lucy's repeated phrase, "How do

you get to be a person . . ." (*Lucy* 41), interpellates the reader to share in the protagonist's insistent rhetorical questioning of Mariah's narcissism and willful ignorance. The rhetorical impact aims to mobilize readers to side with Lucy and empathize with her discontent and psychic state. Thus, a close reading of this episode in the text allows my undergraduates to connect with Lucy's experience because of their own affective relationship to rote memorization in America's culture of schooling. Together, we hypothesize the reasons *why* Lucy is made to memorize a poem about a flower that she has never seen and how she responds to Mariah's affection for the daffodil. Although she has no direct affiliation with British colonialism, Mariah's continued affection for the daffodil represents the failure to recognize Lucy as a colonized subject and to validate Lucy's experience as a racialized woman. Students process the author's intent behind this anecdote in the narrative and how the anecdote fits within a broader narrative of cultural insiders who are largely blind to the plight of cultural outsiders.

For the next class meeting, students read and analyze Allison Donnell's essay "Dreaming of Daffodils—Cultural Resistance in the Narratives of Theory" because I want them to understand how Kincaid uses the daffodil as a symbol of British colonial power and education. Donnell explains that Wordworth's poem personifying daffodils "was promoted pedagogically as an apolitical text and yet becomes highly politicized when analyzed within the colonial context in which Kincaid places it." The daffodil "signifies the forced adoption of the motherland and the attendant suppression of difference" (Donnell 50). To model intertextuality (a learning outcome for introductory composition courses), I assign a short section of Christine Prentice's "Out of the Pre-Texts of Imperialism into 'a Future They Must Learn': Decolonizing the Allegorical Subject." For Prentice, Lucy "effects a return of the colonial gaze, a reversal of its pedagogical project, exposing the ambivalence of colonial authority" (221; 2000). As a class, we put Prentice's contention in conversation with Donnell's argument and discuss how the promotion of Wordworth's poem was instrumental in the dissemination of a colonial ideology that privileged the [ ] (Donnell 50). This exercise
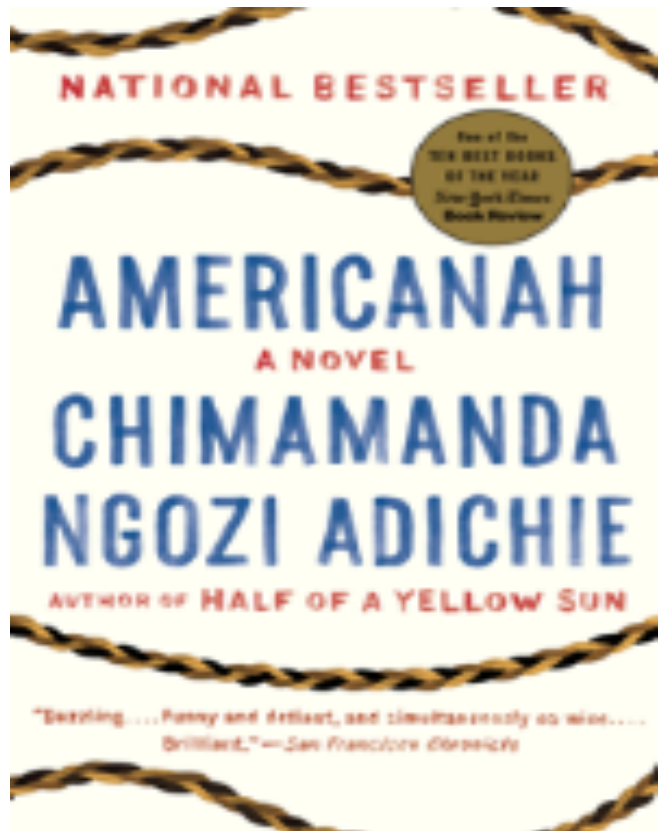
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE
COURTESY OF SHANE MCCOY

lents the use of intertextuality; at the same time, my students understand how literature can be used as a tool for the expansion of Empire.

After the first week of introducing *Lucy*, I assign for homework a short section of Jennifer Nichols' essay "'Poor Visitor': Mobility as/of Voice in Jamaica Kincaid's 'Lucy,'" where she contends that "Lucy metaphorically represents a challenge to the authority of Western feminism . . .Lucy . . .performs mobility as a source of resistance against authority—familial, patriarchal, racial, and national" (190). For Nichols, the daffodil also "function[s] as a symbol of white US feminism (and femininity) that Lucy rejects" (2007, 199). I use both Nichols' and Donnell's essays to frame for students how Kincaid tethers liberal white feminism to a system of colonial oppression that valorizes white supremacy, capitalist exploitation, and rights-based discourses. Nichols' essay helps students to understand the significance of Lucy's explanation of her family history to Mariah and how she was raised in a family that only privileged the lives of the sons. Lucy explains that "each time a new child was born, my mother and father announced to each other with great seriousness that the new child would go to university in England and study to become a doctor or lawyer or someone who would occupy an important and influential position in society" (*Lucy* 130). In Antigua, both Lucy's mother and heteropatriarchal civil society gave little regard to her life as a racialized and gendered subject. I have students also notice Mariah's reaction to Lucy's story: she gives Lucy a book, Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), which was a text that was widely circulated within liberal white U.S. feminism. For Beauvoir, oppression is only captured through sexual difference and in universal terms; to overcome this oppression, women need only gain equal rights.[10] Kincaid, however, aims to show readers how Lucy's oppression in both the Global North and the Global South is due to both horizontal oppression—from her contentious relationship with her mother in Antigua—and vertical oppression—from heteropatriarchal civil society and the colonial state.[11] As a class, we debate the implications of Mariah's actions and Kincaid's intent behind this episode in the text. More importantly, we discuss what the episode might mean for human rights discourse and "women's rights" for a

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

AMERICANAH

A NOVEL

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

AUTHOR OF HALF OF A YELLOW SUN

"Dazzling . . . . Funny and defiant, and simultaneously as wise . . . . Brilliant." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

character such as Lucy who suffers from both vertical and horizontal oppressions. We take note of Nichols' contention that Kincaid "gives Lucy—a transnational, racialized, female domestic worker—agency, allowing her to define herself"

(Nichols 2007, 204) and how Kincaid offers a "resizing" of "America on the world map, dismantling its position as a unilateral cultural agent that defines the rest of the world in comparison with itself." My students grapple with how Kincaid critiques American liberalism and individualism within a counter-narrative that puts a racialized and gendered subaltern subject in a position of power to critique and resist (Nichols 2007, 204). Through the act of migration, Kincaid places the narrative of [hetero](heteropatriarchal) civil society and colonial education in the space of the UnitedStates, thus illustrating to undergraduate students how the UnitedStates is both complicit in *and* a perpetuator of social injustices.

To end the course, we spend the final three weeks reading Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013), viewing interviews with the author, and her TEDTalk, "The Danger of a Single Story."[12] Unlike *Abeng* and *Lucy*, *Americanah* offers undergraduates a contemporary novel told from the perspective of a Nigerian girl named Ifemelu. In her first novel about the United States, Adichie casts a coming-of-age story with a young Nigerian woman who travels to the United States to pursue university education. The author's dynamic approach to institutionalized racism and race and class privilege allows for undergraduate students to encounter a perspective on American culture and society by a cultural outsider who becomes a cultural insider through her attainment of U.S. citizenship and the process of acculturation. Moreover, the novel exemplifies for students a protagonist that slowly comes to grips with her acquiescence to a privileged life as an elite cosmopolitan in the United States.The day before our first discussion, I assign for homework an interview with the author entitled "Humanising History and Connecting Cultures: The Role of Literature" on YouTube.[13] This interview helps to scaffold a 'big picture' concern for the class—the role of literature in portraying history and culture and how this impacts the discussion of mainstream human rights. I assign students to summarize and synthesize the interview and incorporate textual references from *Americanah* to support their analyses. In this way, students are able to understand how Adichie employs *Americanah* to advance an argument about the *politics of representation* of black women, in general, and African women, in particular. As a pedagogical strategy, Adichie's interview brings to life for undergraduates a writer of African literature who is also an influential public intellectual. This platform effectively conveys to my class how literature can be culturally relevant and responsive to our contemporary moment while, at the same time, speaking to global and historical issues that many of them find unfamiliar.[14]

Radical teachers must discuss with undergraduate students the reasons why Ifemelu migrates to the United States. Adichie's narrative, much like Kincaid's Lucy, does not recapitulate a stereotypical narrative that supports the conventional

assumption held by American students—that Caribbean and African immigrants to the United States come to seek political asylum or refugee status in their attempts to flee war and/or famine.

For the second class discussion, we dissect the role of evangelical Christianity in Nigerian civil society and the role of women in fundamentalist movements (Loomba 2005, 188-89). We focus on Ifemelu's mother and her religious conversion from Catholicism to evangelical Protestantism. To contextualize this episode in the novel for students, we view in class an interview with Adichie on *BBC News HardTalk* with Stephen Sackur. In this interview, Adichie explains the complicated influence that religion holds in the local cultural, social, and political milieu. [15] I often encounter undergraduates who argue that the reasons for corruption in religious institutions in post-colonial contexts are 'because of colonialism' and patriarchy, as some of my students not so eloquently argued. As an intervention into this common reaction, I employ Adichie's interview as a tool to debunk normalized stereotypes and students' assumptions about religion and political corruption in Africa. These perspectives eschew the United States from culpability and ignore the complicated historical, social, and political contexts that give rise to corruption and violence in post-colonial contexts. This interview, in particular, is effective because it speaks to our current moment where the militant group Boko Harem impacts this conversation on religion even more. For instance, with the trending #BringBackOurGirls, the host, Sackur, asks Adichie what the West "sees in this particular event" (13:45). Adichie responds that as a Nigerian woman, she believes the story of Boko Harem "fits within certain expectations of what *should* happen in a place like Nigeria; it's also a story that's easy to connect to emotionally without necessarily knowing the political context" (14:30, original emphasis). For her, the West's interpretation of the event is due to "the emotional weight of the story," which allows for the narrative to be "constructed in ways that I find interesting, such as the idea that [Boko Harem's abduction of girls] is just like the Taliban, *because that fits a pre-fabricated box* [that the West has constructed]." She argues that Boko Harem is "*complex in its own way*" (14:45-15:02, emphases added). As an "outsider within" who has enjoyed cosmopolitan mobility in both the United States and Nigeria, Adichie explains that "leaving home" and attending university in the United States allowed her to look at Nigeria's problems "*from the outside*": "*from the outside*, I find myself thinking, 'Why are we under-performing?' and then that makes me much more likely to complain . . . but it's a complaining that comes from believing that we can do so much better" (*BBC News HARDTalk* 21:18-22:01, emphases added). Thus, Adichie brings into focus the violent implications of fundamentalist religion and how to intellectually discuss and debate this complicated situation *as a humanitarian crisis* rather than what might thought to be typical of Nigerian culture and society. Adichie brings into focus how her experiences in the United States as a racialized woman from a post-colonial nation allowed her

unique insight into Nigeria's problems as an outsider within. Additionally, my shift in using an interview versus a secondary piece of literary criticism illustrates an alternative pedagogical approach to connecting with undergraduate students who might not otherwise learn from reading literary fiction and criticism.

Finally, radical teachers must discuss with undergraduate students the reasons *why* Ifemelu migrates to the United States. Adichie's narrative, much like Kincaid's *Lucy*, does not recapitulate a stereotypical narrative that supports the conventional assumption held by American students—that Caribbean and African immigrants to the United States come to seek political asylum or refugee status in their attempts to flee war and/or famine.[16] To scaffold the class discussion, I again make use of a short author interview on *YouTube* entitled "Talking Children, Women, and Africa with author Chimamanda Adichie."[17] In the interview, Adichie discusses the nuanced difference between having choice and not having choice and how those two ideas are raised throughout the novel. Together as a class, we discuss this prominent theme and practice claim development. In this activity, my students and I focus on how Ifemelu in *Americanah* desired different choices for her life. For instance, the protagonist pursues university education in the United States because strikes at Nigerian universities were common when the government refused to pay faculty and staff (*Americanah* 99). After taking the SATs and applying for scholarship opportunities at U.S. universities, Ifemelu receives a scholarship offer to attend college in Philadelphia. We also compare *Americanah* to *Abeng* and *Lucy* in addition to other post-colonial texts students might have encountered in their previous high school literature courses. More importantly, we hypothesize how Adichie's perspective, as a black African woman, disrupts the hegemonic narrative of 'women's rights as human rights' through the assertive character Ifemelu and her staunch critiques of American culture and society. Because of Adichie's public persona and outspoken criticism of Western intervention and paternalism,[18] *Americanah* offers for undergraduate students a text that is both culturally relevant and radical in its approach to confronting common biases and assumptions held by American readers. As one student, Tim, put it in his reflection essay, reading *Americanah* in a post-Ferguson era and viewing author interviews "exposed [me] to concepts of implicit racism, subconscious biases, flaws in public policy, *outsider* perspectives…I thought it was interesting to hear what non-traditional ideas were on the matter and *whether I knew it or not, I started to expand my thinking*" (5, emphases added).[19] *Americanah*, similar to *Abeng* and *Lucy*, does not feature familiar rights-based discourses that hold the West and the United States as beacons of hope and prosperity for all. Thus, *Americanah* affects how my students, such as Tim, rethink their assumptions and interrogate their own paradigms of human rights, women's rights, and international law.

To end the quarter, I transition to the final 'big picture' concern and show in class Adichie's TEDTalk, "The Danger of a Single Story" and revisit Hillary Clinton's speech (discussed the first day of class). For homework, students review Clinton's speech and their initial reactions. While viewing Adichie's lecture, I task students with composing a rhetorical analysis. I also play devil's advocate and ask students to compose an optional counter-argument to Adichie's—that canonical Western literature has historically played an instrumental role in the dissemination of a hegemonic narrative that does not do justice to the Global South. In this lecture, Adichie explains how Western literature has been instrumental in the proliferation of a dominant narrative of the Global South, in general, and Africa, in particular. This dominant narrative has been primarily responsible for a "single story of catastrophe" (5:05) that portrays Africa as destitute, "waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner" (6:25). Her lecture limns a power structure in Western literature, which possesses "the ability not just to tell the story of another person, but to make it *the* definitive story of that person" (10:07-10:14, original emphasis). She argues, "The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. *They make one story become the only story*" (emphases added). Simply put, in order to engage with post-colonial literatures, we must "engage properly with a place or a person" and "all of the stories of that place and that person." To not do so "robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult" ("The Danger of a Single Story" 13:45:14:02).

> *All together, these authors position 'women's rights as human rights' within historical projects, which continue into our present moment. Moreover, fiction, I would argue, has the potential to re-shape our cognitive schemas and how we view and imagine the world around us.*

After the lecture, I have students discuss their reactions to Adichie's counter-narrative of Western literature and power dynamics and ask students to put the lecture in conversation with *Americanah*, *Abeng*'s counter-narrative of colonial and imperial history, and *Lucy*'s personal narrative of a transnational traveler from Antigua. Students compare their experiences in high school literature courses with Adichie's experiences as a student of literature and discuss how their education in high school effectively conditioned them to believe that Western literature was, in fact, the *only* literature worthy of study. What my students learn from Adichie's lecture is that Western literature profoundly affects the production of stereotypes and how we, as readers, internalize those stereotypes in order to understand our world. As one student put it in class discussion, "'The Danger of a Single Story' really drove home how the stories I had read in middle and high school influenced me to believe that African women were poor, downtrodden, and broken." More importantly, undergraduate students intellectually process how dominant narratives of human rights (as seen in Clinton's speech) must be critiqued and dismantled in

order for a different narrative of human rights to emerge, one that privileges the voices of racialized women in the Global South.

All together, these authors position 'women's rights as human rights' within historical projects, which continue into our present moment. Moreover, fiction, I would argue, has the potential to re-shape our cognitive schemas and how we view and imagine the world around us. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Sara Ahmed explains how culture and society shape readers' social cognition and emotions, in particular, "how emotions work to shape the 'surfaces' of individual and collective bodies" (1). For her, the circulation of texts in public space and viewing non-white bodies as 'the other' is a "familiar narrative," one that is culturally conditioned "through othering: the 'illegal immigrants' and 'bogus asylum seekers' are those who are 'not us,' and who in not being us, endanger what is ours" (Ahmed 1). By beginning with *Abeng* and ending with *Americanah*, I aim to radically arrest students' assumptions that liberal rights-based discourses are effective interventions to counteract social injustices. This American sentiment has been cultivated within a culture of schooling that continues to teach texts that do nothing to counter students' worldviews. These counter-narratives exemplify features that surpass the common tropes of human rights abuses such as genocide, famine, and the atrocities of war. My students are already familiar with these tropes, as many have read previously in high school Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. To teach a radical perspective means to teach narratives that counter the familiar tropes and narratives that have impacted students' learning and cognition. I want my undergraduates to be confronted with a nuanced critique of American culture and ideology from the perspective of black women writers who are not American. As my student, Jonathan, writes in his reflection essay, "I have gained insight into a side of the US I don't normally see . . .[Berkeley, the student's hometown] is such a diverse, accepting place, *that I was under the impression racism was taken care of in this country*" (2). Indeed, these familiar narratives leave an "impression" on students' imaginations, which Sara Ahmed defines as "an effect on the subject's feelings ('she made an impression'). It can be a belief ('to be under an impression'). It can be an imitation or an image ('to create an impression'). Or it can be a mark on the surface ('to leave an impression')" (Ahmed 6). Ahmed emphasizes, "*We need to remember the 'press' in an impression*. It allows us to associate the experience of having an emotion with the very affect of one surface upon another, an affect that leaves its mark or trace" (6, original emphases). How fiction creates an "impression" on its readers is important to consider because, I would argue, fiction affects how we perceive the world around us and the inhabitants of that world. Teaching counter-narratives of human rights in black women's fictions confront students with a cultural perspective that is not familiar and aims to recondition the *impression* dominant narratives have left. Through both critical reading and writing practices, students are forced to reckon with an unfamiliar narrative that radically reconditions their affective relationship to not just literature, but, also, the larger world around them and their cognitive and intellectual understanding of that world.

Critical Pedagogies in Action: Reflective Practice and Collaboration

To support students' intellectual and cognitive processes, I implement two teaching strategies that can be applied to a variety of course contexts—reflective writing practices and classroom collaboration. These classroom practices model the kind of bottom-up approach to human rights that I advocate. To begin, I assign students reflective writing throughout the quarter in order to facilitate students' acquisition of the course material and to make interventions into their understanding of the course material if and when necessary. As a tool, critical reflection assists in a radical pedagogy that is committed to transforming students intellectually because critical reflection often reveals students' misunderstandings about course material and common assumptions about mainstream human rights discourses. To echo bell hooks, "How can we transform consciousness if we do not have some sense of where the students are intellectually, psychically?" (1989, 54). Thus, each class session includes at least seven minutes at the beginning of the class for students to ruminate on a topic. For my freshman composition courses, I include 'small picture' concerns, such as students' initial reactions to a novel, or 'big picture' concerns, such as keywords ('immigration' or 'the American Dream'). [20] I ask students to reflect on and analyze *Abeng* rhetorically and consider the relationship between colonialism and imperialism and the rhetorical impact of the storyline. With *Lucy*, I ask students to hypothesize why Lucy reacts negatively to Mariah's affection for daffodils. After writing these reflective paragraphs, students share in small groups and compare notes on what they have learned and how they perceive the course texts in relation to the course theme. What these conversations often reveal is how the rhetorical interruptions in *Abeng* educate students about history and how students understand Lucy's affective relationship to daffodils has been largely conditioned vis-à-vis colonial education. *Lucy* also teaches students that familial preference for male children in the post-colonial context, the voluntary migration of the protagonist, and the subjugation of Lucy within the white middle-class nuclear family all contribute to a counter-narrative of human rights that disrupts top-down approaches to combating gender and sexual discrimination in both the Global South and the Global North.

Another reflective writing activity I employ in my composition course is reflection essays. On the final day of class, students take one hour to write reflective essays that enable them to metacognitively connect the activities and readings I have assigned throughout the quarter. For the prompt, students are tasked with composing a five-page hand-written essay that asks them to explain (1) what they have learned throughout the course about 'women's rights as human rights' vis-à-vis counter-narratives, and (2) what activities helped them to learn the best *and* the least. I ask students to provide open and honest answers in their essays, and I divulge to them that their grade will be dependent upon the level of metacognition demonstrated in the essay. Because they understand that there is no

'right' or 'wrong' answer in these reflective essays, students can be as formal or informal as they wish; however, I caution students to be mindful of their presentation in their essays and to focus on their rationales for the claims advanced throughout the paper. What these essays often reveal is the effectiveness of my teaching in my courses and what students intellectually and cognitively gained from the course. For instance, one student, Catherine, shares, "[These texts] have helped me reach a better understanding of the world around me and how the world can work for someone whose appearance is different from mine" (2). In comparison, Jonathan, writes, "This class taught me that I should look through the glass of my bubble of privilege. People are still suffering at the hands of people who believe they're 'better' than others" (3). Reflection essays allow students like Catherine and Jonathan to consider the class as a whole and to provide me with feedback on what is *and* is not helpful for student learners.

In a third and final sample activity, I have students discuss open-ended questions that guide them through ethical and socially conscious discussions of the texts. The questions are posted to our course website the day before class (although students are not required to review these questions before class). During class, I have students collaborate in small groups for at least fifteen or twenty minutes where they discuss a guided question from a short list. Sample questions for *Americanah* include:

- Why does the protagonist, Ifemelu, move to the United States? How does this narrative differentiate *Americanah* from other novels we've read? In your opinion, why would this be important or not important for a discussion about human rights, in general, and women's rights, in particular?

- When Ifemelu first moves to the UnitedStates, what becomes "the real America"?

- Similar to *Lucy*, this section of the text [Chapters 8-18] represents the 'under-belly' of immigration, despite one's relative privilege. What episodes in this section of the novel surprise you?

These questions implicitly and explicitly call upon students to focus on their initial reactions to the text through reader-response criticism. I do this for two reasons: first, I want students to consider the author's intent behind plot elements in the text; second, I want students to consider how basic plot elements in the text lead to 'big picture' concerns that speak to the central issue of 'women's rights as human rights' in post-colonial contexts. Comparative questions (such as the last question above) also require students to situate the novel in relation to *Abeng* and *Lucy*. My aim here is to allow students to think about their prior knowledge regarding the previous texts and to situate that prior knowledge within the acquisition of new knowledge in reading *Americanah* (the final text for the course). In "Rethinking Transfer,"

Bransford and Schwartz argue that questioning/problem-posing pedagogies allow for students to generate the conversation regarding a topic. This is important for gauging what students already know regarding a topic before we attempt to intervene with the use of literary fiction (Bransford and Schwartz 1999, 24 and 34). Because most of my students do not have experience with contemporary post-colonial fiction, it's important for me to understand how students might be linking these texts together and how I might work towards radically correcting students' misunderstandings regarding immigration to the United States and the place of the United States within rights-based discourses that privilege the Global North. Moreover, students engage with the insight drawn from other students. Within a diverse classroom setting such as the classes I often teach, students' interactions with diverse ideas through casual, yet structured, conversations provide a space that is learner-centered where students actively generate and shape knowledge about human rights in the classroom.

The pedagogical function of critical reflection and collaboration allows students to consider how the texts they are reading shape their new knowledge about human rights. This approach to teaching about human rights through literature is radical because by having students actively engage with these unfamiliar outsider texts and critically reflect on their learning experiences about human rights through both 'small picture' and 'big picture' questions and topics, we can initiate a process that allows students to transfer this new knowledge beyond the literature classroom and implement what they have learned in other contexts, remembering the counter-narratives that challenged their own worldviews about racialized women and agency from the Global South. This intervention allows for undergraduate students to understand how texts teach them about human rights in post-colonial contexts and how human rights discourses are perceived and understood by the outsider within. Cristina Bruns posits that through collaboration and critical reflection, students are able to "produce the knowledge themselves through what they notice in one another's readings with the facilitation of the instructor, and they experience its value as a means of enriching their own encounters with the literary texts under discussion" (2011, 137). In this way, students are able to make explicit connections between what they have learned about human rights vis-à-vis counter-narratives that correct their faulty cognitive schemas (Bracher 2013) regarding women's rights, social justice, and rights-based discourses promoted and controlled by Western nations.

Scaffolding for Skepticism: My Pedagogic Creed

To end, I want to raise two suggestions for intervening in students' common assumptions about 'women's rights as human rights.' First, we must consider *what* literary texts we teach in our courses. In order to promote an active student citizenry, undergraduate students must be confronted with oppositional narratives that trouble their worldviews. This confrontation might elicit powerful emotions in students who have been conditioned to

uncritically accept American exceptionalism, but as critical pedagogues, we must contend with how students are socialized in educational institutions that promote "patriotic correctness" (Giroux 2006) and wholesale acceptance of mainstream rights-based discourses, which hinges upon a narrative that positions the Global North as having human rights while "the [Global] South needs to achieve them" (Grewal 338). In the age of expanding Empire, the "outsider within" in post-colonial black women's literature helps to slowly dismantle uncontested patriotism in a post-9/11, post-civil rights world. Second, we must consider *how* these texts are contextualized for students in our classrooms. This includes guiding students through ethical and critical close-reading practices that account for historical, social, and political issues that impact both the local and the global. To promote ethical close-reading and scholarship is to work against what Neville Hoad calls a "self-consolidating intransigence of the 'I am so glad I am American' response of otherwise good students to postcolonial . . . material" (22). Through critical praxis, we can teach young undergraduate students the necessary skills to critique rights-based discourses; without such skills, the United States becomes the place of exception decontextualized from the historical, social, and political implications of Empire.

I argue that *what* we teach in our classroom and *how* we teach are mutually constitutive in an undergraduate literature classroom that focuses on human rights. In a former issue of *Radical Teacher*, Nick Hengen Fox argues that "*how* we teach texts may matter more" than "*what* we teach in literature courses" (2012, 22, author's emphases). But what Fox fails to consider is the impact that literary counter-narratives have on shaping students' world-views, especially the way in which literature can reshape students' cognitive schemas (Bracher 2013). Kanishka Chowdhury posits that a literary text must be studied within "its sociocultural politics" (1992, 192). He argues, "[D]iscussions [about post-colonial literature] have to be regulated so that the specificities of a culture do not recede into the background and become a subtext" (192). What we teach and how we teach are equally important because *both* equally contribute to students' literary and historical knowledge and how they might use that knowledge in other contexts. As Adichie so eloquently puts it, "*Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories can be used to empower and to humanize*" ("The Danger of a Single Story" 17:35-17:43, emphases added). Simply put, *what* stories we teach and *how* we teach those stories in our classrooms matter greatly. Therefore, if we wish to affect the kinds of change we hope to see in students' perception and understanding of social justice and human rights, we must consider the choices we make for the contents of our curricula *and* how we teach students to critically read and write in our classrooms. Moreover, we must expose students to texts that challenge their assumptions that the dissemination and production of knowledge is value-neutral (Chowdhury 194). These radical strategies are crucial for intervening in a "patriotic education" that reproduces neoliberal social injustices (Sheth 2013) and conditions young American students to uncritically support mainstream human rights.

As radical teachers, we have a responsibility to challenge students' belief systems, especially as educational institutions that privilege consensus and grand narratives so often shape students' paradigms of human rights. Therefore, teaching counter-narratives of human rights in black women's fiction offer radical opportunities to educate undergraduate students within a literature course that cultivates critique and skepticism of neoliberal social justice. We must teach about human rights through texts that represent that racialized women in the Global South *do*, in fact, have agency and actively define their own lives *and* write their own stories. We must convey to undergraduate students that human rights scholarship conveyed through an oppositional worldview must speak to specific histories and particular cultural moments. The stakes of counter-narratives illustrate for undergraduate students the troubled history of post-colonial subjects as they intersect with liberal rights-based pluralism in the United States. The stakes of these texts also make the case for why human rights, as dominated by UN-sanctioned discourses, fail to accomplish radical change at the ground level of culture and society. By beginning with counter-narratives in literature classrooms, we can begin to disrupt students' false assumptions about the larger world around them through a process that is nuanced, sustainable, and socially just.

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Notes

[1] In the most recent UN Report on Human Rights, Israel was the only Global North country that was reported to have human rights violations ("A Look at Countries Cited in Human Rights Report," *ABCnews.com*, June 25, 2015). Israel's condemnation in the report, however, is mentioned in tandem with "Palestinian Militants" ("U.N. Report on Gaza Finds Evidence of War Crimes by Israel and by Palestinian Militants," *NYTimes.com*, June 22, 2015).

[2] In *Represent and Destroy*, Melamed defines race radicalism as a term that is analogous to "antiracist thinking, struggle, and politics that reckon precisely with those aspects of racialization that official liberal antiracisms screen off: the differential and racialized violences that inevitably follow from the insufficiency and nongeneralizability of human value under U.S.-led transnational capitalism and neoliberal globalization. Race radicalisms are materialist antiracisms that prioritize the unevenness of global capitalism as primary race matters" (2011, 47).

[3] In her article "The Woman Question" (2004), Haleh Esfandiari intervenes within the hegemonic narrative of the "woman question" through a focus on Arab women fighting for democratic rights in the Middle East. Despite the top-down approach of rights-based policies, Esfandiari argues that "equal legal status for women is virtually unachievable so long as family law remains based on the sharia, and rules derived from a particular interpretation of Islam prevail in the social sphere" (63). This argument counters Hillary Clinton's now famous argument that the world "must recognize that women will never gain full dignity until their human rights are respected and protected" (*UN.org*).

[4] For more on feminist interpretations of the Muslim hijab, see Chelsea Diffendal's "The Modern Hijab: Tool of Agency, Tool of Oppression" (2006), Anastasia Vakulenko's "'Islamic Headscarves' and the European Convention of Human Rights: An Intersectional Perspective" (2007) Hauwa Mahdi's "The Hijab in Nigeria, the Woman's Body and the Feminist Private/Public Discourse" (2009), and Tanja Dreher's and Christina Ho's edited collection *Beyond the Hijab Debates: New Conversations on Gender, Race, and Religion* (2009).

[5] For more on feminist interpretations of FGM, see Rogaia Mustafa's "Rethinking Feminist Discourses on Female Genital Mutilation: The Case of Sudan" (1995), Lisa Wade's "The Evolution of Feminist Thought About Female Genital Cutting" (2009), Maria Caterina la Barbera's "Revisiting the anti-Female Genital Mutilation Discourse" (2009), Preston D. Mitchum's "Slapping the Hand of Cultural Relativism: Female Genital Mutilation, Male Dominance, and Health as a Human Rights Framework" (2013).

[6] I am not claiming that *only* black women writers of the African diaspora have this unique insight. Hill Collins' term "outsider within" could certainly apply to other transnational and post-colonial women writers: Jhumpa Lahiri, Le Thi Diem Thuy, Arundhati Roy, Nawal El Saadwai, Jessica Hagedorn, and Meena Alexander, among others. In fact, Hill Collins makes clear that the term "outsider within" can also be applied to male writers; for instance, James Baldwin, Malcolm X, Junot Díaz, Teju Cole, Dinaw Mengestu, Marlon James, and Ta-nehisi Coates could all be considered "outsiders within." As Hill Collins puts it, "…a variety of individuals can learn from Black women's experiences as outsiders within: Black men, working-class individuals, white women, other people of color, religious and sexual minorities, and all individuals who, while from social strata that provided them with the benefits of white male insiderism, have never felt comfortable with its taken-for-granted assumptions" (S30). In this way, the "outsider within" is a more capacious concept that, I would argue, certainly includes individuals and groups other than post-colonial black women writers.

[7] For more on this, see Benita Bunjan's essay "Feminist Organizations and Intersectionality: Contesting Hegemonic Feminism" (2010).

[8] In *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (1995), Anne McClintock makes a similar argument: "Subjected to the civilizing mission, the

mimic men (for Bhabha they seem to be only men) serve as the intermediaries of empire; they are the colonized teachers, soldiers, bureaucrats and cultural interpreters whom Fanon describes as 'dusted over with colonial culture'" (62). But McClintock cautions that "[r]acial mimicry may be akin to gender mimicry in important ways, but they are not socially interchangeable. Indeed, mimicry as a term requires considerable elaboration" (65).

[9] One recent strain of U.S. nativism that has profound implications for my reading here is Donald Trump's disparaging remarks about undocumented immigrants from Mexico and the broad support gained by issuing such comments. For more, see Michelle Ye Hee Lee's "Donald Trump's False Comments Connecting Mexican Immigrants and Crime" on *WashingtonPost.com* (http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/08/donald-trumps-false-comments-connecting-mexican-immigrants-and-crime/).

[10] For more on this, see Margaret A. Simons' essay "Racism and Feminism: A Schism in the Sisterhood" (1979) in her book *Beauvoir and the Second Sex: Feminism, Race, and the Origins of Existentialism* (1999).

[11] For more on types of oppression, see Chapter 3, "Conceptual Foundations for Social Justice Education" in Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 2nd ed., by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin (2007).

[12] For more, see Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story" on TED.com (http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en#t-1164260).

[13] For more, see "Humanising History- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie" on *YouTube.com* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Lx1BDdNF4w).

[14] For more on culturally responsive pedagogy, see Geneva Gay's *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2010).

[15] For more on the global spread of Pentecostalism, see Gastón Espinosa's *William J. Seymour and the Origins of Global Pentecostalism: A Biography and Documentary History* (Duke UP, 2014). For more on African Pentecostalism, in general, and Pentecostalism in Nigeria, in particular, see Ogbu Kalu, *African Pentecostalism: An Introduction* (Oxford UP, 2008) and Samson Adetunji Fatokun, "The 'Great Move of God' in an African Community: A Retrospect of the 1930s Indigenous Pentecostal Revival in Nigeria and Its Impact on Nigerian Pentecostalism" (2009).

[16] One case in point is the on-going Syrian refugee crisis. I would argue that moments solidify for many in the United States that the Middle East is in a constant 'state of emergency.'

[17] For more, see "Talking Children, Women, and Africa with Author Chimamanda Adichie" on *YouTube.com* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XNvQ6DXay4).

[18] At the 2014 Hay Festival for Literature and Arts, Adichie counters foreign intervention as an effective method to combat Boko Harem, explaining that Nigeria "can solve our own damn problems," as reported in numerous online news outlets (*TheNationOnline.net*).

[19] Pseudonyms have been adopted throughout my essay to protect students' identities.

[20] In *Teaching Literature as Reflective Practice*, Kathleen Blake Yancey contends that we can enable students to read for 'big picture' concerns through critical reflection: "When students read for the big picture, when they speak to questions such as these through specifics of particular texts, they create contexts that invite new readings, during the course and after" (2004, 104).

RADICAL TEACHER

Bringing Human Rights Education to US Classrooms: Exemplary Models from Elementary Grades to University
by Susan Roberta Katz and Andrea McEvoy Spero (Eds.)

Reviewed by Michael Bennett
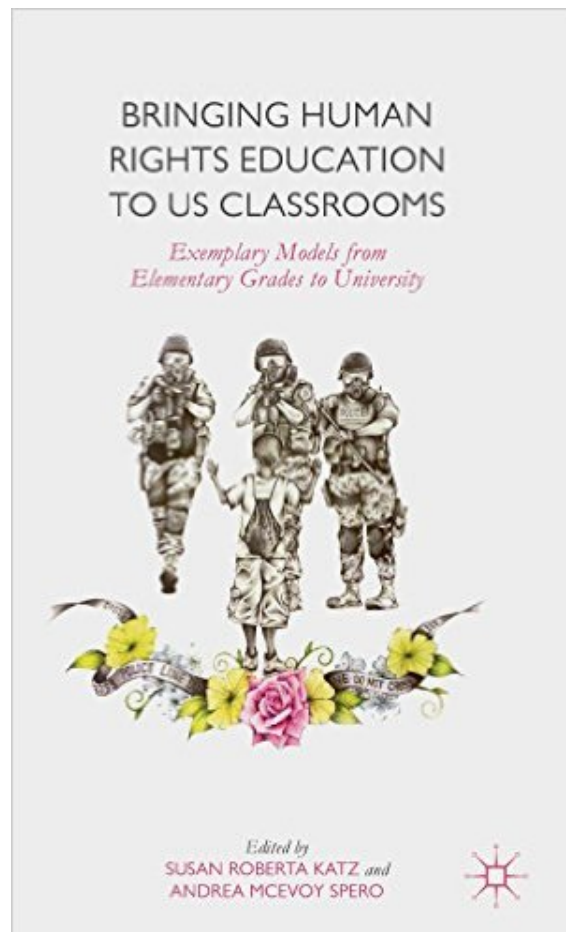
BRINGING HUMAN
RIGHTS EDUCATION
TO US CLASSROOMS

Exemplary Models from
Elementary Grades to University

Edited by
SUSAN ROBERTA KATZ and
ANDREA MCEVOY SPERO

Bringing Human Rights Education to U.S. Classrooms: Exemplary Models from Elementary Grades to University (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)

As Susan O'Malley and I discuss in the introduction to this issue of *Radical Teacher*, we have come to appreciate through the process of gathering and editing the essays included here that there is a growing and vibrant community of teachers dedicated to Human Rights Education (HRE). Katz's and Spero's edited volume does an admirable job of providing this community with the tools and information needed to apply the insights of HRE in a range of classroom settings, from elementary school and a junior high science class to a college course in Asian American Studies.

The two introductory chapters (one by Felisa Tibbitts and one by the editors) provide a helpful overview of HRE. They also caution that HRE is built on contested terrain. Tibbits traces this contestation to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was developed mostly by nation states of the Global North that emphasize "individual rights," as opposed to the emphasis on "collective rights" by indigenous groups and nations in the Global South; she notes that HRE is still resisted at times because of this legacy of thinking about human rights in a "top-down and hegemonic manner with little knowledge or respect for local culture" (4). Katz and Spero also train a critical eye on HRE, noting the contradiction between the U.S.'s self-image as a beacon of human rights and its failure to ratify many of the most fundamental human rights treaties (most notably being the only nation not to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child). They trace this contradiction to two sources: "U.S. 'exceptionalism' and a neoliberal, market-economy approach to education" (19). Though the subsequent essays in *Bringing Human Rights Education to U.S. Classrooms* are more interested in the nuts and bolts of providing HRE rather than a critical analysis of human rights discourse from a radical perspective, they provide some useful models for teachers that could be adopted and adapted from a variety of political perspectives.

The best pedagogical essays that form the core of this volume do an admirable job of keeping the contradictions of HRE in view. For instance, in the process of discussing the connection between human rights and the social construction of race and gender in "Bringing to Life Human Rights Education in the Science Classroom," Annie S. Admian makes the point that efforts to engage in HRE are undermined by the U.S.'s failure to live up to the education standards established in the UDHR, such that "U.S. public schools often embody sites of punishment and failure, rather than sites of sustenance and hope" (70). Jessie Blundell's "Each One, Teach One: The History and Legacy of the Black Panther Party (BPP) for an Elementary School Audience" explains how the BPP represented a return to the roots of the Black Radical Tradition that the mainstream Civil Rights movement had largely abandoned. Blundell brought this message home for her elementary school students in San Francisco by focusing on a local human rights campaign to free the SF 8—members of the BPP who were jailed in 2007 for refusing to give testimony regarding a 1971 case that was reopened by former San Francisco Police Department inspectors who had since been deputized as Homeland Security agents. In my favorite of the pedagogical essays, "Tout moun se moun 'Every Person is a Human Being': Understanding the Struggle for Human Rights in Haiti," Victoria Isabel Durán points to the multiple ironies of trying to engage in HRE in and about Haiti, a country devastated by the legacy of colonialism, domestic dictators, and U.S.-led "humanitarian interventions" resisted by President Aristide's appeals to the UDHR before he was deposed and then replaced by the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) that has since been accused of several violations of human rights that were codified by the UN. The mind reels.

Even the "exemplary lessons" I most appreciate in this volume are, for my taste, a little too full of jargony Ed School Speak (rubrics and repetitive lesson plans and worksheets). One could argue that these are necessary components of the genre of exemplary lessons, but the writing is sometimes weighed down by the uninspired prose and insufficiently self-critical and overly instrumentalist analysis of the genre. This is especially a problem for the essays that are more prescriptive than descriptive, which often come off as preachy. Also, the essays focused on college courses are less innovative and interesting than those dealing with primary and secondary education. I suspect that some of these limitations have to do with the fact that all of the pedagogical chapters are drawn from final projects submitted by graduate students in the University of San Francisco's HRE program. Though this narrow focus is understandable given the innovative character of the program in which the editors teach, one wonders if the volume would have fewer clunkers had the publication process been opened up to human rights educators working outside the confines of one program.

> *The best pedagogical essays that form the core of this volume do an admirable job of keeping the contradictions of HRE in view.*

The most intriguing and radical essays in this volume are those that frame it: Olga Talamente's "Foreword" and K. Wayne Yang's "Afterword: Will Human Rights Education Be Decolonizing?" Talamente discusses how her experience of being imprisoned and tortured during the Dirty War in Argentina awakened her to the discourse of human rights, which shaped her activism from the successful campaign that ended military aid for the Argentinian junta to her current struggles as director of the Chicana/Latina Foundation in support of the undocuqueer. Yang's afterword is both engagingly written and critically engaged in recognizing that too often "the very powers that enforce Human Rights are the human rights violators" (225). In recognizing this contradiction, Yang turns to a model of critical pedagogy that draws on the Black Radical Tradition and movements for Indigenous survivance. Yang invokes Malcolm X and the practice of red pedagogy (drawing less on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

than on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) for models of HRE that recognize how too often "the legal concept of 'Human' has continued to mean a settler and a property owner whose 'Rights' to land, life, and liberty are actually entitlements enforced by settler nation-states" (226). These lenses lead him to conclude that "human rights are not achievable in a colonial setting; human rights are achieved through self-determination" (234), which provides a necessary sense of critical awareness that is absent from some of the volume's essays that are essentially paeans to HRE.

Though I wish that more of the "exemplary models" that form the core of the volume were as politically astute as the essays that frame and introduce them, *Bringing Human Rights Education to U.S. Classrooms* performs a useful pedagogical function. At its best, the text provides models for radical teachers who want to develop courses on HRE or incorporate lesson plans about human rights discourse for a variety of classroom settings and course offerings. And even the less overtly radical lesson plans could be tweaked with the help of the political lenses offered in the framing essays and introductions. Some would say that it is too difficult to provide elementary students with the radical tools of critical pedagogy and socio-political understanding, but the best of the essays here provide evidence that this is not the case.

Radical teaching happens from pre-school to graduate school, as this volume helpfully reminds us.

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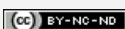
RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

A Critical Inquiry Framework
for K-12 Teachers:
Lessons and Resources
from the U.N. Rights of the Child
Edited by JoBeth Allen and Lois Alexander

Reviewed by Valerie Kinloch
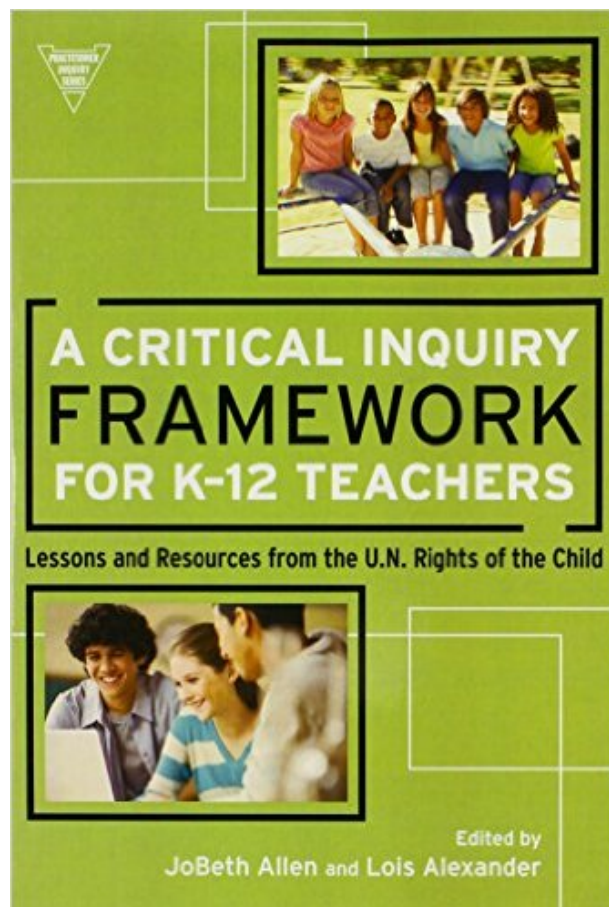
A Critical Inquiry Framework for K-12 Teachers: Lessons and Resources from the U.N. Rights of the Child (Teachers College Press, 2013)

In their new edited collection, *A Critical Inquiry Framework for K-12 Teachers,* JoBeth Allen, Lois Alexander, and their contributors present powerful classroom cases that reflect the significance and educational relevance of the United Nations Rights of the Child (ROC). The collection opens with a Critical Literacy Invitation (see Van Sluys, 2005; Allen & Alexander, 2013) that derives from the U.N. Convention on the ROC and that advocates for critical, humanizing, and intentional responses to all forms of injustice. The invitation reads:

> *Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child "applies to all children, whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say; whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what language they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis." (1)*

This invitation is powerful for a number of reasons, particularly so because it provides the basis for a critical content framework that does not tolerate discrimination, unfairness, and inequities of any kind. Instead, the invitation recognizes the unwavering commitment of educators to honor students and their identities, realities, humanities, and lived conditions. It also acknowledges the importance of educators hearing students' voices, listening to students' concerns and, subsequently, providing students with positive learning spaces that support their engagement with "critical inquiry into social issues relevant to their lives such as race, social class, language, and other aspects of citizenship in a democracy still under construction" (2). The assertion that "no child should be treated unfairly on any basis" is a valuable message that rings through on each page as one reads the nine chapters that comprise this dynamic collection.

To move beyond imagining and into fostering classroom spaces as sites of critical inquiry where, according to Allen, "concrete subject matter [is presented] in a cohesive structure that can serve as a basis for critical inquiry across disciplinary areas" (2), each chapter begins with an invitiation to readers. In the first chapter, Allen invites readers to think through the meanings and intended purposes of critical inquiry and a critical content framework. She explains that the contributors to this book are elementary, middle, and high school teachers and teacher educators who served as consultants in the Red Clay Writing Project (RCWP) in the state of Georgia. RCWP, a local affiliate of the National Writing Project (NWP), is a unique collaboration that provides teachers with professional development opportunities (summer institutes, writing retreats, open learning institutes, and Saturday workshops) focused on writing, social justice, teacher

leadership, and inquiry-based pedagogical approaches. According to Allen, RCWP participants and book contributors "wanted an explicit focus on issues of power and social justice and a framework that could guide us across content areas, grade levels, and state standards" (3). Their desire for such an explicit focus supports the belief, as presented in the ROC, that every child is entitled to fair treatment as well as equitable and socially just forms of learning. The introductory chapter leads beautifully into the remaining chapters on K-12 teaching practices.

For instance, in Chapters Two and Three, the authors issue an invitation for readers, especially those who are primary and elementary grade teachers, to examine "issues of poverty, peace, power, and action" (21). To do so, elementary-aged students were asked to select books on the aforementioned topics and to think through specific questions such as: "What do people in poverty look like? What do they do? How do the other characters in the book treat them?" (24). Overtime, these questions served as impetus for deeper investigations into ways to empower "students to understand and engage the world around them [by] enabling them to exercise the kind of courage needed to change the social order" (McLaren, 2009, 74). An example of how teachers are working to empower students is found in Chapter Three, in which the focus is on ability, disability, and the rights of the child.

> *Reading this book convinces me even more that additional critical research is needed that explicitly examines the institutional, systemic barriers to treating students as fully human, fully capable, and as fully engaged in their learning.*

In Chapters Four and Five, the authors issue an invitation for readers to consider, on the one hand, "the families in your school community [and] who feels welcome, valued, and part of the community" (Chapter Four, 54) and, on the other hand, (dis)connections among the curriculum that is taught, enduring understandings, and students' rights (Chapter Five). Here, emphasis is placed on teaching and learning that respect the lives and rights of immigrant students and their families. The authors highlight some of the ways in which to engage in this work: by encouraging the formulation of family groups within the context of schools (such as the Latinos for Involvement in Family Education) and by "naming the violation of the rights of undocumented people [to] envision and create a space for all voices and people" (89).

In Chapters Six, Seven, and Eight, the authors invite readers to consider other rights that are worth exploring including the following: the right to an adequate standard of living (Chapter Six), the right to culture, identity, and freedom of thought (Chapter Seven), and the right of students to work for human rights across the world. These three chapters compliment the first five chapters and they add needed perspectives on how students across the

grades can be encouraged to use their education (what they do and learn in schools and in their communities) to question, challenge, and propose viable solutions to a variety of human rights issues. As Paige Cole, author of Chapter Seven, explains: "As I expanded my teaching practice to include more space for students' cultures, histories, and thoughts, I began to see how much I had been missing" (126). Over time, Cole adopted Sweeney's (1999) stance to "create a classroom atmosphere and curriculum that prepares my students to build and participate in critical democracy" (97). Cole and the other authors of these chapters have heeded Sweeney's suggestion. In doing so, they have situated the U.N. ROC as an important framework by which to engage students in discussions and actions related to human rights.

In closing, Chapter Nine invites readers to explore children's literature for teaching the rights of the child. The chapter is filled with annotated bibliographies and explanations as to why literature should be used as a springboard for discussing human rights issues. Taken together, the chapters in this collection are provocative and powerful. They provide compelling reasons for why each and every child who enters our classrooms must be treated as full human beings, must be given the right to learn, and must be provided with opportunities to connect what they are learning in classrooms with what is happening in the larger world.

This collection serves as an exemplar for research and praxis grounded in critical literacy pedagogy. As the authors prove, we can no longer wait for permission to teach in just and justice-oriented ways. We cannot continue to give lip service to the importance of centering a human rights perspective in our teaching. Instead, we must be (and must remain) committed to actively challenging, critiquing, and resisting dehumanizing educational practices and inequitable structures associated with histories of segregation, racism, the inequality in resource distribution, the replication of unjust social practices, and the privileging of monolingualism and monoculturalism within schools and society. This commitment requires that we move beyond a rhetoric of human rights that gets invoked only when it serves the needs of a neoliberal agenda. Instead, we must move toward critical, humanizing educational practices that are grounded in human rights, justice, equity, and difference for all human beings. While the authors of this book do not explicitly address antiracist education, they do highlight what many scholars refer to as antiracist practices and antiracist pedagogical approaches for addressing human rights issues across the grade levels.

Reading this book convinces me even more that additional critical research is needed that explicitly examines the institutional, systemic barriers to treating students as fully human, fully capable, and as fully engaged in their learning. In closing, I turn to poet-educator June Jordan who beckons us to recognize that "we are the ones we have been waiting for." We are the ones who must revolutionize teaching and learning with and because of our students. We are the ones who must stand against the *talk* of human rights and stand for locating human rights at the center of our practice, our pedagogies, and our politics. We must do this work if we are committed to standing for and honoring the Rights of the Child.
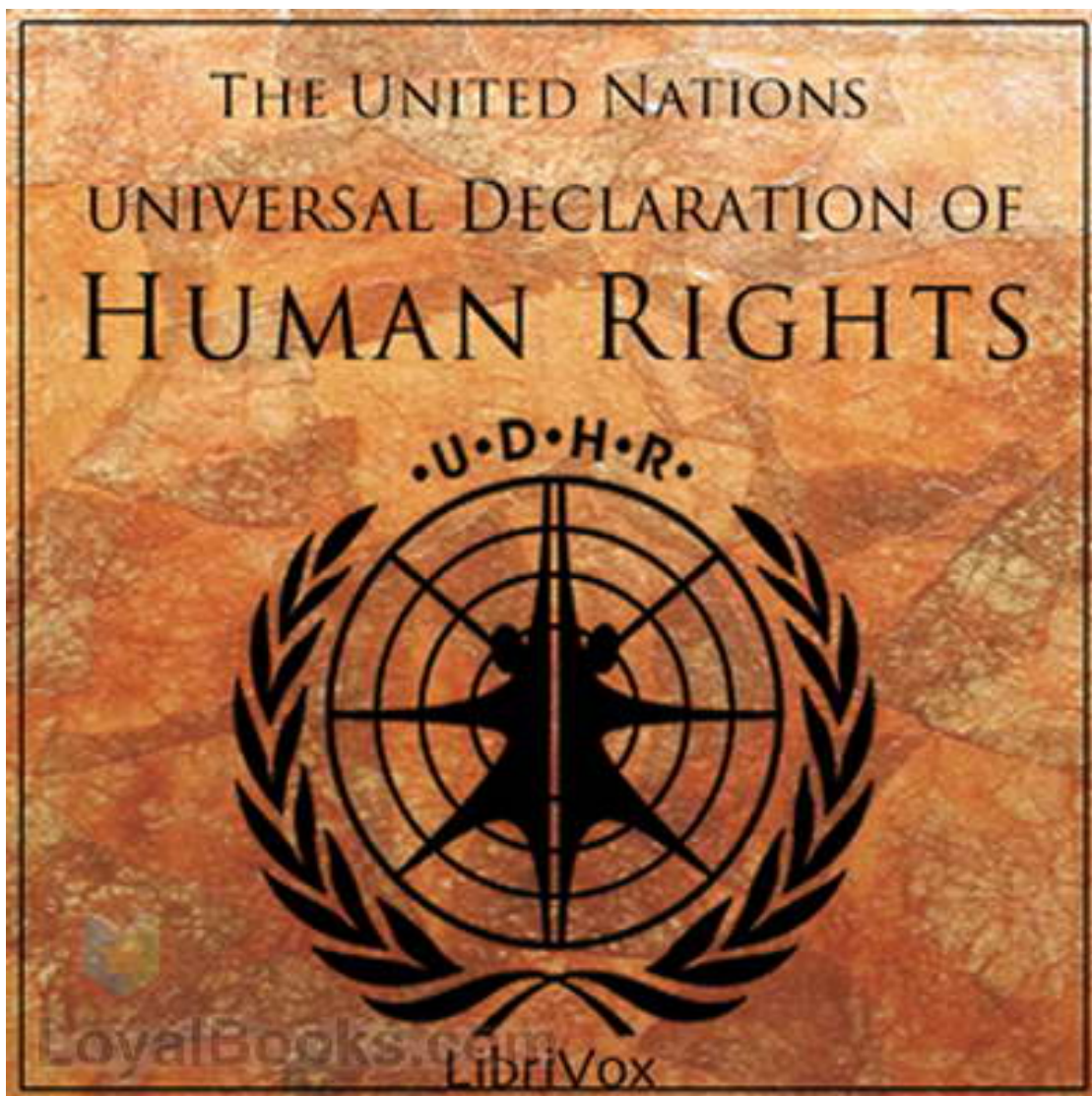

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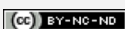
RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Teaching the Declaration of Human Rights

by Janet Zandy

REPRINTED FROM RADICAL TEACHER #73 (2005)

"What is your greatest fear?"

"I fear leaving college and not being able to find a job and working at McDonald's the rest of my life."

The technologically-determined and career-focused private university where I teach has state of the arts programs in photography, computer science, new media, and many permutations of engineering, but no undergraduate or graduate degrees in English or history. The quarter system is unforgiving and, not unrelated, retention is a major concern. Art students hope for their big break and information technologists worry about finding required co-ops. Everyone knows that the real money these days—for grants, research funding—is in some manifestation of homeland security.

In this climate, teaching in the liberal arts is a refuge and a challenge. One of those challenges is a theme-centered Senior Seminar course that all students must take if they wish to graduate. The present theme is Globalization, Human Rights, and Citizenship. I like teaching this course even though I know that many students dislike this requirement, and some are outright belligerent and hostile to it. I think of the course as taking students where they do not necessarily want to go and I assign a variety of texts, films, lectures, even comics to open dialogic spaces for perceiving the intersection of globalization, human rights, and citizenship. I want them to question how their training for jobs fits into a larger geo-political and humanistic space, but I have to find subtle ways to get there or they will stubbornly and predictably shut down. And, so, I practice a variant of samizdat pedagogy.

I always begin with a central, grounding document: the *1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Almost all students have never seen it before or heard of it. It is a useful pedagogical troublemaker. From the start, a vocal minority of students make it clear: human rights are not a given. At first glance, their response (invariably from highly technical, white, suburban males) highlights the distance between those protesting in anti-capitalist globalization demonstrations and those programming the security systems that sustain the Patriot Act, the prison system, as well as the more mundane slow passage through any airport. Some—not all—of these technologically sophisticated and outspoken students champion a social Darwinism of survival of the fittest, an ideology of choice without any consideration of circumstances. Or, in the words of one student, "people have a right to go *after* water, but no one is entitled to it."

Many students see the *Declaration of Human Rights* as an idealistic but meaningless document, well intentioned, but irrelevant. Some are quick to point out its inconsistencies, indeterminacies (their meaning, my term). At first, few recognize it as a heuristic for centering human actuality, for examining issues of contemporary slavery, international labor conditions, rights of women and children, and the economic impact of undemocratic capitalist globalization—until they start to apply it to their own lives and fears. I inform them that many non-Western members of the United Nations such as Iran, China, Egypt, and Lebanon participated in the drafting of this document, as well as nations in the Western and Soviet-Bloc countries, and I explain how it emerged with Eleanor Roosevelt's prodding out of the trauma of war and was viewed by her as a threshold document, an "international magna carta." What I don't say is that I offer it as an imaginary for another world.

This text—30 articles approved by the UN General Assembly— is a catalyst for gathering and connecting the filaments of students' own experiences to the actualities of global capital. Each student must choose and respond to one article. For example, Article 9, "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile," leads us to a discussion of Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. Article 15, "Everyone has a right to a nationality," evokes a discussion of migration and exile, of literally existing in a condition "without papers." Article 29, "Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible," raises questions about the responsibilities of corporations and businesses to local communities. And Article 23, "Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment," speaks to them because they fear the outsourcing of their recently acquired technical skills and almost all know someone whose job succumbed to corporate downsizing.

Out of this modest exercise, patterns of concern emerge. Then we make a leap, and I ask them to write responses to three questions: What do you fear? What is the greatest global problem? What would you do if you were a citizen activist? In the small drama of this brief ten-week course, their responses, read anonymously and aloud, reflect back to them the possibilities inherent in themselves. Large numbers name hunger and poverty as primary problems. They fear failure and loss and almost all recognize environmental perils. Some go further and speak to the "concentration of so much wealth and power in the hands of a few people; [and] the lengths to which these people go to protect their wealth and power and accumulate more." And, "money over humanity." One observes, "the greatest global problem: Lack of concern for global problems." No text can claim the power of progressive revolution these Orwellian days, but the *1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is a critical reminder of new vision and hope after the trauma of war. Many students want alternatives to cynicism and political paralysis. And some, a very few, are ready to act.

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RADICAL TEACHER
A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

News for Educational Workers

by Leonard Vogt
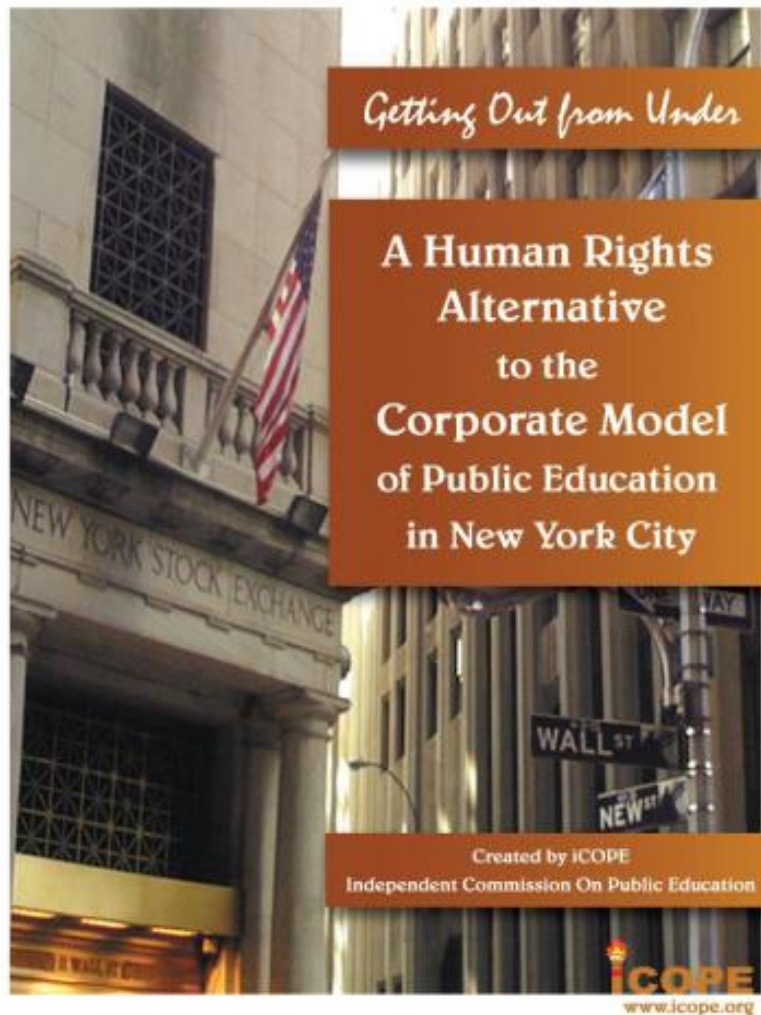
COURTESY OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSON ON PUBLIC EDUCATION WWW.ICOPE.ORG

Wealth and Education

The Chronicle of Higher Education (June 8, 2015) published "Executive Compensation at Public and Private Colleges." At public universities, the median salary for presidents for a year is $428,250, with two presidents earning more than $1 million (Rodney A. Erickson of Penn State University at $1, 494,603 and R. Bowen Loftin of Texas A&M University at $1,128,957). At private colleges, 36 presidents earn at least $1 million.

Since Arizona's higher education funding cuts were the deepest in the country since 2008, *The Nation*'s "The Gentrification of Higher Ed" (June 8, 2015) focuses on this

those lucky enough to get Pell grants, which max out at less than $6,000 per year, the tuition at many public four-year colleges can be upwards of $10,000 a year, requiring the difference to be squeezed out of those minimum wage salaries (Policy.Mic, September 8, 2015).

"Higher education wears the cloak of liberalism, but in policy and practice, it's a cutthroat system of exploitation": so begins an article on AlterNet (June 29, 2015) which uses the example of New York University (NYU) as "a predatory business, hardly any different in ethical practice or economic procedure than a sleazy storefront payday loan operator." In a report called "The Art of the Gouge" 400 NYU faculty members describe how their place of employment can be a corrupt institution of power, money,

For minimum wage workers, tuition at four-year public colleges and universities represents a huge share of their income.

Total pre-tax annual income for minimum wage workers working 40 hours a week, divided by average 2014-2015 in-state tuition and fees at public four-year schools in each state. Does not take into account grants or financial aid.
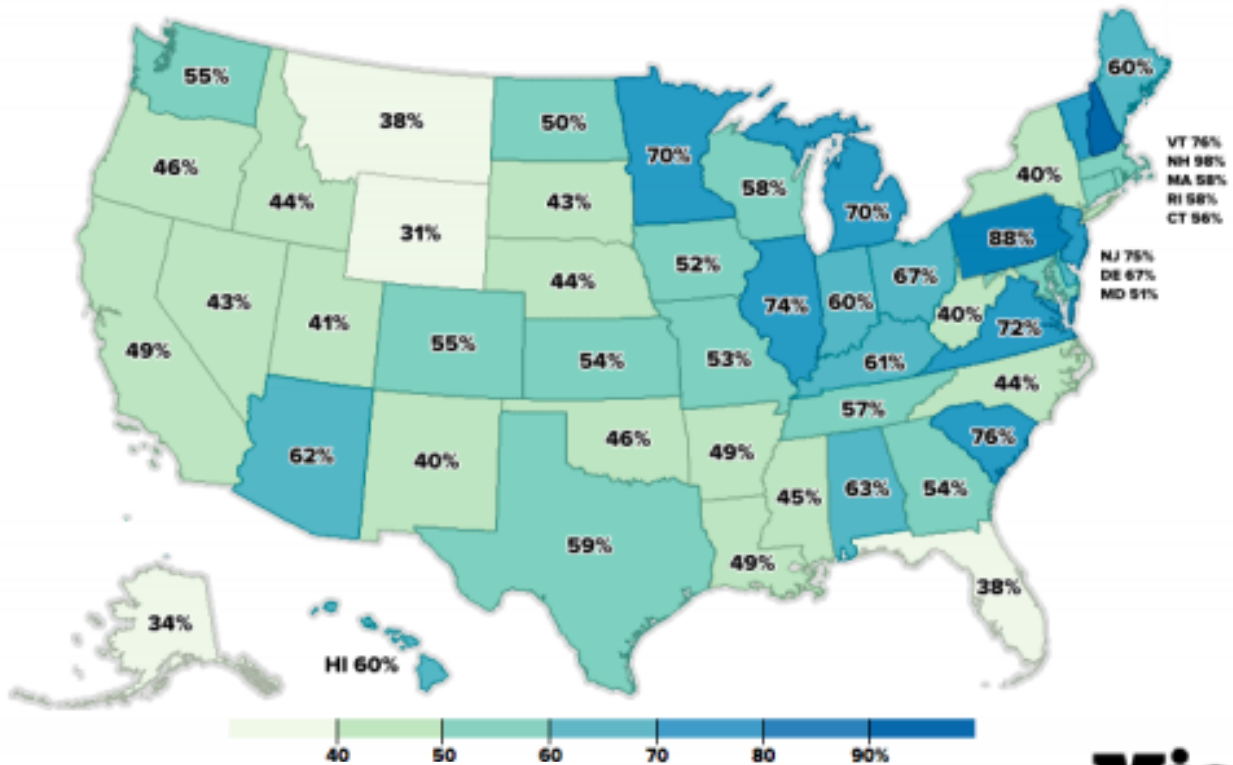
COURTESY OF U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR/COLLEGE BOARD

.Mic

state for its 70 percent tuition increase for in-state students between 2008 and 2013, the biggest hike in the country. At the same time, to appeal to the students (or their parents) who can afford these hikes, and want even more from their tuition than classes and professors, the University of Arizona in the last two years has added food pantries, food courts, swimming pools (with hot tubs, steam rooms, and tanning salons), and luxury apartments for the very wealthy students offering one-bedroom apartments for as high as $1,640 a month.

For students making minimum wage, college is becoming almost an impossibility. The cost of one year of in-state tuition and fees could cost anywhere from 31% to 98% of a minimum wage earner's annual income. Even for

and exploitation that is severely unfair to students and professors alike.

Although asked to move large numbers of lower-income students into the middle class, community colleges receive far less public financial support than do highly selective public four-year colleges (Education Opportunity Network, June 4, 2015).

Poverty and Education

Scientific American writes "For children, growing up poor hinders brain development and leads to poorer performance in schools. . . Up to 20% of the achievement

gap between high- and-low- income children may be explained by differences in brain development. . . .Children who grew up in families below the federal poverty line had gray matter volumes 8 to 10% below normal development" (Education Opportunity Network, July 30, 2015).

Schools in Latino and African American communities regularly are targeted for turnarounds, state takeovers, and transfer to charter schools without the consent of the people whose children live in these communities. All the school takeovers from New Orleans to Detroit to Newark to Tennessee have one thing in common: they enroll primarily children of color (the Diane Ravitch blog, September 18, 205).

A report by the Center of Civil Rights Remedies at UCLA found that during the 2011-2012 school year, 3.5 million public school students were suspended at least once. Within this group, African American students received suspensions at more than three times the rate of white students (portside.org, September 5, 2015).

An investigation by the U. S. Department of Justice found that in Alabama thousands of students with behavioral issues or disabilities were given subpar educations and isolated in decrepit buildings used during Jim Crow (ProPublica, July 29, 2015).

A new report by the Education Law Center shows that in many states in the United States, the poorest children, who actually need the most support in order to succeed in school, get the least support. In Vermont, Wyoming, and North Dakota, poor districts receive only 80 cents for every dollar in wealthier districts. In Nevada, poor schools receive only 48 cents to the dollar of wealthy districts (portside.org, June 14, 2015).

Inequalities at the Starting Gate: Cognitive and Noncognitive Skills Gap between 2010-2011 Kindergarten Classmates explores gaps by race/ethnicity and social class in both the cognitive skills of reading and math but also the noncognitive skills of self-control and interactions with teachers and peers (Economic Policy Institute, June 17, 2015).

Student Debt

The U. S. Department of Education will forgive outstanding loan debts of former students of Corinthian Colleges, the now-closed for-profit educational chain that preyed on students and bribed employers to temporarily hire and then fire graduates to beef up their success rates. The chronology is as follows: on February 23, 2015 fifteen former Corinthian students refused to pay off the student loans they received to attend Corinthian; on March 31, the Debt Collective, an offshoot of Occupy Wall Street and an organizer of the debt strike, hand delivered to the Department of Education hundreds of "Defense to Repayment" requests asking the government to forgive the Corinthian students' debts because the company lied about future job prospects for the students; on June 8, the Department of Education agreed to forgive the debts on an individual basis (*The Nation*, July 6/13, 2015). For the

excited response from Occupy Wall Street, see the Diane Ravitch blog of June 13, 2015.

"The Student Loan Crisis and the Debtfare State" (*Dollars & Sense*, May/June 2015) compares the student loan crisis to the sub-prime housing industry, saying that both depends on the ability of borrowers to meet their debt obligations. Since the majority of student debtors cannot get decent paying jobs after leaving college, they cannot pay back their loans and, since 2003, default rates on student loans have been climbing.

Teacher Strikes

In Chicago, 12 members of a coalition of public school parents, grandmothers, and education activists were on hunger strike for 34 days to protest the closing of Dyett High School, the only remaining open-enrollment public high school left in the Bronzeville community. Under Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, the city has closed about 50 schools in its attempt to privatize education. Under pressure from the hunger strikers, officials plan to reopen Dyett High School (DemocracyNow, September 4 & 9, 2015; portside.org, August 21 & 26, 2015).

For the first time in 30 years, Seattle teachers went on strike on September 8, 2015, which would have been the first day of classes for about 53,000 students. The strikers' demands are for fewer standardized tests for students, more time to prepare for classes, and better pay. For an interview with a striking teacher, see DemocracyNow, September 15, 2015. For a complete report on the strike, see portside.org, September 9, 10, and 15, 2015.

On June 12, 2015, 10,000 people in Mexico City, along with teachers announcing a strike, protested the neoliberal education reforms of President Enrique Peña Nieto (DemocracyNow, June 12, 2015).

Charter Schools
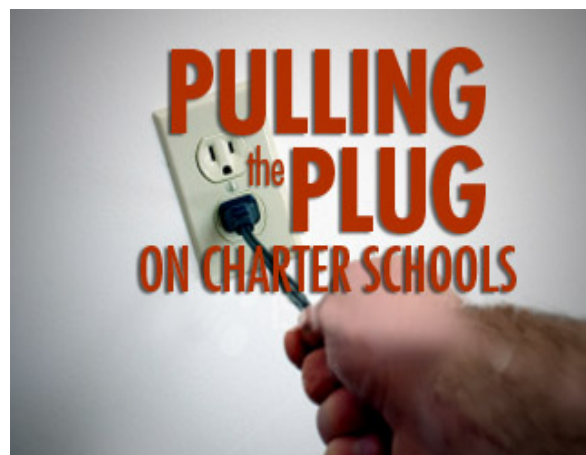
COURTESY OF COMMONWEALTH FOUNDATIONS

Charter school advocates have had a setback with Washington State's Supreme Court landmark ruling stating that charter schools are unconstitutional based on the fact that they are not really "public" schools (portside.org,

September 12, 2015 and Education Opportunity Network, September 10, 2015.

Charter schools, in general, are receiving a bad rep, even in mainstream sources like *The New York Times* (August 27, 2015) which reports that the post-Katrina all-charter New Orleans urban district has "stark problems": "Principals engage in widespread . . . selecting, or counseling out, students"; "No agency is responsible for keeping track of [students]"; "Louisiana's official dropout rates are unreliable"; and "Louisiana's education data has been doled out selectively, mostly to pro-charter researchers, and much of the research has been flawed." In addition, charter schools are fraudulent "and marked by a lack of transparency that leads to even more fraud" (inequality.org, July 12, 2015) and the Walton Foundation-funded charter schools are marred by fiscal mismanagement (alternet, June 25, 2015). As the Obama administration asks Congress for a 50 percent increase for charter school funding, a report called "New Documents Show How Taxpayer Money is Wasted by Charter Schools" by The Center for Media and Democracy claims that charter schools are spending billions of dollars with no oversight, regulation, or accountability. The report says the federal government has spent over $3 billion dollars over the past two decades by the charter school industry but has no database showing how the money was spent or what results were produced (DemocracyNow, May 8, 2015).

Testing

In the Phi Delta Kappa annual opinion poll about U. S. education, nearly half the public supports opting out of mandated standardized tests, which is great news for the Opt Out movement. Fifty-four percent of the public do not want their schools to implement the Common Core standards. Fifty-five percent oppose the use of public test scores to evaluate teachers. Most notably, "A strong majority—about 8 in 10—of the U.S. public believes the effectiveness of their local public schools should be measured by how engaged the students are with classwork and their level of hope for the future" (Diane Ravitch blog, August 23, 2015).

Even though the vast majority of textbook publishers say their books are aligned with the Common Core, they are simply repackaged versions of earlier books. The publishing giant Pearson has no textbooks evaluated as aligning with the Common Core (The Daily Beast, July 16, 2015).

An editorial "Teaching as Defiance" by the *Rethinking Schools* editorial staff delineates ways teachers can survive in a high-stakes testing environment but still be creative and collaborative. The editorial includes testimonies from many teachers about how they defy testing while struggling to defend and transform public schools.

The Harvard School of Public Health's 2013 study starkly states, "Fewer than 50 percent of U. S. youth currently get the recommended amount of moderate to vigorous exercise they need to become healthy adults." Since recess is being eliminated in many schools to set aside more time for test preparation, the problem is likely to continue ("Physical Education Takes a Hit: Schools' Emphasis on Testing Is Making Kids Sick" Truthout, May 8, 2015).

Steven Salaita

The firing of Steven Salaita from the University of Illinois Urbana campus has become a cause célèbre of academic freedom. Hired in 2013 to teach Native American Studies, he moved himself and his family from Virginia to Illinois to start the new school year. In 2014 after the Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, which killed some 2000, 400 of them children, Salaita wrote some Twitter entries using hyperbole and ridicule to criticize the Israeli attack. At the July Board meeting, the trustees and the chancellor received pressure from pro-Israel donors to the university to fire Salaita, and the trustees did (Informed Comment, August 15, 2015). At its annual Washington, D.C. meeting, the American Association of University Professors censured the University of Illinois, saying that firing him "violated Professor Salaita's academic freedom and cast a pall of uncertainty over the degree to which academic freedom is understood and respected" (*The New York Times*, June 14, 2015). Salaita sued the university and a federal judge recently has allowed the lawsuit against University of Illinois to proceed, with the chancellor who originally fired Salaita having resigned under an ethics investigation (*The Nation*, August 12, 2015).
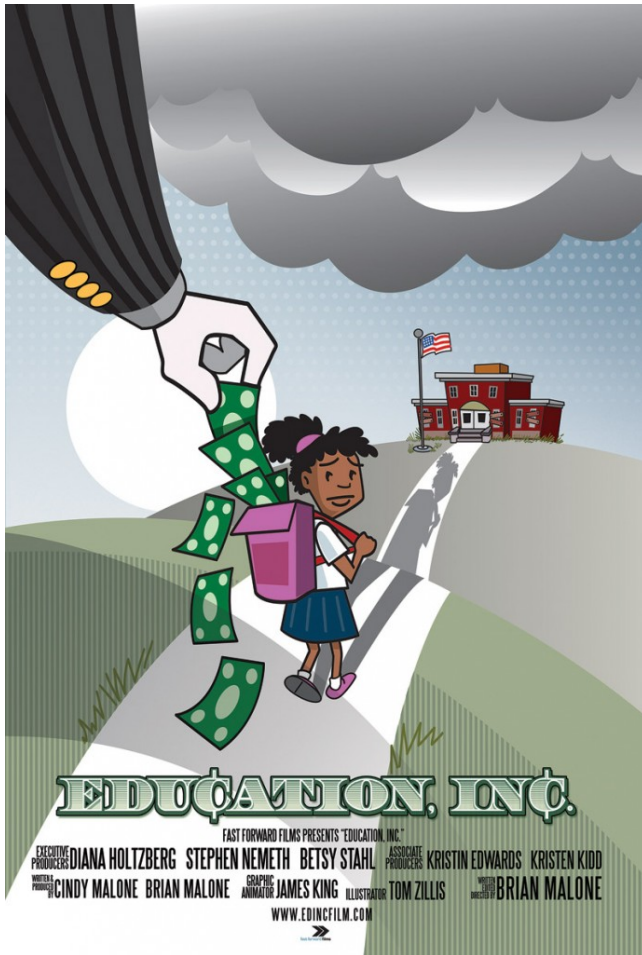
Divestments

The Columbia University student activist group, Columbia Prison Divest, has forced the university to sell its 220,000 shares in G4S, the world's largest private security firm, as well as its shares in the Corrections Corporation of America, the largest private prison company in the United States (portside.org, June 23, 2015 and *In These Times*, August 2015).

Sheldon Adelson and Haim Saban, fellow Zionist billionaires, gathered at a secret summit in Las Vegas to raise $50 million to fight campus campaigns to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel (Portside, June 13, 2015).

A Slanted Civil War

After recent controversy over raising, and finally lowering, the Confederate flag, it has become obvious that many Americans believe false things about the Civil War because our textbooks teach false things about the Civil War. Teaching or implying that the Confederacy broke away because of states' rights rather than its unwillingness to give up slavery bends, and perhaps even breaks, the historical facts. This continues today, says *The Washington Post* (July 9, 2015), when in Texas "five million public school children" will be taught social studies "that barely address racial segregation." Slavery is seen as "a side issue to the Civil War."

Resources

Brian Malone's *Education Inc.* shows the huge pot of money coming from organizations connected to the Koch brothers, Jeb Bush, Michael Bloomberg, and other advocates for dismantling the public school system and replacing it with unregulated private schools and charters.

PUZZLES is a documentary that follows the story of a violent hate crime in New Bedford, MA, when an 18-year

old entered an LGBT bar and attacked three patrons with a hatchet and a gun, bringing the community together with greater understanding of and connection between the roots

of hate crime, joblessness, homophobia, intolerance, alienation, and violence. For information on ordering PUZZLES, go to http://andersongoldfilms.com/films/documentaries/puzzles .htm.

A North Carolina-based queer youth media project just released its third issue of *I Don't Do Boxes* magazine:

http://www.idontdoboxes.org/issues/act-out/.

THE TRUE COST, BULLFROG FILMS

Bullfrog Films has two new videos good for both secondary and college level education. *The True Cost* is a story about clothing, the clothes we wear, the people who make them, and the impact the industry has on the world. *Weather Gone Wild* explores recent extreme weather events and the scientific projections of what we can expect over the next few decades. For information on either film, go to www.bullfrogfilms.com.

WEATHER GONE WILD, BULLFROG FILMS

*Is there a news item, call for papers, upcoming conference, resource, teaching tool, or other information related to progressive education that you would like to share with other Radical Teacher readers? Conference announcements and calls for papers should be at least six months ahead of date. Items, which will be used as found appropriate by Radical Teacher, cannot be returned. Send hard copy to Leonard Vogt, Department of English, LaGuardia Community College (CUNY), 31-10 Thomson Avenue, Long Island City, New York 11101—or email items to **lvogt@nyc.rr.com**.*

RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

Contributors' Notes

Amy Argenal is in the process of completing her doctoral studies in International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco, where she also received her Masters in the same area of study. She received her second Masters in Human Rights from Mahidol University in Thailand. Her doctoral research focuses on human rights activism in Myanmar. Amy is the Director of Service Learning at an independent high school in San Francisco and through her work in that capacity has published on service learning and presented at various conferences on teaching race, power and privilege.

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Rhode Island College in Providence, R.I. She is a scholar of higher education and organizational change and teaches courses on research methods, law, education, and social justice. Her book *Student Activism and Curricular Change in Higher Education* was published by Ashgate, and she has extensive publications and presentations in the area of sociological and legal studies pedagogy.

Monisha Bajaj is Associate Professor of International and Multicultural Education at the University of San Francisco, where she directs the MA program in Human Rights Education. She is also Visiting Professor and Research Fellow at the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice, University of the Free State, South Africa. Dr. Bajaj is the editor and author of multiple books, including *Schooling for Social Change: The Rise and Impact of Human Rights Education in India* (winner of the 2012 Jackie Kirk Outstanding Book Award of the Comparative & International Education Society), as well as numerous articles. She has also developed curriculum—particularly related to peace education, human rights, anti-bullying efforts and sustainability—for non-profit organizations and inter-governmental organizations, such as UNICEF and UNESCO. In 2015, she received the Ella Baker/Septima Clark Human Rights Award (2015) from Division B of the American Educational Research Association (AERA).

Michael Bennett is Professor of English at Long Island University (Brooklyn). He is the editor and author of four books and numerous articles on American literature, African American studies, and urban culture & ecology. His latest work has been creative, publishing poetry and short fiction. He currently serves on the editorial board of *Radical Teacher*.

Melissa Canlas is completing her doctoral studies at the University of San Francisco in International and Multicultural Education, with a focus on Human Rights Education. Her doctoral research focuses on social justice leadership praxis for Asian American community college students. Melissa received her Master's Degree in Asian American Studies at San Francisco State University. She has taught Ethnic Studies at the community college level for over ten years and she is currently the director of APALU (Asian Pacific American Leaders United), a critical leadership development program at City College of San Francisco.

Nancy Flowers is a writer and consultant for human rights education. She has worked to develop Amnesty International's education program and is a founding member of Human Rights Educators USA, a national human rights education network. As a consultant to governments, nongovernmental organizations, and UN agencies, she has helped establish national and international networks of educators, develop materials, and train activists, professionals, and military and police personnel in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. She is the author and editor of articles and books on human rights education including *Acting for Indigenous Rights: Theatre to Change the World* (Minnesota, 2013); *Local Action/ Global Change: A Handbook on Women's Human Rights* (Paradigm Press, 2008), *Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (Minnesota, 2007), and *Compasito*, *a Manual on Human Rights Education for Children* (Council of Europe, 2007).

Diane F. Frey, Ph.D., is a Senior Researcher at the Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies at CUNY, a Lecturer in Labor Studies at the San Francisco State University and an adjunct faculty member at the Harvard University Extension School. Previously, Dr. Frey was the Director of Labor Studies at the National Labor College. Her research examines worker rights in

comparative perspective and appears in *Advances in Industrial and Labor Relations*, *the Hastings Race and Poverty Law Journal* and *the American University of International Law Review*, as well as in edited volumes published by the ILO and UNESCO. Prior to her academic career, she was a labor organizer, field representative and director and has worked with U.S. and British unions. Dr. Frey received a Ph.D. in International Comparative Employment Relations from the London School of Economics and a B.A. in Economics from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Valerie Kinloch is Professor of Literacy Studies and Associate Chair of the Department of Teaching and Learning as well as the Chief Diversity Officer and Director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion in the College of Education and Human Ecology. Her research examines the language, literacies, and community engagements of adolescence and adults inside and outside schools. She is author of articles and books on race, place, language, literacy, and diversity. Her co-authored book, *Still Seeking an Attitude: Critical Reflections on the Work of June Jordan,* was published in 2004, and her biography on poet-educator June Jordan titled, *June Jordan: Her Life and Letters,* was published in 2006. Dr. Kinloch's book, *Harlem Our Minds: Place, Race, and the Literacies of Urban Youth* (2010), examines how the literacies of young people in New York City are affected by public attempts to gentrify their community. *Harlem on Our Minds* was awarded the 2011 Exemplary Research Award from the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Division K as well as the 2011 Honorary Mention for Outstanding Contribution to Research from AERA's Division B. In 2012, *Harlem on Our Minds* received the prestigious Outstanding Book of the Year Award from AERA. In addition to these recognitions, Dr. Kinloch was also the recipient of the 2010 AERA Scholars of Color Early Career Award, the 2015 Diversity Award from the College of Education and Human Ecology, and the 2015 Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award from Ohio State University.

Robyn Linde is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and the director of the International Nongovernmental Organizations Studies program at Rhode Island College in Providence, R.I. Her teaching and research interests in the field of international relations include international law and human rights, specifically, the rights of children and queer rights. Her book, entitled *The Globalization of Childhood: The International Diffusion of Norms and Law Against the Child Death Penalty*, will be published in 2016 by Oxford.

Gillian MacNaughton, JD, DPhil, is an Assistant Professor in the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development and a Senior Fellow with the Center for Peace, Democracy and Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston. MacNaughton is an international human rights lawyer who works on economic and social rights and human rights-based approaches to social justice, including human rights impact assessment and indicators. Before joining UMass Boston, she was the executive director of the Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy at Northeastern University School of Law. She has taught human rights at Brandeis University in the United States, the University of Sarajevo in Bosnia, and the University of Oxford in the UK, and has consulted on projects for WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health, and numerous nongovernmental organizations. She received her doctorate from the University of Oxford.

Shane McCoy is a Ph.D. candidate in English Language and Literature at the University of Washington in Seattle. He teaches composition and literature courses for first and second year writers, which include topics on feminist theory and literature, American ethnic literature, critical race theory, and transnational literature. His research focuses on historical feminisms, American ethnic studies (post-Reconstruction to the present), and critical pedagogy within the discipline of Critical Cultural Studies. His current dissertation, *Texts that Teach: Curriculum, Affect, and Critical Pedagogy in the Neoliberal University*, focuses on curriculum development, affect theory, and critical pedagogy in the undergraduate literature classroom. He is especially interested in theorizing the ways in which literature serves as a vehicle for developing students' critical capacities for taking up social justice causes in both their education and their everyday lives.

Mary Nolan is Professor of History at New York University. She teaches courses on Human Rights, the Cold War, and the History of Women and Gender. Her most recent book is *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010.* She is on the editorial board of *International Labor and Working-class History* and *Politics & Society* and she works with Brooklyn for Peace.

Susan O'Malley is on the editorial board of *Radical Teacher a*nd was one of its founders. After teaching at Kingsborough Community College for 36 years, she retired and is currently Vice Chair of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women/NY at the UN. Her recent article, "Macbeth's Witches: Nurses, Waitresses, Feminists, Punk Gore Groupies?" was published in *Shakespeare on Screen: Macbeth* (Publications des Universites de Rouen et du Havre) and a feminist reading of *Merry Wives of Windsor* will be published by Routledge in 2014 in a collection on the play.

Janet Zandy is Emerita Professor of English and American Studies at Rochester Institute of Technology. Among her books are *Calling Home: Working-Class Women's Writings*; *Liberating Memory: Our Work and Our Working-Class Consciousness; Hands: Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work*; and *Unfinished Stories: The Narrative Photography of Hansel Mieth and Marion Palfi*.