

RADICAL TEACHER

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

Speaking of Freedom: U.S. Multicultural Literature and Human Rights Talk In an Emerging Democracy

by Amy Levin



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It's 100 degrees Fahrenheit in Yangon (also known as Rangoon), and I am trying to explain to a student that when she analyzes irony in *Hamlet* for her MA thesis, she may want to consider politics and the ways in which Shakespeare commented both on Elizabethan England and the nature of power more generally. Ophelia doesn't even come up in the conversation. I pause for a moment to adjust the feeble fan near my desk, imagining a Danish winter. The parallels between the play and the political situation in my host country are glaringly obvious to me, with Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of a murdered leader, in place of the prince. Dare I say something? Is my student oblivious to this matter, or is she choosing to ignore it, knowing the fragility of human rights in the emerging democracy? Is she able to speak freely or speak of freedom?

I faced this dilemma with the first student I met in Myanmar,¹ and similar questions arose in the following weeks. Our conversations grew increasingly open, but even in anonymous course evaluations at the end of my stay, many students were indirect. One used the third person to describe the cultural estrangement between the United States and Myanmar: "Most of the students do not exactly



HAMLET AND OPHELIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

know about the literature in US. Thus, they want to explore more and more but some barriers and difficulties make them delay. They are very thirsty for knowledge, if the US helps them, they will be the best friends forever."

I encountered these students in February 2013, when I served as the first U. S. Fulbright scholar in a Myanmar public university in close to thirty years. The excitement and sense of privilege that accompanied the experience were tempered by anxiety that I might unintentionally jeopardize my students or the reception of future American scholars through my actions, speech, or appearance. Yet literature was chosen for my Myanmar venture because, according to the project overview I received, "American literature is not a sensitive subject with the Ministry of Education and thus a good area." This sentence was to haunt me almost daily. I was assigned to meet at least once with each of the 27 second-year MA students to talk about their theses, to facilitate a "train the trainer" workshop for up to 70 Yangon-area university faculty members, and to participate in events elsewhere, including a Muslim women's empowerment group that was interested in discussing lesbianism, among other topics.

Yet my primary activity was a workshop for close to 35 first-year MA students which met for six hours weekly.

I approached my work from a critical human rights perspective. I met Westerners everywhere who worked for international agencies, ranging from those protecting displaced persons to UN mine sweepers, from census advisors at glamorous cocktail receptions to Mennonite missionaries in an elegant restaurant. At functions for a visiting delegation of American academics, human rights workers jockeyed for attention. Women affiliated with NGOs to promote reproductive health haggled for jade in the market. I wondered whether the local economy would collapse if the human rights workers left, remembering Linda Polman's assertion in *The Crisis Caravan*² that some NGOs appear to exist primarily to perpetuate themselves. Without NGOs and foreign missions, translators, drivers, secretaries, and cooks would find themselves without work.

Human rights talk was pervasive among Westerners and often turned to aspects of Myanmar culture that were presented as "backward" or morally inferior as opposed to being results of a lack of resources.³ Moreover, the individuals from more developed nations often failed to distinguish between cultural differences that were the result of poverty and those that were consequences of political or religious oppression. While the circumstances were intertwined, these situations provoked me to think about human rights discourse, both in terms of the texts I was teaching as well as in terms of who speaks on this topic, for whom, and in what setting.



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My experience learning and teaching in Myanmar also came at an important juncture in the opening of the country: Coke had only been reintroduced a month earlier. The quota for imported cars had been raised within the last year, so sparkling Chinese Cherys wove between rusted Toyota Corollas spewing fumes. The preferred currency was crisp one hundred dollar bills, and adjacent restaurants charged anywhere from \$5 to \$30 for similar meals. After student riots in the late 1980s, many undergraduate-serving institutions had been expelled from the capital. Yangon Technological University had only returned to its Soviet-built campus in the fall of 2012. Individuals my age reported breaks in their education when universities were shut for years. Americans had not been allowed on the campus of the University of Yangon until Obama's visit three months prior to my arrival.

In the month I visited, dramatic changes continued to occur. Desmond Tutu made an unexpected trip and delivered an address critical of Myanmar's human rights record, drawing parallels between South Africa's history and the lives of Myanmar citizens. His presence in the

country and ability to say what he did marked a major shift. Press freedom increased that month as well. The U.S. embassy informed me that journalists who were interested in my visit would not be welcome on campus. I made laborious plans to meet one reporter outside the university's gates so she could photograph me with the classroom building in the background. Yet on the appointed day, I was surprised to find that she had been admitted and waited for me in the building's entryway. While one faculty member appeared askance, the interview took place right there, and U.S. embassy staff declared this a first in recent history.

Experiences inside and outside the classroom yielded multiple opportunities to reflect on and theorize about the nature of global rights, marginalization, and reciprocity; I was able to compare how women in Myanmar and the United States respond to concerns relevant to disadvantaged populations, even as I confronted issues arising from post-colonialism and male privilege daily. Yet the most intriguing parts of the experience were the silences, evasions, and hesitations that constantly interrupted conversations about the opportunities for gaining civil rights in the shift toward democracy. Slowly, we were able to use literature to draw implicit parallels and to open conversations about "sensitive" topics so that in the end, the experience was transformative for all of us. Lena Khor refers to a human rights "regime," based on a Western essentialist view of human rights.⁴ The discourse in my classroom was based on an assumption that the United States was not the world's exemplar in this area, even though on occasion students' questions cast me in the role of ambassador, as when they asked about jury trials. More significantly, texts which are not necessarily perceived as human rights works in the United States stimulated exchange in a situation that called for delicacy. With frequent opportunities for questions ranging from the pronunciation of unusual words to the weight of snow, from Valentine's Day rituals to political violence, students became more direct. In a course evaluation, one student wrote: "the instructor gave chances for students to question; we can dare to express our feelings."

While the stated purpose of the Fulbright program is people-to-people exchange, I could not escape the fact that lurking under our country's zeal for Myanmar are visions of huge untapped markets for goods and expertise as well as a cheap labor force eager to adopt English as the global language of business. In turn, a U. S. presence might create a more competitive market for imports from China and other areas in Asia. As a scholar engaged in a work of critical humanitarianism, familiar with works by such authors as Jack Donnelly, Michael Ignatieff, Anne Orford, Joseph Slaughter, Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus,⁵ I arrived eager to gain a complicated vision of Myanmar culture and not to create an intervention that placed me in the company of those whom Richard Falk describes as playing "the role of saviours of people trapped in barbaric circumstances."⁶ Nor did I want to replicate for myself the experience of what Anthony Ogden refers to as the "colonial student," observing another culture from the comfortable "veranda" or "bubble" of the home culture.⁷ Nevertheless, another irony of my work in Myanmar is that

I find myself speaking for others whom I would prefer to hear speaking for themselves, because the process for Myanmar citizens to obtain exit visas remains convoluted, incompletely documented, and at times mystifying. The greater openness in the country is new and remains tenuous; in another month, my students might find themselves grateful for their indirection with me.

I further hoped to present a nuanced portrait of the United States and not to subscribe to a simplistic vision of our country as the world's champion of democracy. I did not come to moralize and took seriously the Fulbright emphasis on exchange. The work plan I submitted was terse: "student workshops: introduction, one week on women writers, one week on African-American writers, one week on Native Americans and Latinos (combined)." These descriptions were tailored closely to what I had been asked to do, and I hoped to use the sessions with instructors to generate locally appropriate approaches to teaching the material. I was encouraged by my liaisons to establish the importance of a student-centered classroom and to promote critical thinking, which they claimed had been absent from Myanmar education for many years.

This placed me in a somewhat contradictory position. Attention to these qualities has improved my teaching over the years; at the same time, they may also be understood as Western constructions rather than universal truths about teaching. As much as I might focus on exchange, I could not deny that I was arriving as a consultant, which suggested that I had some form of expertise that those around me lacked. Consequently, I repeatedly found ways to reveal the contradictions or even to put into question my own authority. In class, I chose to balance a structure that was familiar to the students and faculty—the lecture—with group work and discussion. I also developed a situational definition of critical thinking, which simply involved asking students or teachers for their opinions. If I thought I heard a received opinion, I would inquire further, "do you really believe that," "what are the strengths and weaknesses of that argument," or "what would someone who objected to that say?" The latter strategy was most successful because it encouraged my listeners to take diverse perspectives without asking them to put themselves on the line. In a culture where students' favorite question was "is that right," this approach also shifted the focus toward an appreciation for a variety of opinions.

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These pedagogies were novel to my students. They rose and greeted me on my arrival; someone raced to erase the whiteboard; and another student would rush to replace or refill markers that dried out almost instantly in the heat. Students would bring me jasmine garlands in the

morning after they learned what a novelty they were to me. Classroom technology was superior to what I have at home, and students helped with that, too. Nevertheless, my efforts to instigate dialogue were often disrupted by group recitals of canned answers from adjoining classrooms. Students were accustomed to rote learning and memorization. These techniques were the norm, possibly because most faculty members had never been exposed to native English speakers and dared not move beyond a limited vocabulary. Consequently, it was virtually impossible to obtain participation at first. One Westerner who tried to teach in Myanmar found himself asking "If anyone is alive here, can you please raise your hand," because the silence was so profound.⁸ When I called on someone, I evoked blushes. A student pulled out a phone, and when I tried to stop her, she indicated that she was looking up a word in her dictionary. I waited. I reminded the class that conversation was welcome and that there were no wrong answers. Individuals shifted in their seats. Finally, one brave person tried to answer, giggling and checking with her friend in the next seat. I applauded her answer. Smiles. Slowly, we developed a plan: if I were willing to let students consult with each other, they would try their answers on the class next. Patiently, we worked from the buddy system thereafter, though as the weeks passed, students increasingly ventured answers on their own. Realizing that it took courage to speak spontaneously about new concepts and in a foreign language, I praised participation extensively. In an evaluation, a student commented, "The instructor's welcoming attitude to questions, discussions and interruptions makes this class a good one. Moreover, the appreciation and praise by the instructor to any students who have participated in activities is also one of the best features of the class."

The first time we divided into groups, silence mingled with bewilderment: what exactly *were* they supposed to do? As I explained how they could come up with answers collaboratively, the students relaxed visibly, feeling less responsibility to be correct. I circulated, playing devil's advocate. When the groups reported back, their responses often reflected deep insights about the texts, although group reporters continued to hesitate when speaking. But by the last week, groups exploded with energy and laughter; students had already gathered to analyze texts when I returned from lunch. If my asides and indirect remarks provided opportunities to raise difficult topics that might be discussed after I left the room, groups provided safety in numbers, a "stress free" environment, as one student put it.

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The contents of the workshop were new and difficult for the students as well. The 1988 crackdown that closed Myanmar occurred as the canon wars were being fought,

so the curriculum, which is set nationally by the English Department at Yangon University, exemplified what ours might resemble without greater acceptance of literature by women and minorities. To expand students' knowledge of U. S. writing, I therefore concentrated primarily on this literature. Texts were selected from those I teach at home and were discussed with predominantly female⁹ groups representing many religious and ethnic populations. I hoped to use the "not sensitive" aspects of the discipline, such as a focus on the theme of adolescence, to move beyond an evolutionary discourse of unimpeded American progress toward greatness. To reverse the power imbalance which would establish me as sole expert, I also frequently asked students about parallels to their country. I made jokes about their "strange" or "clumsy" American professor to put into question the cultural and professional authority vested in me by their faculty and the Ministry of Education. Students frequently asked how I felt about my visits to tourist sites, new foods, and encounters with their fellow citizens. These questions provided multiple opportunities for me to respond with humor aimed at myself—how I had unwittingly committed sacrilege at a temple, how I mistook a karaoke bar for a temple, and how I simply couldn't fasten a sarong so it would stay up. At first, students laughed nervously or looked at each other in discomfort—and I recognized why they did so—but eventually they understood the destabilizing effect of humor and its role in creating a welcoming environment. To quote one evaluation, "The instructor plays actively and encourages student's participation." Ultimately, we were able to talk more as peers, with students explaining, for example, why certain suggestions for a thesis might be unacceptable to their faculty, either because they deviated from the standard format or brought in unfamiliar authors and texts.

To increase dialogue, I also focused on two themes: who or what is an American and becoming an adult. The first theme addressed the purpose of my visit, and the latter provided an avenue to comprehension by asserting commonalities even as we questioned our differences. After an introductory meeting, sessions centered on short works by white women, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and recent immigrants. At home, I avoid isolating ethnic and racial groups (and I did speak about overlapping forms of difference as well as hierarchies of oppression), but in Myanmar this structure enabled me to provide background on each population, admittedly superficial. I began each section with a short lecture and slide show on the history of the minority group, listing key dates, authors, and supplemental texts on the board. The necessity for this approach became evident when I presented slavery and slave narratives as a genre; several students displayed uncertainty about whether slavery still exists in the United States. One pupil remarked, "By categorizing topics and the texts, it is easy to understand their social, historical, cultural background," although I remained uncomfortable about the way in which I had to generalize and summarize.

Sessions on white women writers were introduced with information on the distinction between sex and gender as well as the three waves of feminism. I compared the

differences in performances of masculinity and femininity in our two countries, pointing out that in the United States men rarely wear sarongs, but shoveling snow might be considered a sign of manly strength. When I explained how some might go so far as to shovel even when a snow blower was available (another term I had to explain), students laughed, recognizing the ways gender roles may involve some vanity. We also shared the experience of seeing women take primary responsibility for feeding their families and providing health care to them.

I introduced Adrienne Rich's poem "Power" to discuss a certain feminist moment and the ways female artistry has been perceived as both creative and self-destructive. I asked about power more generally, and whether it could hurt those who sought it. The students claimed not to understand this notion at all. I did not have the courage to mention Aung San Suu Kyi at this early point in the class (though I was to do so later), but I engaged in a practice I was to adopt frequently, in which I would say something like: "Maybe you, too, know of a situation like this." Often students paused or looked meaningfully at each other without saying anything, engaging in a wordless but significant conversation that frustrated me at first. In this situation, as I described how a woman who expressed strong ideas in the public arena might be punished, the nodding was evident. At the end of the session, I asked students to write short summaries of what they had learned to check whether my presentation had been clear to them. The summaries were anonymous, and the silence regarding political issues was broken: "I've learned to see another point of view on the word, 'feminism'," "among the three waves, I totally agree with the third wave," and "women should have the same chance[s] as men and they shouldn't be discriminated against." Another addressed the poem about female strength: in her written summary of the day, a student commented, "I came to understand the deep meaning of the poem named 'Power.'"

Our next selection, "Old Woman Magoun" by Mary Wilkins Freeman, presented the effects of powerlessness and related it to sexual trafficking. U.S. students are generally attracted to the way it resembles a children's fable, even as they are shocked by the ending: how could a doting grandmother allow a young girl to eat poison in order to protect her from being traded in payment for her father's gambling debt? The day before I taught this story I participated in a panel on slavery and human trafficking at the American Center, a library and cultural complex operated by the U. S. State Department, and the event remained on my mind. Thus when students grappled with Old Woman Magoun's actions, I inquired whether the plot reminded them of contemporary issues in Myanmar. At first, the students were shocked by Old Woman Magoun's desperate remedies and found nothing sympathetic about her behavior. However, I kept asking questions about the situation and parallel ones the students might encounter. The notion of marriage to please family came up, and I mentioned that students at the American Center the previous day had talked about sex trafficking, particularly



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for individuals who went to Thailand without a visa. This generated head nodding. We sidled up to this theme and did not spend a great deal of time on it. I had yet to discover the boundaries of students' comfort zones, and I wasn't sure how far I could go in discussing sexuality or gender politics. I envisioned the police car perpetually stationed at the American Center entrance and remembered that speech was often carefully monitored.

In other conversations, speech flowed freely, particularly when students asked about U.S. culture and politics. A session on Susan Glaspell's play *Trifles* epitomized a frequent occurrence: a well-planned session hijacked by a series of questions that revealed the need for additional background. In this case, when I mentioned that the short story version of the play is titled "A Jury of Her Peers," I was asked what a jury was, how jurors are selected, and how a trial in the United States might proceed. Students were particularly intrigued by the notion of ordinary citizens being selected for juries. As I explained, Anne Stock, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, entered with an entourage from the embassy—even though I hadn't planned it, if someone had asked me to show the political benefits of Fulbright grants in democratizing other nations, I could not have chosen a better moment. A similar lesson occurred when I talked about African-American urban housing since the 1960s, in the context of Gwendolyn Brooks' *In the Mecca*. In response to questions, I explained about segregated housing as well as the benefits and limits of Fair Housing legislation. This topic was new and intriguing

to students, who appreciated the irony that the run-down site was named after a Muslim holy place.¹⁰ They asked questions about how a landlord could be prevented from discriminating and how penalties could be enforced. In turn, I told them a story about a landlord I once reported because she refused to show the apartment I was vacating to two males of Middle Eastern descent. They asked how I knew it (I saw her turning them away and she later made a bigoted comment about them to me). Wasn't I afraid to turn her in?

Themes of cultural exclusion and deprivation merged with concerns of young adulthood when we turned to discuss a pairing of Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" and Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks." Students referred to grandparents whose habits and foods discomfited them. I asked why the mother in the first work and the girl in the second wanted to assimilate into the dominant society, and I encouraged students to explore the advantages and disadvantages of this desire. What was gained? What was lost? What cultural conditions make people desperate to fit in? These questions arose again, and conversation grew spirited after I screened a film of Alice Walker's "Everyday Use," which was an assigned reading. We shared insights about migration from small towns and attitudes toward assimilation, modernity, and heritage. Students could understand both sisters' perspectives. The younger sister appealed to them because they had been taught to revere their elders, but they also understood why the older sister expressed scorn for tradition, because many of them had left villages to come to university, clutched cell phones, and sported stylish clothes when they were not required to wear uniforms.

As a museum studies scholar, I focused particularly on the quilts and wooden dasher in the story as emblems of tradition. Myanmar attitudes toward heritage are mixed—major tourist sites such as Shwedagon, the golden temple, are impeccably maintained. In contrast, the National Museum is in ill-repair, its priceless collections deteriorating due to minimal conservation measures. Members of oppressed groups and inhabitants of refugee camps face limited opportunities for cultural preservation. I therefore turned Walker's story on its head and asked whether the elder sister was entirely wrong in wanting to preserve items related to her heritage, as well as the extent to which what counts as heritage is a social construction. Students engaged actively with these topics and several referred to their experiences with temples and museums.

Literature by Latinos added a twist to the theme of cultural difference: living between two languages. I included Pat Mora's poem "Sonrisas." Mora's poem contrasts two worlds within a school—one white and bland, and the other Latino and colorful. Many words in the English version of the poem remain in Spanish, estranging those who speak only English. The informal writing prompt that day asked students to describe their morning, adopting words in Myanmar when they were unfamiliar with the English equivalents. Students commented that this activity led them to realize how many vocabulary words they still had to look up and the extent to which this curbed their communication. This assignment also yielded

discussion on what is lost when a culture's language becomes second to that of a dominant nation. The descriptions of students' mornings also taught me a great deal about their daily lives: exhaustion after staying up late to complete homework, helping family members, and, in some cases, tutoring others; a lack of privacy and quiet at home for studying; parents who insisted they sit down for a morning meal; and the difficulties of traffic in downtown Yangon. I had noticed that students were frequently late and no one seemed to mind. As students described lengthy commutes on crowded buses that often zoomed by without collecting passengers, long walks, and precarious motorbikes, I understood why it would be unreasonable to set rigid rules regarding punctuality.

We continued to explore the difficulties of living between cultures after the introduction to Native American works. I presented two women who struggled with acculturation. The women's stories led to Western colonialism and its effects on indigenous peoples. We were well into our month together, so I felt comfortable mentioning Myanmar's colonial past. One of the few times I heard a direct allusion to contemporary circumstances in Myanmar occurred when I brought up reservations, at which point one student cautiously noted that she had "heard" of Muslim camps in Rakhine state, and others nodded solemnly.¹¹ My effort to introduce literary theory into this discussion was not successful: I brought Paula Gunn Allen's "Kochinnenako in Academe" to contrast white, feminist, and native perspectives, but the theoretical language proved too challenging for the students.

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We also explored Joy Harjo's poem, "Perhaps the World Ends Here." Harjo focuses on the kitchen table and its centrality to the family and its culture. I asked students where their relatives gathered. As we converged on the topic of family conversations, I deliberately joked about how the students might find it strange that until recently, they were discouraged from having contact with U.S. culture, and suddenly, parents and faculty expected them to respect and listen to an American professor. This yielded considerable head nodding and a couple of stories. The cultural norm of respect for one's elders and teachers had not been altered, but many of those elders displayed changed attitudes to the presence of Americans.

Buddhist practice arose the final week, when we studied writings by recent U.S. immigrants as well as Asian Americans. Students explained allusions in Jane Hirshfield's poem, "Green-Striped Melons," including images of reincarnation and other Buddhist beliefs. Although I often took on the role of learner when we compared cultures, this activity dramatically reversed the classroom hierarchy, as I developed a more nuanced comprehension of a poem I had not particularly enjoyed before. Linguistic issues, pedagogy, and content came together in these discussions, as I realized how far we had moved from the stiffness and

formality of the earliest days, students' discomfort with sharing ideas, and their timidity about speaking in English.

Cultural differences reappeared on the final day. Several students came during my office hour for help with an essay they were assigned by another professor. We had recently read a poem by Rafael Campo, whose parents were refugees from Communist Cuba. The professor made a valiant effort to include this work, which was new to her, too, in the assignment, but as so often happened, some cultural significance was lost in "translation"—she asked the class to write an analysis of the poem using Marxist theory. I took a deep breath, imagined Campo's anti-Communist relatives' reactions to this assignment, reminded myself that I couldn't be critical of the Myanmar faculty member, and asked the students what they would do. By then, they were sufficiently accustomed to my methods that they were able to summarize for me their teacher's definition of Marxist theory, and we were then able to address images of oppression in the work. Even so, the students struggled, so I indicated that they would still be demonstrating their knowledge of the theory if their analysis showed how the poem failed to fulfill Marxist tenets.

Addressing cultural differences was equally important in analyzing our closing text, Naomi Shihab Nye's poem "Arabic." The speaker has returned to visit Jordan and engages in a conversation with a local who argues, "Until you speak Arabic, you cannot understand pain." My writing prompt began with the expression, "Until you speak Myanmar [language], you will not understand," and I asked students to complete the thought. Many included aspects of Myanmar culture such as food—*mohinga* (fish soup) or pickled tea leaves (a delicacy I never could savor). Others stuck with language and terms I did not know. Yet I was stunned by responses that referred to deeper topics, and most of all, by this sentence: "Until you speak Myanmar, you will not understand freedom." And the author was right. After my departure, many students "friended" me on Facebook. When one posted a photo of herself with some classmates taken shortly before my arrival, I teased, "You looked so innocent before you met me!" Her rejoinder captured the continuing uncertainty of political change in the nation as well as other aspects of our dialogue: "Yes, we've become artful since you left."

Notes

- 1 Naming the nation creates a dilemma. The U. S. government refers to the nation as Burma, while the citizens of the country generally refer to it as Myanmar. However, since the latter name is linked to the junta that ruled the country for decades, some locals also prefer the name Burma.
- 2 Linda Polman, *The Crisis Caravan: What's Wrong with Humanitarian Aid?* (New York: Picador, 2010), 48-62.
- 3 For a description of such behavior among NGO workers in Africa, see Maria Ericksson Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid* (London: Zed Books, 2005).
- 4 Lina Khor, *Human Rights Discourse in a Global Network: Books Beyond Borders* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2013).
- 5 Jack Donnelly, "The Relative Universality of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29. 2 (May, 2007): 281-306; Michael Ignatieff, "The Attack on Human Rights," *Foreign Affairs* 80. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2001): 102-116; Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003); Joseph R. Slaughter, *Human Rights, Inc.: The World Novel, Narrative Form, and International Law* (New York: Fordham UP, 2007); Rory Stewart and Gerald Knaus, *Can Intervention Work?* (New York: W. W. Norton), 2011.
- 6 Richard Falk, "Humanitarian Intervention: Elite and Critical Perspectives," *Global Dialogue* 7. 1-2 (Spring 2005). Accessed at <http://worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=329>. 24 June 2014.
- 7 Anthony Ogden, "The View from the Veranda: Understanding Today's Colonial Student," *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad* LXIV (Winter 2007-2008): 35-56.
- 8 Lara Farrar, "Myanmar Moves to Rebuild Its Universities, With US Help," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 18 March 2013. <http://chronicle.com/article/Myanmar-Takes-Steps-to-Rebuild/137943/>.
- 9 According to the faculty members with whom I worked, English is a feminized discipline in Myanmar universities. At the graduate level, English is mostly taught and studied by women.
 - 10 On my return, mention of this discussion in a university press release led to praise from John Trasviña, Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity U. S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, who is a proponent of social equality.
 - 11 Most of the camps in Rakhine state are occupied by members of the Rohingya ethnic minority.



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