



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.<sup>1</sup>

***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)<sup>2</sup>.

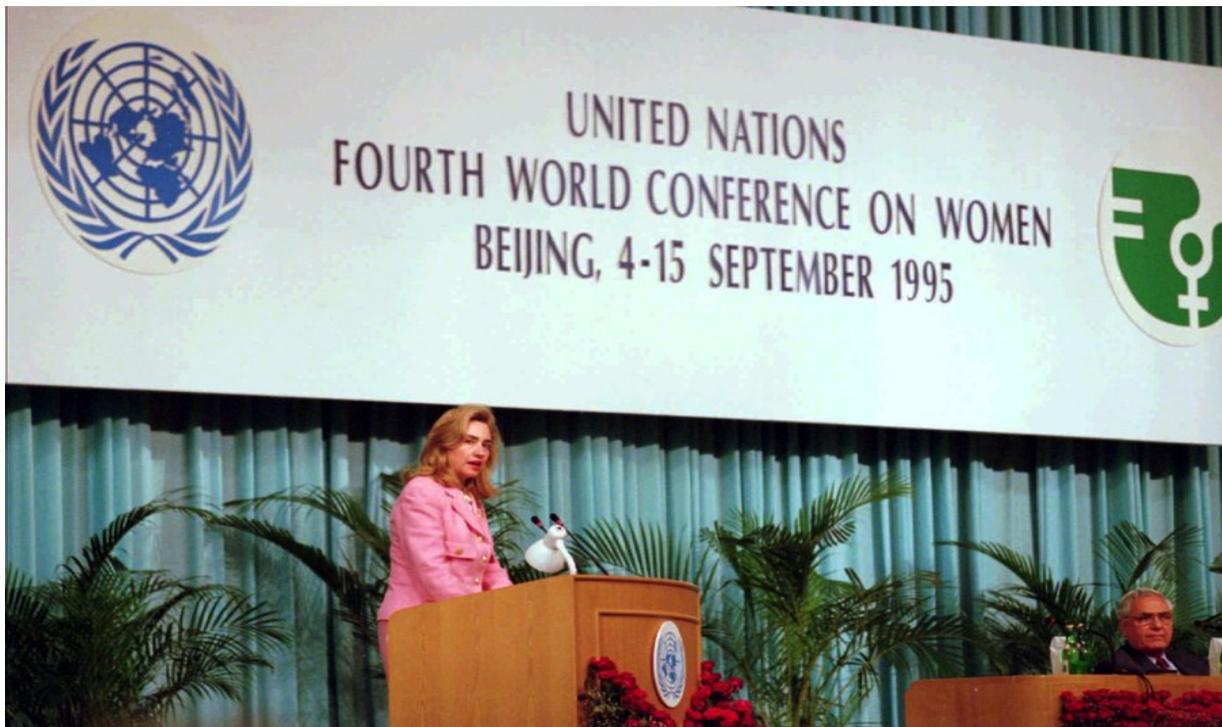
Patriotic education also reproduces stereotypical images of foreign nations that has a profound influence on how students construct cognitive schemas of racialized women in post-colonial contexts (Bracher 2013). In the post-9/11 era, the "woman question" becomes even more salient as a cause for war in attempts to rescue "brown women from brown men" (Spivak 1995) in Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> While much of the feminist literature on human rights has focused on the Muslim *hijab*<sup>4</sup> and female genital mutilation<sup>5</sup>, 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).<sup>6</sup> 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 mutually 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



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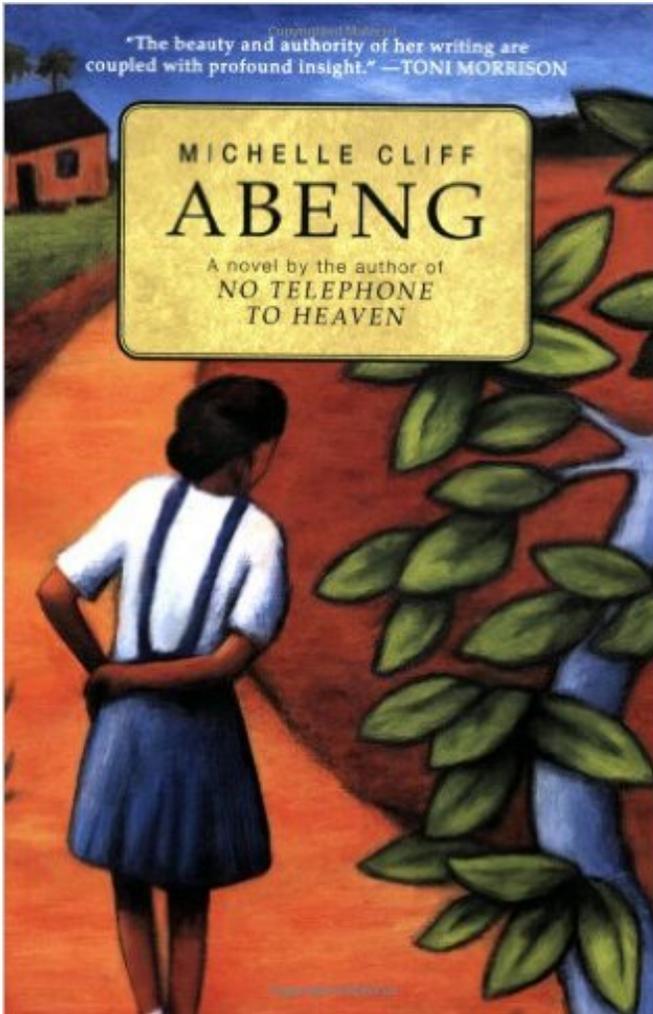
shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of color" (1991, 1244). The failure to deploy intersectionality and account for the "interlocking nature of oppressions" (Hill Collins S20) by the Global North, in general, and Western feminist organizations, in particular, influences a single-narrative for women's rights.<sup>7</sup> 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

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



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

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

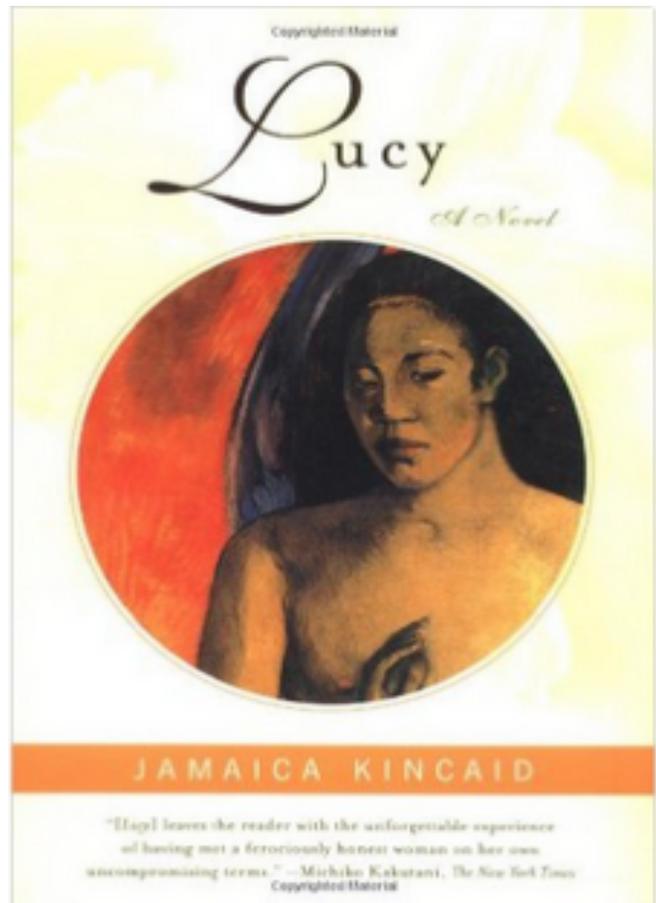
historiography that subsumes colonial and imperial histories (110). Together, my students and I extrapolate Ilmonen's thesis in relation to the specific histories divulged in *Abeng*. We contextualize how these histories counter hegemonic human rights discourse. As told from the perspective of a racialized 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 Bhabha 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).<sup>8</sup>

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.

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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.<sup>9</sup>

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

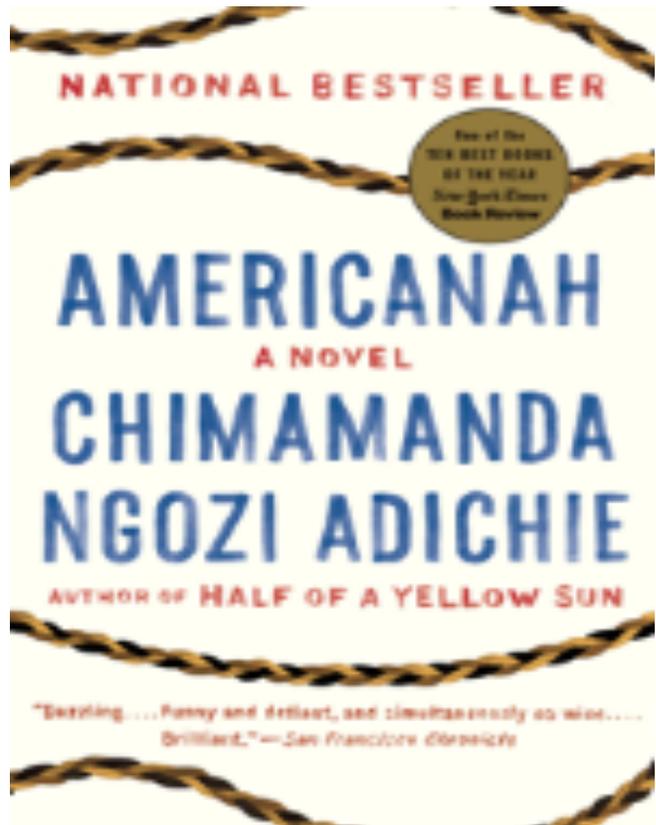
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE  
COURTESY OF SHANE MCCOY

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.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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



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 heteropatriarchal civil society and colonial education in the space of the United States, thus illustrating to undergraduate students how the United States 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.”<sup>12</sup> 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

**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 (Lomba 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.<sup>15</sup> 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 Haram 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 Haram “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 Haram’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 Haram 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.<sup>16</sup> 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."<sup>17</sup> 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,<sup>18</sup> *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).<sup>19</sup> *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').<sup>20</sup> 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 United States, what becomes "the real America"?
- Similar to *Lucy*, this section of the text [Chapters 8-18] represents the 'underbelly' 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

<sup>1</sup> 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).

<sup>2</sup> 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).

<sup>3</sup> 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*).

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> 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).

<sup>6</sup> 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 insiderness, 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.

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

<sup>8</sup> 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).

<sup>9</sup> 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/>).

<sup>10</sup> 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).

<sup>11</sup> 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).

<sup>12</sup> 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](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en#t-1164260)).

<sup>13</sup> For more, see “Humanising History- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie” on *YouTube.com* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Lx1BDdNF4w>).

<sup>14</sup> For more on culturally responsive pedagogy, see Geneva Gay’s *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice* (2010).

<sup>15</sup> 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).

<sup>16</sup> 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.’

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

<sup>18</sup> At the 2014 Hay Festival for Literature and Arts, Adichie counters foreign intervention as an effective method to combat Boko Haram, explaining that Nigeria “can solve our own damn problems,” as reported in numerous online news outlets (*TheNationOnline.net*).

<sup>19</sup> Pseudonyms have been adopted throughout my essay to protect students’ identities.

<sup>20</sup> 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).



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