

In Her Own Words

Thesis by

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1997

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY



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IN HER OWN WORDS

**Aung San Suu Kyi as an organic intellectual
addressing the context and content of dialogue
in Burma in transition to democracy**



**A thesis submitted to fulfil part of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts
with Honours degree**

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October, 1997

FTS THESIS

959.105092 AUN

30001004900298

Nichols, Denise L

In her own words : Aung San

Suu Kyi as an organic

intellectual addressing the

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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
IR	International Relations theory
NLD	National League for Democracy
SLORC	State Law and Order Restoration Council
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
USDA	Union Solidarity and Development Association

Chapter One: Introduction

Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner, was an absent figure from the world stage until the day she was freed from six years of detention. From July 20, 1989 she had been under house arrest. Even after convincingly winning a democratic election she had not been permitted to take up her rightful position as Prime Minister of Burma. Her democratic ideals cost her her freedom. She remains forcibly separated from her husband and two sons; she has been obliged to endure the imprisonment of most of the leaders of the party she had helped to create, the National League for Democracy (NLD). Upon her release the world saw an elegant, confident woman unbowed by her experience and showing hints of the unwavering will that sustained her through the years of imprisonment.

Her conciliatory message to the military authorities upon her release had immediate echoes of Nelson Mandela after his release from South African prisons. It also signalled her continued commitment to dialogue and national reconciliation which had been the clarion call, the central principle of her philosophy since she first entered the political scene in Burma during the tumultuous events of the non-violent uprising for democracy in 1988.

Her call for dialogue with the military generals of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is yet to be answered. Her words in 1995 remain true today: “people have to accept that we are nowhere near democracy yet. I’ve been released that’s all... the situation hasn’t changed” (1995:12).

For almost ten years the international campaign to support the movement for democracy in Burma has called for dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi, the NLD and

SLORC. Despite the efforts of governments, the United Nations and activists world wide, real face-to-face dialogue to achieve national reconciliation is not happening.

What is the message behind Aung San Suu Kyi's call for dialogue in Burma? Is there an underlying meaning that actors in the international campaign can respond to?

Aung San Suu Kyi has spent much of her own life reflecting on the social and political history of Burma. Closely tied to Burma's contemporary history, as the daughter of the national hero and liberator of Burma, General Aung San, she concludes that Burma is in an unfinished renaissance. It was begun by student activists in the 1920's, and further developed by intellectuals, artists and writers but their efforts were interrupted by the Second World War. The assassination of her father, active as a student, soldier and statesman on the eve of Independence in 1947, arrested the process until the present day (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995, 1997; Lintner, 1991). Her writing since she picked up her father's mantle of leadership has sought to articulate her father's vision for a united Burma but within her own unique political discourse (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1997; Oishi, 1997).

This thesis argues that Aung San Suu Kyi is an "organic intellectual" who offers a vision for an alternative democratic political system in Burma. She integrates the characteristics of modern democracy and the universal values of human rights within the religious and cultural precepts of Burmese society. In addition, she is adding to the political discourse in relation to Asian values and context. It is also argued that in global politics Aung San Suu Kyi demonstrates that the narrowness of Realism theory in International Relations (IR) theory is of limited value in enabling the international community to respond to the complex issues confronting communities currently under

authoritarian rule. Her own people focussed political philosophy based on universal values and moral principles underpinned by her deeply held Buddhist beliefs challenges the dominant power discourse in IR theory. This thesis was not fully able to take into account the possibilities for a transition to democracy in Burma. Suffice to say that recent theory on transitions from authoritarian rule points to Aung San Suu Kyi as a charismatic leader and her advocacy of dialogue as key ingredients in any future transition to democracy.

The thesis begins with a review of literature by Aung San Suu Kyi, books, monographs and articles about her providing an overview on the history of Burma, the role of intellectuals, and the movement for democracy since 1988. This material leads into a discussion of various interpretations of Gramsci's formation of organic intellectuals and his philosophy of praxis. This thesis extends Gramsci's theory beyond its Marxist context in order to analyse the political development of Aung San Suu Kyi. As well there is a review of Morgenthau's principles of Realism in IR theory. Using this approach and interpreting primary data, a qualitative analysis was made of a collection of nineteen speeches by Aung San Suu Kyi, to a variety of international conferences, universities or United Nations hearings. The aim of the analysis is to contextualise Aung San Suu Kyi as an organic intellectual leader in Burma and to hear the underlying message to the international community in her own words.

It is concluded that in the world of contemporary politics Aung San Suu Kyi makes a unique contribution as an organic intellectual in Burma. The underlying meaning of her message is that as a leader she needs to be taken seriously by the international community and granted the freedom to establish the basis for dialogue and a transition to

democracy in Burma. It is also concluded that in global politics she is a new force in providing an alternative to the paradigm of Realist politics.

Chapter Two: A Literature Review

Burma – its history and predicament:

Between 1920 and 1997 the history of Burma has been one of complex struggle: first for independence from colonial rule; second, for good self government, and third, to achieve national unity. The imposition of colonial rule and the resulting loss of language, culture and tradition, not only for the ethnic minorities but also for the dominant group of Burman people, has fuelled the underlying dilemma of restoring Burma as an independent nation with a political system that is Burmese in character (Mya Maung, 1991:68).

Aung San Suu Kyi was born into a tradition that connected her closely to Burma's historical struggles. Her father, General Aung San, who founded the Burma Independence Army during the 1930's in order to resist the British administration, had also been a radical student leader at Rangoon university. From being a student leader and founder of the armed forces he took on the responsibilities of leading Burma "in their hour of need to restore their national pride and honour" (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:37). At the height of his political achievement, on the eve of independence, Aung San was assassinated. With his life cut short this ensured that his memory lived on in the political culture of the Burmese people as well as most of the ethnic minorities (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:37). Aung San's leadership was in the tradition of Burma's hero kings, and with his martyrdom, his memory took on almost mythical proportions (Mya Maung, 1991:16; Lintner, 1990:22). Martyr's Day which commemorates Aung San's death is celebrated each year and his memory was inspirational during the spontaneous peoples'

movement across the nation in 1988, “everywhere pictures of Aung San, the hero of the independence struggle, were on prominent display” (Smith, 1991:6).

The early death of her father when she was only two years old, resulted in Aung San Suu Kyi’s passionate study, not only of his life, but of the influences on Burmese life by intellectuals and writers during the colonial administration. Her work brings new insights into the attempts by Burmese writers and thinkers to bring about a transition from colonialism to fruition in the way it had happened in India (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:135).

Intellectuals and their role in Burmese society

The major source at this point is *Freedom from Fear*, a collection of Aung San Suu Kyi’s writings and speeches up to 1995. It contains the essence of her thinking which points to her understanding of the role of intellectuals in Burmese society.

The chapter, “Intellectual Life in Burma and India under Colonialism”, a comparative study of intellectual developments in Burma and India has been described by some who work in the field of Burmese studies as “breaking new ground both in its method of approach and in its findings” (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:xviii). It is of particular relevance to this thesis in that her conclusions on the roles of elites in India and Burma reflect significantly on Gramsci’s theory of the role of organic intellectuals in political and social change.

Her study of intellectual life in both countries reveals a strong link between nationalism and intellectual developments in Burma and India under colonialism. India, where the caste system lent itself to acceptance of an intellectual elite which “sought a

harmonious union between western thought and Hindu philosophy in the search for nationalist ideals”, failed to realise the renaissance of nationalist ideals because “the gap between the elite and the common people was so large that the momentum of the renaissance could not be sustained” (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:11,18,31).

Burma, which, she argues, was a more egalitarian society, reacted in a totally different way to the impositions of the colonisers who required the development of elites to administer the country. There were no leaders to interpret the “alien values” and changes in traditional Burmese society and culture happened because the people themselves willed it.

The lack of an elite meant that there was little to guide and spur on the people to reach out for greater achievements. The younger generation of leaders who were attempting to find ways and means to independence appeared too late to bring about effective changes before the outbreak of the Second World War (1995:135).

In both cases, the relationship of the elites to the people prevented a successful renaissance of nationalism from taking place. This chapter is crucial to understanding Aung San Suu Kyi’s own approach to her political role. It shows her very keen understanding of the need for intellectual leaders to interpret political ideas within traditional cultural frameworks and that there needs to be close relationship between elites and the people if there is to be ideological change (Lintner, 1990:11). Her analysis affirms Gramsci’s theory of the role of the organic intellectual in social and political change.

Her chapter on “Literature and Nationalism in Burma”, demonstrates her interest in the relationship between literature and the social and political conditions of the people,

and informs her own approach to political leadership. She sees the relationship between literature and society as twofold. First, literature reflects current views and values, especially under colonial rule, when writers addressed themselves to a wider audience rather than narrow groups of intellectuals (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:157). Her perception of the importance of this role again alludes to Gramsci's theory of the development of the organic intellectual.

Secondly, literature shapes social and political opinion by giving verbal form to the feelings and aspirations of the people. Aung San Suu Kyi has demonstrated this herself through her addresses to the people from her garden following her release from house arrest. On these occasions she seeks to answer questions that are submitted to her by the people. She is articulating their feelings and aspirations which they cannot do themselves (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1997). She also takes their cause to the international stage through her weekly "Letter from Burma" in the Mainichi Shimbu Newspaper in Fukuoka, Japan. These have been published in a collection called, *Letters of Hope*, (1997). The publication has been too recent to be included as part of this discussion, but a reference to her writing in the Mainichi Shimbu is made in the analysis of her speeches further into the thesis.

These two chapters, therefore, are important, not only because they demonstrate the level of intellectual work in which she was engaged before her return to Burma, but because they inform us of her own understanding of the development of intellectuals and the critical role they must play in social and political change.

In the 1997 book, *Voice of Hope*, Aung San Suu Kyi takes this further. The NLD was formed by bringing several factions together. Aung San Suu Kyi headed the

“intellectuals” group of artists, musicians and lawyers. Her views echo Gramsci’s theory of intellectuals that was discussed in the first section of this thesis. She says,

In order to become an intellectual you have to have a questioning mind. I think everybody is capable of having a questioning mind, but not everybody who has one can be described as an intellectual. To be an intellectual also requires some kind of scholastic discipline – that’s essential. Intellectuals are very important in any society. Because they are the one, who, like in the quotation, are provoking people, opening them to new ideas, pushing them along to new heights. This is one of the tragedies of Burma – the intellectual is not allowed any place within society. And the real intellectual, of the kind described by Vaclav Havel, would not be allowed to survive in Burma. He would either have to repress his instincts as an intellectual, or he would have to leave Burma, or he would have to go and sit in prison (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1997:92).

This quotation takes into account Gramsci’s theory of the role of the organic intellectual in social change and his theory of praxis. Aung San Suu Kyi’s own response to the experience of repression will be taken up in the analysis of her speeches later in the thesis.

Despite the authoritarian regime’s attempts to quash all opposition, Aung San Suu Kyi puts her faith in the future of dialogue and reconciliation coming about because some in the regime will have questioning minds also (1997:92). This view of possibilities for change within the regime are also consistent with her emphasis on the responsibility to have a “questing mind” which is linked with her Buddhist beliefs (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1997:91). It is also linked with her view that the movement for democracy is very much a revolution of the spirit and it is at this level that there has to be change in order for space to open up for dialogue.

In a book published in 1997 by Mikio Oishi, Aung San Suu Kyi rejects the idea of a mediator (1997:6) but otherwise is concerned to discuss the attitudes necessary for dialogue rather than the steps needed for both sides to come to the table. This is discussed later in this section with reference to Oishi's discussion of dialogue in the context of a conflict resolution process.

Other outside observers such as Lintner also see in Aung San Suu Kyi a renaissance from the past. Following the death of General Aung San, the Burmese people struggled to fulfil the promise of his legacy. Under U Nu, who became Prime Minister in 1948, a period of fragile democracy ensued. U Nu had reluctantly taken up the leadership following the sudden death of Aung San and most of his cabinet colleagues. He was a brilliant intellectual and devout Buddhist who sought to unite the deeply divided country through a civil ideology based on a synthesis of Buddhism and socialism (Butwell, 1969:71,73). But he did not have either the infrastructure or international support to succeed. His policies were rejected by the ethnic minorities, by the major political force, the Burmese Communist Party, and ultimately by the army (Butwell, 1969: 92,103,168). U Nu was deposed in a military coup led by General Ne Win in 1962, once again "interrupting Burma's renaissance" (Lintner, 1990:11).

The continuation of that renaissance is seen in Aung San Suu Kyi herself. The line of intellectuals, including her father and U Nu, broken for over thirty years by a military regime, was re-emerging through the national uprising for democracy in which she would play a pivotal role (Lintner, 1990:31).

The movement for democracy

The revival of the people's aspirations for freedom and democracy occurred in 1988 and the Burmese people were to engage in their most difficult struggle since independence. This time, though, it was not against a colonising power but their own military government.

On 8 August 1988, anti-government demonstrations involving millions of people, broke out simultaneously in towns and cities all over the country. Thousands of people were killed as the army opened fire on demonstrators in Rangoon. On 9 August hundreds more were killed when police and army units opened fire on demonstrators in Sagaing. The President, Sein Lwin resigned and Dr. Maung Maung was appointed to take his place. Huge political gatherings and demonstrations continued throughout the country. On 18 September, the military, led by General Saw Maung, stepped in to shore up the regime and set up the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). Hundreds more were killed in confrontations between the military and the people. Demonstrators and dissidents began to flee to the Thai-Burma border to avoid arrest. They linked up with the ethnic insurgent groups and took their struggle into exile.

Aung San Suu Kyi arrived in Rangoon in April, 1988 to nurse her ailing mother. During the three months she nursed her mother, her home became the centre of political activity. She was caught up in the popular uprisings and agreed to address a huge gathering of several hundred thousand people at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. For the first time she captured the imagination of the people who saw in her the voice and words of her father (Klein, 1995:120-124; Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:xx-xxi).

At this stage she had no intention of forming a political party but saw herself, as a “kind of unifying force because of my father’s name.”(Aung San Suu Kyi,1995:201). Nevertheless, events moved quickly, and as the leader of the “intellectuals” group of artists, musicians and lawyers, she was involved in several factions joining together to form the NLD.

Authoritarianism in contrast to democracy

Very quickly, Aung San Suu Kyi began analysing the events happening around her and wrote about the nature of the authoritarian regime and the effect on the Burmese people’s political outlook. Despite many years of repression the regime has not succeeded in suppressing the political aspirations of the people. It sharpened their curiosity and thirst for political change. She says that peoples’ capacity to look to their traditional Buddhist values to identify the causes of the social, spiritual and economic decline of the country despite being cut off from modern political thought for over twenty five years, supports her argument that the people are ready for change. Democracy, she argues, although little understood, appealed to the “common sense notion of what was due to a civilised society” (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:168). This also has echoes of Gramsci’s organic intellectual who identifies with the common sense of the mass. Gramsci, is of course, wanting to change the *common sense* of the mass, Aung San Suu Ky identifies that the people already want an alternative hegemony; that it exists as the unarticulated aspirations of the people; it needs only to be liberated and fulfilled by democratic processes. She does not shy away from the fact that the struggle for democracy is “fraught with danger” because change is anathema to authoritarianism.

Revolution of the spirit

She then firmly places the Burmese movement for democracy on a different level from being about merely the pursuit of power. She says it is a movement for a change in values. It is a revolution of the spirit. It is a political and spiritual movement for change based on experiment, innovation and evaluation of old and new ideas. It will need

a liberal integrated spirit to meet intellectual challenges and a capacity to meet sustained mental strife. The movement for democracy is not about an appetite for power, revenge and destruction but is based on respect for freedom, peace and justice (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:179).

The quintessential revolution is that of the spirit. She draws on the words of her father, Aung San and Gandhi to illuminate her understanding of human nature as spiritual, which gives people the strength to stand against oppressive ideologies. She elaborates on the qualities of the spirit that will be called on in the struggle. This is a prophetic word that she will be called on to fulfil herself Klein records the depth of her suffering,

Sometimes I didn't even have enough money to eat, I became so weak from malnourishment that my hair fell out, and I couldn't get out of bed. I was afraid that I had damaged my heart. I thought that I would die of heart failure, not starvation at all. Then my eyes started to go bad. I developed spondylosis, which is a degeneration of the spinal column. But they never got me up here (pointing to her head) (Klein 1995:120-144).

Mikio Oishi in his monograph *Aung San Suu Kyi's Struggle: Its Principles and Strategy* (1997), captures the essence of the underlying principles and philosophy of

Burma's democracy movement from the writings and activities of Aung San Suu Kyi since her release from house arrest in 1995. Oishi explores the strategy of Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD that is implicit in her writing and activities by applying a conflict resolution approach. Having identified the underlying strategy he enlarges on possibilities for strengthening the strategy in order to advance democracy in Burma. He describes the strategy of the democracy movement as creating space for conflict resolution (Oishi, 1997:28). He concludes that dialogue, the favoured approach to achieving a transition to democracy by the democratic movement, is happening, but indirectly (Oishi, 1997:41).

Both of Oishi's propositions are supportive of this thesis. First, the purpose of the thesis is to examine the meaning behind the content of Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches to the international community and secondly, to examine the role of the organic intellectual in creating space in which political and social change can occur. Oishi demonstrates through his conflict resolution approach, that indirect dialogue is occurring already.

Implications for the international community

Historically, Burma's domestic struggles had been just that: an internal engagement to rid itself of its colonial masters. Following the transition to independence, Burma reacted to its colonial experience by emphasising its self reliance and joining the non-aligned group in the United Nations (Butwell, 1969:174). This approach to the international community was in the spirit of Aung San, who, even in the lead up to independence, indicated that he did not look to international propaganda and assistance for their cause. "The main work, I thought, must be done in Burma which must be the

mobilisation of the masses for the national struggle” (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1995:12). Aung San Suu Kyi, too is mindful of Burma’s need to be self-reliant, but not cut off as in the past (1997:69). The long term impact of Burmese autarky since 1962 had a devastating effect both domestically and internationally. Steinberg in his discussion on the complex causes underlying Burma’s current economic crises includes the policy of isolation. He describes how “the fear of foreign economic domination has persisted beyond the reality of external conditions” (Steinberg, 1990:58). It is a fear that is bound up with loss of identity and culture for the sake of modernity and driven from the top of Burma’s hierarchy. At the domestic level Steinberg says the central control of all economic and social matters has prevented economic reforms from succeeding (Steinberg, 1990:4).

It was not surprising that following Independence Burma adopted a foreign policy of “positive neutrality”, but its long term effect of isolating Burma in the geo-political sphere was not U Nu’s intention. Prime Minister U Nu undertook a careful policy of non-alignment based on motives of peaceful co-existence. It was the foreign policy of neutrality that had a major impact on domestic policy. Conversely, the internal difficulties between the ethnic groups and U Nu’s government also affected foreign policy (Butwell, 1969:171). Burma was caught between needing to rebuild its economy following the devastation of war, balancing their relationship with their neighbours, India, China and Thailand and issues of international security between the emerging super powers (Liang, 1991:59). U Nu chose a middle way, placing Burma’s hopes on the United Nations organisation.

When we joined the United Nations, we were not prompted by considerations of financial aid, medical aid, educational missions to plan our educational program

and other such benefits likely to accrue from membership. These things, however desirable, are immaterial. What was foremost in our minds was the expectation of the U.N. assistance when our country is subjected to aggression by a stronger power. We have pinned our faith to the United Nations organisation on this score (Liang, 1991:59-60).

This emphasis on the United Nations as one of the cornerstones of Burma's foreign policy goes some way to explaining the prominence given by Aung San Suu Kyi in the speeches that are the source of primary data in this thesis, to the role of the United Nations in solving Burma's current political situation.

Burma's international isolation came about when General Ne Win turned the policy of positive neutralism on its head. He actively pursued a policy of negative neutralism starting within Burma itself (Liang, 1991:xi). His Revolutionary Council expelled all western institutions and the "ill-conceived nationalisation policies saw the flight of some 300,000 'Indians' and 100,000 'Chinese' from the country" (Smith, 1990:219). They took with them wealth that was crucial to the economy. The disruption to society was furthered in May, 1964 by the first 'demonetisation' of Burmese currency causing thousands of ordinary citizens to lose their hard earned savings and spawning a new generation of ethnic insurgents overnight (Smith, 1990:219).

The effects of political and economic isolation from the international community continued to play havoc with the domestic economy until 1988, when another round of demonetisation by Ne Win caused widespread unrest leading to a national movement for democracy. The violent crackdown on the public demonstrations hardly penetrated the international media but when the government arrested Aung San Suu Kyi, the daughter of Burma's national hero, it brought unwelcome attention from the international community. Burma's military regime became the target of worldwide condemnation.

Articles in the *Far East Economic Review*, describe how foreign governments, international agencies and human rights groups withdrew aid and continued to criticise the military regime until Aung San Suu Kyi's release in 1995 (Lintner, 1995:14). Ne Win's attempt to protect Burma from the world had rebounded by making it an international pariah.

Since her release from house arrest in 1995, Aung San Suu Kyi has continued to be a problem for Burma's military regime. In *Voice of Hope* (1997) Aung San Suu Kyi is compared to Martin Luther King, Václav Havel, Nelson Mandela and Gandhi in order to compare the experience in Burma to other non-violent struggles for freedom. In the context of Realist IR power discourse she raises the issue of a leader who can be understood within the Idealist tradition. Strategically, her emphasis in Burma that the movement for democracy is a revolution of the spirit and her appeals to the international community based on universal values create a problem for the international community (Falk, 1992).

Chapter Three: A Theoretical Overview

This chapter gathers together three theoretical approaches to the issue of Aung San Suu Kyi's role as the leader of the democracy movement in Burma and the place of dialogue in the transition to democracy in Burma. Gramsci's theory of organic intellectuals and philosophy of praxis enables us to appreciate her emergence and significance as a national leader of the movement for democracy in Burma. As an international leader she is a contradiction to Realist discourse which has been the dominant paradigm in IR theory since the 1920's. The work of O'Donnell and Schmitter on comparative transitions from authoritarian rule provides an innovative framework that allows us to consider the possibilities for a transition to democracy in Burma through Aung San Suu Kyi's approach.

Organic Intellectuals

Antonio Gramsci's theory of the organic intellectual and his philosophy of praxis are elaborated in his *Prison Notebooks* (Gramsci, 1971). They provide a helpful perspective on the role of Aung San Suu Kyi in the democracy movement in Burma. As the following review of literature will demonstrate, Gramsci was primarily concerned with achieving a socialist revolution, but it is his development of a theoretical understanding of transitions for political change that, if taken out of its specialist Marxist context and applied more broadly, can help explain Aung San Suu Kyi's role in the call for a transition to democracy in Burma. Aung San Suu Kyi is an organic intellectual in Gramsci's terms and through the study and analysis of her praxis it will be demonstrated

that Gramsci's theory can also be applied to the religio-cultural domain which is unique to Burma.

In *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci argues that intellectuals are the organisers and leaders of society who have responsibility for providing the understandings around which society is organised. Historically, he argues, the classical world, feudal lords, the aristocracy and capitalist society have all had their experts who gave each group "homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields" (Gramsci, 1971:5). The ecclesiastics, who were initially the intellectuals of the landed aristocracy, broadened their role to such an extent that they became a distinct group of their own, reinforcing the dominant hegemony of, but separated from the landed aristocracy, the group whose views they represented (Gramsci, 1971:9). Gramsci categorises these intellectuals as 'traditional intellectuals' and recognises their role in reinforcing the hegemony of the group they represent on the common people.

But, he argues, should this be the only description of an intellectual? Following through his argument that "all men are intellectuals, but not all men have the function of intellectuals", Gramsci concludes that a person, who by virtue of his experience of and sharing in the activities of the common man, introduces an alternative critique of the dominant ideology is an "organic intellectual" (Gramsci, 1971:9). It is Gramsci's concept of praxis that is critical to his definition of "organic intellectual". It is also crucial for his understanding of the role of the intellectual in social and political transitions that allows us to examine the role of Aung San Suu Kyi as an organic intellectual.

In an article written in 1968 in *The Australian Left Review*, Alistair Davidson elaborates on Gramsci's view of the role of intellectuals. Davidson's article is focussed on his particular audience and engaged with the time in which it is written. His reflections on Gramsci's view of the role of intellectuals is firmly placed within the social revolution yet to come and he takes an instrumental view of intellectuals in this process. If we suspend both Davidson and Gramsci's aim of achieving a socialist revolution, Davidson's analysis of the role of the organic intellectual is useful in understanding Aung San Suu Kyi's role.

Davidson establishes that Gramsci believes intellectuals were the social groups most responsible for social change (1968:44). Gramsci argues that it is the relationship of man to the machine and not vice versa which can be revolutionary. Therefore, rationality, intelligence, ideologies and ideas are most important and are provided by the intellectuals (Davidson,1968:45). Functions of society are intellectually legitimated with each level of legitimation becoming more enveloping and comprehensive as the levels get higher. Finally, there is the all embracing philosophy or *the Weltanschauung* that is embraced by the whole society. The intellectuals thus act as the mediators of the realities of the predominant ideology into values (Davidson,1968:47).

The article goes on to examine Gramsci's methodology by which intellectuals will influence the masses and describes the process of political transition to which both Davidson and Gramsci are committed. It can be argued that Aung San Suu Kyi is Gramsci's organic intellectual, whose rationality, intelligence and ideas are directed at establishing a new *Weltanschauung*. Her insights about a new political reality which expresses the aspirations of the Burmese people come from sharing their experiences,

their traditions and values, from being at one with the Burmese people in their struggle against the government.

Davidson's discussion about the role of the intellectual in ideological change is based on a discussion of class and is therefore not germane to this thesis. It is only when we arrive at Davidson's conclusions that can we see Gramsci's methodologies and analysis depend on Gramsci's concept of knowledge. Gramsci, Davidson says, "believes that man, made 'self-conscious', will be able to make his own destinies within the limits of what he perceives as potential" (1968:56).

Gramsci's theoretical concept of knowledge is an argument which can be applied more broadly to intellectuals like Aung San Suu Kyi who are not engaged in a social revolution but are engaged in a critique of the dominant hegemony of a military dictatorship through her own "self-consciousness". Davidson's revolution is based on meeting the needs of people by economic and material means. Aung San Suu Kyi's political philosophy is based on fulfilling the deepest needs of people first.

Alistair Davidson writing in his book, *Antonio Gramsci*, elaborates on the philosophy of praxis (1977:94). Davidson provides an overview of the philosophical and intellectual influences on Gramsci which had been with him through "the miseries of Sardinia in 1911", the elections of 1913 and his extensive involvement with the workers in the Turin factories in 1919-20. This paper is a detailed study in chronological form of Gramsci's involvement in the Turin factory councils and the development of his role as an intellectual who participated and shared the experiences of the workers. Davidson describes how Gramsci became aware of the ways change in "consciousness" can be effected – not from the educative process (which Gramsci had previously believed to be

the way change was brought about) but through experiencing change or being involved in changing the world practically (Davidson, 1977:155). At this stage of Gramsci's experience he had not written about the thematic analysis of his experiences. This was to come later through his *Prison Notebooks* (1971). Davidson's chapter on Gramsci does highlight Gramsci's practical experience on which his later theoretical conclusions are based. Davidson, however, locates his discussion of praxis within Marxist frameworks rather than within Gramsci's own philosophy of praxis that he discusses in the *Prison Notebooks* (1971).

James Joll in *Gramsci* (1977), adds to the discussion of the organic intellectual from the starting point of Gramsci's belief in the power of the will (1977:88). Joll explores Gramsci's theory of the organic intellectual with an argument based on the capacity of humans to affect their development and surroundings by their understandings of the historical situation in which they find themselves. Joll believes Gramsci's prison experience led him to conclude that "one can arrive at a certain serenity even in the clash of the most absurd contradictions and under the pressure of the most implacable necessity" (1977:89), but (and here Gramsci's conclusions differ from Aung San Suu Kyi's),

One can only reach it if one succeeds in thinking 'historically', dialectically, and identifying one's own task with intellectual dispassionateness... In this sense... one can and therefore one must be 'one's own doctor' (Joll, 1977:89).

Like Gramsci, Aung San Suu Kyi during six years under house arrest was forced to draw on her inner strength, and the impact that it had on her physically, emotionally and spiritually, will be discussed further as part of the analysis of her speeches.

Joll examines Gramsci's theory of traditional and organic intellectuals, differentiating them by saying that "while the 'traditional intellectuals' are those we normally think of as the people who perform tasks of intellectual leadership in a given society, the 'organic' intellectuals are somehow more closely bound to the class to which they belong" (1977:91). Joll manages to conclude that because intellectuals have a role in revolutionary change, traditional intellectuals become organic intellectuals if they have "understood the direction in which society is moving" or are genuine organic intellectuals if they are "thrown up by the revolutionary class itself to serve as leaders". Joll then argues that,

The intellectual, organically linked to the revolutionary class, becomes a member of the political party which provides the leadership for that class. His role is essentially a practical one (1977:93).

Joll sees the problem of linking the intellectual to the ordinary people and goes on to discuss Gramsci's philosophy of praxis. Here he quotes Gramsci:

The position of the philosophy of praxis is the antithesis of that of catholicism. It does not tend to leave the 'simple' in their primitive philosophy of common sense, but rather to lead them to a higher conception of life (1977:94).

Joll has separated the development of the organic intellectual from praxis which I argued earlier cannot be done. It is praxis that creates the organic intellectual, not simply an intellectual being in a class in order to organise the masses behind an ideology.

Two things suggest that Joll's application of Gramsci's theory is inadequate.

First, historically, intellectuals who became members of the party in totalitarian states in

Germany and the USSR in the 1930's and 1940's were eventually eliminated because they were dangerous to the maintenance of the hegemony of the party (Arendt, 1967:339). Secondly, the organic intellectual is one who provides the critique of the prevailing hegemony as a result of their own struggle.

Vaclav Havel and Aung San Suu Kyi are two examples of what it means to be an organic intellectual. Each has been squeezed for space in which to express themselves by authoritarian regimes. For Havel, it was at first as a playwright and a member of the artistic community that his freedoms were limited. As he challenged the authorities in the world of literature he gradually integrated his experiences into wider social and political concerns. He served two prison sentences charged with dissent before the authoritarian regime in Czechoslovakia collapsed. In a speech on democracy and authority he says, "In an authoritarian regime the only room left in which to exercise responsibility, is a prison cell." (Havel, 1995). It was his experience of the total repression of his intellectual and artistic freedoms that caused Havel to develop counter philosophical and political positions to the regime in Czechoslovakia (Havel, 1989). The organic intellectual develops as a result of his practical experiences. Aung San Suu Kyi's development as an organic intellectual in Gramsci's terms will be discussed in the review of her writing and in the analysis of her speeches.

However, Joll's discussion of the important role of intellectuals in establishing a "civil hegemony" is relevant to Aung San Suu Kyi's role. "To create such a will and form a 'popular national bloc' which will enable a new society to emerge, it is essential that the intellectual leaders do not lose touch with the masses, and that their ideas are subjected to the test of common sense" (Joll, 1977:101). Gramsci himself, goes even

further to say that this bond between intellectuals and the people needs to be one of passion and emotion,

History and politics cannot be made without passion, without this emotional bond between intellectuals and the people-nation. In the absence of such a bond the relations between intellectuals and the people-nation are reduced to contacts of a purely bureaucratic, formal kind; the intellectuals become a caste or a priesthood (Joll, 1977:101).

This passion and emotional attachment to the people, becomes a measurable mark of the organic intellectual.

Anne Showstack Sassoon (1982) in *Approaches to Gramsci*, says that to understand Gramsci's entire political theory one has to answer the political question of the intellectuals (1982:60). Her approach to Gramsci's notion of the "organic intellectual" is to link it with the function of classes in the world of production and to the different technical functions that the intellectuals perform in the state. She restricts her interpretation of Gramsci's theory to a socio-economic context, "the concept of organic intellectual has a precise sense only from the point of view of the totality described by the socio-economic formation as a whole" (1982:63). Her concrete political analysis of intellectuals is based on "the social division of labour which offers a real basis for a materialist and class analysis of intellectuals." The formation of the organic intellectuals of the working class makes sense and is possible only in connection with the transition to socialism. Organic intellectuals will arise when a new social organisation of knowledge is elaborated from below: coming directly from the world of production and from the new relationship that the producers have with the social organisation of knowledge (Sassoon,

1982:64). This interpretation means that economics and production shape the new organic intellectual not praxis. It does not take into account the organic intellectual occurring as a response to a new “self-consciousness”. Her conclusion that the organic intellectual can only be understood within the context of a transition to socialism, restricts the organic intellectual to an economic and political model. The limitation of this interpretation is demonstrated when Aung San Suu Kyi, Nelson Mandela and Vaclav Havel who are, arguably, organic intellectuals within Gramsci’s definition, offer alternative models of social and political transition based on culture, law and spirituality (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991; Mandela, 1992; Havel, 1989).

However, it is Sassoon’s idea that “the creation of the new intellectual category evidently has the function of a process”, that is interesting to this thesis despite it being located within an economic framework (1982:65). The process in Sassoon’s paper is two-fold; first in economic terms to separate scientific knowledge from capital and to re-appropriate productive forces by the producers; and secondly, at the political level, to overturn the relations between ruler and ruled. “The whole science and art of politics for the working class therefore are based on a perspective of a transition to a new society, of a new concept of revolution” (Sassoon, 1982:66).

While this thesis is not concerned with the process of socialist revolution, Sassoon’s conclusion that intellectuals have a role to play in transition to a new society is a concept that will be discussed in relation to a transition to democracy in Burma and Aung San Suu Kyi’s role as an intellectual in that process.

Transitions from authoritarian rule

In her paper, “Rethinking Regime Change” (1990), Nancy Bermeo provides a substantial review of the work of O’Donnell and Schmitter on comparative studies of transitions from authoritarian rule which is contained in three volumes with a fourth focussing on their conclusions (O’Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). These volumes contain substantial comparative research based on country cases studies in Southern Europe and Latin America from which O’Donnell and Schmitter draw their tentative conclusions. The theoretical frameworks which they develop will be used in this thesis to discuss the role of Aung San Suu Kyi and “dialogue” as a tactic for achieving a transition to democracy in Burma. Bermeo suggests that “political learning”, which she draws out from the studies as being the process through which authoritarian leaders change, and which involves values and decisions of political leaders, requires much more interdisciplinary research. The subject of this thesis, therefore, is relevant to understanding the nature of transitions from authoritarian regimes to democracy (1990:373).

The reason that O’Donnell and Schmitter’s research is also of interest to this thesis is the authors’ conclusion that whether democracy occurs at all will be largely determined by negotiations (Bermeo, 1990, 362). Indeed they argue that “it seems fruitless to search for some international factor or context which can reliably compel authoritarian rulers to experiment with liberalisation, much less which can predictably cause their regimes to collapse.” Not only do the authors conclude that “domestic factors play a predominant role in the transition”, they urge us to begin our study of domestic factors by analysing the behaviour of individual decision makers. Individual heroics may

in fact be key: the “catalyst” for the process of democratisation comes, not from a debt crisis or rampant inflation or some major crisis of industrialisation but “from gestures by exemplary individuals who begin testing the boundaries of behaviour” (1990:361).

The emphasis on individual actors is important in terms of methodological approach in looking at regime change. It de-emphasises the importance of an international economy while bringing domestic issues much more into focus. It is a break away from the traditional structuralist approach to analysing breakdown in political systems. Bermeo goes on later to question the authors’ judgement in de-emphasising the role of economic crises as much as they have in their conclusions (Bermeo, 1990:361).

The political implications of focussing on elites is on what tactics work in achieving change from an authoritarian regime. The tactical message from the research is: “play it safe”. Playing it safe means presenting moderate images and demands, opting for gradualism and cooperating with the regime softliners (Bermeo,1990:362). The authors tactical insights are reminiscent of Dahl’s *Polyarchy*, which also implies that gradualism, moderation and compromise are key to a successful democratic transition (Bermeo,1990:363).

The analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi’s speeches will show that she does not fit into this aspect of O’Donnell and Schmitter’s observations.

Bermeo weighs up O’Donnell and Schmitter’s conclusions with materials presented by authors in the collection of case studies. She concludes that both the methodological and tactical conclusions are well supported by the case studies of Robert Kaufman’s theoretical work, Jose Maravall and Julian Santamaria’s case study of the Spanish transition, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Brazil) who all emphasise the tactical

message of moderation and gradualism. Of particular interest and disappointment to Bermeo, is that virtually none of the surviving transitions to democracy that are discussed in the collection combine a significant redistribution of political and economic resources as a result of the political changes. Aung San Suu Kyi picks up this point and offers her own insights as to why democracies, as well as other forms of government, fail to deliver economic reforms once in power. It is part of her overall political philosophy which emerges from the analysis of her speeches and will be discussed further in this thesis.

Bermeo draws conclusions of her own about the significance of economic forces in transitions. She disagrees with the authors about the significance of the international economy saying that “the histories of successful and failed transitions suggest O’Donnell and Schmitter underrate the role of structural incentives and constraints” (1990:366). She goes on to demonstrate that economic crises accompany every transformation under review in this collection but concedes that the pattern suggests that “economic crises might be a necessary though not a sufficient incentive for the breakdown of authoritarian regimes” (Bermeo,1990:366). She holds the view that O’Donnell and Schmitter could be more certain about structural effects on regime change than they offer.

The research establishes that neither economic crisis nor a loss of legitimacy is a sufficient cause for a regime to disintegrate. Adam Przeworski highlights this point by arguing that “what matters for the stability of any regime is not the legitimacy of this particular system of domination but the presence or absence of preferable alternatives” (Bermeo,1990:368). What the collection shows us is that class analysis, economic analysis and other forms of structural analysis fail us in predicting whether specific opposition leaders will succeed in choosing and presenting democracy as a “preferable”

model of government. Therefore the emergence of democracy as a preferable alternative does largely depend on the “values and decisions” of opposition leadership.

Bermeo concludes that the collection

Forces us to recognise that the methods that have been so comfortable in the past only provide a piece of the redemocratisation puzzle. We can use structuralist analysis to understand why regimes are threatened, but we must use other sorts of analysis to explain how and why elites succeed in projecting democracy as a preferable alternative (1990:368).

As this thesis is also exploring dialogue as a tactic in transitions, the examination of political parties that comes out of this study is also important. Party leaders are the key players in the transition gamble. They set the stakes; they work out the compromises; they act as the forces for moderation that the successful transition process requires (Bermeo, 1990:369). Parties are ultimately the institutions that influence the “democratic compromise” most. The collection leaves little doubt that parties serve as institutions of social control.

Another major factor in transitions is to do with value changes by the authoritarian leaders. O’Donnell argues that “the ideological ‘prestige’ of political democracy in Latin America is now higher than it has ever been before” (Bermeo, 1990:372). He attributes this to two factors. First, “the failure of authoritarian regimes and their unprecedented repression and violence.” and secondly, the discrediting of groups which seek a violent and immediate route to change (Bermeo, 1990:372).

Both of these factors have relevance to the situation in Burma. First, there is documented evidence of continuing violence and repression by the military regime which

initially took power in order to unify the country and establish a political program of Burmese socialism. Secondly, the regime has politically and economically mismanaged Burma to the extent that the non-violent approach of Aung San Suu Kyi and her articulation of Burmese democracy, has already achieved “ideological prestige” and electoral support within the country.

Bermeo points out that the case studies refer to the process of change which she calls “political learning”. In the research under examination it refers to the critical changes in the way people view politics. For the purpose of this thesis I would like to apply this concept to the possibility that military regime in Burma could change in their critical understanding of politics.

It is this question of “learning” that is of particular interest to the question of dialogue as a tactic in the transition to democracy in Burma, and whether the content of that dialogue presents the face of moderation, gradualism and compromise that O’Donnell and Schmitter argue is the basis of transitions to democracy from authoritarian regimes.

As O’Donnell and Schmitter point out from the outset, they are not offering prescriptive conditions for transitions from authoritarian regimes. But their tentative conclusions, that transitions to democracy “are profoundly affected by the values and decisions of political leaders” and that “political learning” can take place, allows the role of Aung San Suu Kyi and the call for ‘dialogue’ to be examined in the light of these theoretical considerations (Bermeo, 1990:368).

The third area of theoretical consideration which provides some insight into Aung San Suu Kyi’s place as a leader within the international community is in the area of

International Relations. The focus of this thesis is to examine her speeches to the international community in order to draw conclusions about the role of dialogue and the meaning behind her call for dialogue, in a transition to democracy in Burma.

Scott Burchill in his chapter on “Realism and Neo-realism” discusses the contribution of E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau who are acknowledged as the founding fathers of the traditional Realism in IR theory. Both Carr and Morgenthau begin their approach to Realism by defining their positions in opposition to what they see as the influence, if not the dominance of the liberal-utopian perspective (Burchill and Linklater, 1996:74).

In 1939 Carr wrote his critique of the impact of liberal “utopianism” which emerged following the devastation of the First World War in an effort to eliminate war as an instrument for securing peace. Carr was critical of the approach that focussed on how the world *ought to be* rather than *how it is* and wanted a more rigorous, analytical approach recognising that international order should be shaped by the realities of global power not morality. “In neglecting the importance of power as a consideration in international relations, Carr was convinced that the architects of the Versailles peace had set the world on an inevitable course to further conflict” (Burchill and Linklater, 1996:73).

It is Morgenthau however, who in 1948 consolidates the principles of Realism in IR theory in his book *Politics Among Nations*. It is against the six principles of Morgenthau’s political realist theory as summarised by Burchill, that Aung San Suu Kyi’s position as an organic intellectual can be clearly brought into relief

Morgantheau's six principles include:

1. Politics is governed by *objective laws* which have their root in human nature.
2. The key to understanding international politics is the concept of *interest* defined in terms of power.
3. The forms and nature of state power will vary in time, place and context but the concept of interest remains consistent. The political, cultural and strategic environment will largely determine the form of power a state chooses to exercise.
4. Universal *moral principles* do not guide state behaviour, though state behaviour will certainly have moral and ethical implications.
5. There is no *universally* agreed set of moral principles.
6. Intellectually, the political sphere is *autonomous* from every other sphere of human concern, whether they be legal, moral or economic.

These principles will be referred to in the analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches and it will be demonstrated that, as in the domestic situation, so also in the international arena, Aung San Suu Kyi is an organic intellectual who challenges the hegemonic paradigms of political theory.

Aung San Suu Kyi challenges Realist IR theory by introducing a moral position on the basis of universal values. This position is an affront to states whose behaviour is traditionally guided by self interest defined in terms of power, whether military or economic. It will be seen in the analysis of her speeches that she poses a problem for

states in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) block who have given credibility to SLORC, Burma's military regime who hold onto power against the expressed will of the people. Her call for recognition and the ongoing violation and repression of the military regime will continue to pose a problem for the region.

This thesis will show that Aung San Suu Kyi's own position in IR theory can be most clearly understood in relation to leaders such as Václav Havel, Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi who have all challenged and succeeded in changing the prevailing political ideology within their own countries.

Chapter Four: Methodology

This chapter presents documents that represent a series of written papers, addresses, and transcripts of video presentations by Aung San Suu Kyi. They cover the period from 1992 until 1997. They were all presented in English for international audiences. The next section identifies the documents and describes the method to analyse them in relation to the central thesis of her organic leadership.

The Documents

Table 1 lists the documents with a key to their order of presentation.

Table 1: Aung San Suu Kyi's Speeches and Addresses

<i>Date</i>	<i>Title of Speech</i>	<i>Reference Number</i>
May 14, 1992	International Human Rights Law Group Award Acceptance Speech, Washington, DC	1
June 13, 1992	Welcoming the Arrival of the Olympic Torch, Spain	2
May 19, 1993	Towards a True Refuge: The Eighth Joyce Pearce Memorial Lecture. The Refugee Studies Program, Oxford, UK	2A
November 21, 1994	Empowerment for a Culture of Peace and Development, World Commission on Culture and Development, Manila, The Philippines	3
August 31, 1995	Keynote Opening Address NGO Forum on Women, Beijing, China	4
November 21, 1995	1995 IRC Freedom Award Acceptance Speech, USA	5
October 15, 1996	Videotaped Address to the Mainichi Newspapers on the conferring of the Japanese Newspapers Publishers and Editors Association Award in Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan	6
September 3-4, 1995	Opening Message to the Burma Seminar organised by The Forum of Democratic Leaders in the Asia-Pacific, Seoul, Korea	7
November 15, 1995	Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding Video acceptance speech, New Delhi, India	8
January 4, 1996	Message to the International Convention for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma, India	9
April 17, 1996	Speech by video to a press conference held in the Human Rights Commission, Geneva, Switzerland	10

September 22, 1996	Video address to the General Systems Preferences Hearings, Brussels, Belgium	11
January 26, 1997	Commencement Address upon receiving Honorary Doctorate of Laws Degree in absentia, American University, U.S.	12
February 21, 1997	Address upon receiving Honorary Doctorate of Letters in absentia, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia	13
May 29, 1997	Video message to the leaders of ASEAN	14
1997	Letter from Burma No. 3, Mainichi Shimbu Newspapers, Japan	15
April 8, 1997	Video address to the 53 rd session of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Geneva, Switzerland	17
April 24, 1997	Address on receiving the Degree of Doctor of Laws <i>honoris causa</i> , University of Natal, Natal, South Africa	18
January 3-7, 1997	Keynote address for an International conference held at Sia Plateau, Panchgani, Maharashtra, India	19

Selection of documents

The documents were chosen from the period May, 1992 to May, 1993, the earlier stage of Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest period when she was permitted some communication with the outside world through her family. These are numbers 1-2A in Table 1. A period of eighteen months passed before her next paper in November, 1994, an address to a meeting of the World Commission on Culture and Development held in Manila (Number 3). There was another period of silence until July, 1995, immediately following her release from house arrest. Speech number 5, is her video keynote opening address to the NGO Forum on Women in Beijing, China. The bulk of the documents from number 6 - 19 cover an eighteen month period from October, 1996 to April, 1997 and like all the others were not presented personally.

The set of addresses was selected for its representativeness of her ideas, the international focus of her address and because they form a cohesive identifiable set. Her fifty two letters published in the Mainichi Shimbu Newspaper in Japan have not been

included but are referred to where appropriate. Other material, for example, her weekend addresses to street gatherings outside her home are not available as a collection in English. The present set forms an identifiable body of material which yields information pertinent to the leadership question.

Method of Analysis

The method for analysis involved several steps. This results in a combination of theory-driven and data-driven identification of themes. It yields a close textual analysis similar to that used by social cognitive theorists (Lawrence, Benedict and Valsiner, 1992; Valsiner and Lawrence, 1997).

For this thesis' emphasis on political addresses, six steps were used, adapting the previous author's methods to the content and focus of the political address.

Step 1: The first step involved a text-based identification of themes in each address. At the same time it involved a search for any materials related to Gramsci's theory of the organic intellectual and his philosophy of praxis and/or Morgenthau's IR Realism. The search also included reference to the theoretical propositions of O'Donnell and Schmitter in relation to transitions from authoritarian rule but these were not included in the final analysis.

Step 2: The themes were listed in a master list and assigned an alphabetical key which is shown in Table 2 below. Each theme in the table represents a concept, for example, democracy was coded as present in the document if Aung San Suu Kyi mentioned and elaborated on democracy (see Table 2 below for an example).

Step 3: The list of themes was then cross-referenced across each document and identified in the text by its code label.

Step 4: Labelled keys were used to show a pattern of each theme of their occurrence over the period of years.

Step 5: Close textual reading of the thematic material was identified to emphasise and make connections about the significant features of Aung San Suu Kyi's political philosophy.

Step 6: Each theme that was interpreted as evidence of Aung San Suu Kyi's organic leadership or international relations political theory was collated and these collated extracts are presented as figures and with commentary in the next chapter. The commentary is keyed to the figure by a series of numbers that allowed the commentary to explain and interpret specific textual material.

The technique of numbering sections of the text and referring to them in the commentary is drawn from Lawrence, Benedict and Valsiner (1992:162) and has been used by cognitive theorists who examine on-line transcripts (Ericsson and Simon, 1984).

In summary while this method has been borrowed from another discipline it appears to be suitable to the analysis of the spoken and written communications of an absent world figure. In this way, the case for treating Aung San Suu Kyi as an organic intellectual leader and taking her seriously in international relations political theory is grounded in her own words.

Table 2 **Themes from Documents**

Code	Theme	Code	Theme
A	Ethnic Groups	Q	International Community
B	Refugees	R	Empowerment
C	Influences	S	Media
D	Democracy	T	SLORC
E	Values	U	Judicial System
F	Human Rights	V	Technology
G	Women	W	What others say of her
H	Suffering	X	Expatriate Bumese
I	Buddhism	Y	National League for Democracy
J	Dialogue	Z	Gramsci's philosophy of praxis
K	Peace & Security	1	Student's role in Bumese history
L	Peace & Happiness	2	Education
M	Economic development	3	Health
N	Government Accountability	4	I Infrastructure of civil society
O	Truth and Reconciliation	5	Religious groups
P	ASSK Personal experiences	6	Youth
		7	Culture
		8	Self government

Chapter Five: Analysis

A close reading of speeches by Aung San Suu Kyi to international conferences, forums and universities over a period of five years from 1992-97, shows how she can be understood as a national and international leader.

We can see that in the world of contemporary politics Aung San Suu Kyi makes a unique contribution as an “organic intellectual”. Her leadership in Burma, within a highly oppressive regime, is to pursue democracy on the basis of her interpretation of the principles of Buddhism and non-violence. Despite a long history of military responses to the search within Burma for independence and democracy, she has created her own political party on this non-violent basis.

Hans Morganthau claims that “the essence of international politics is identical with its domestic counterpart. Both domestic and international politics are a struggle for power, modified only by the different conditions under which this struggle takes place in the domestic and in the international spheres” (1948:24). For this reason some in the international political community are mistaken in their view that Aung San Suu Kyi’s contribution is limited to Burma and is not a model for others. This misapprehension is due partly to the fact that she doesn’t conform to the Realist theories of political realism and partly to the fact that the international community has accepted SLORC’s rhetoric that politics in Burma is an internal matter and not of international concern. This then has implications for countries such as China, which make similar claims and deny the international community the right to comment on their human rights situation.

This understanding of Aung San Suu Kyi and her political message also has implications for those working for political change in Burma. Aung San Suu Kyi stands

with Mandela, Havel, Gandhi and others who have been fundamental to displacing prevailing hegemonies both against the military odds and contrary to mainstream political theory. She is proving to be the archetypal charismatic figure of recent political theory about transitions to democracy from authoritarian regimes: the kind of leader who is effective at transmitting value change to create the inevitability of democracy.

Table 3. The Organic Intellectual

<i>1. Identification with the masses</i>	<i>2. The Power of the Will</i>	<i>3. Social and Political Role</i>
a. Suffering	a. Personal experiences	a. Personal experiences
b. Refugees	b. Gramsci's philosophy of praxis	b. Democracy
c. Her personal experiences	c. Buddhism	c. National League for Democracy
d. Buddhism	d. Democracy	d. Buddhism
e. Women		e. Values
f. Influences		
g. The National League for Democracy		

First, we turn to the themes in Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches that point to her development as an organic intellectual. The formation of an organic intellectual can be summarised as involving an individual's personal response, involving their intellectual, emotional, spiritual and psychological qualities, to the external environment. By looking at the development of the organic intellectual from the perspective of internalisation/externalisation processes is to remove Gramsci's theory from the narrowness of Marxist analysis. Consequently, the role of the organic intellectual in the process of political and social change can also be applied in a broader context than the Marxist socialist revolution. Therefore, our starting point will be Aung San Suu Kyi's

references both to her experiences and political activities in Burma from 1988, as well as her references to the belief and value system that underpins her worldview. These excerpts will be compared with the identifiable marks of the organic intellectual as described in Gramsci, (1971; Davidson: 1968, 1977; Joll: 1977 and Showstack Sassoon: 1982).

Underpinning her evolution as an organic intellectual is the crucial fact that she is the daughter of General Aung San, Burma's national hero and revered as the father of independence. Her acceptance by the Burmese people on her return to Burma in 1988 was due, not only to her own gifts, but also to the similarity of looks and manner of speech to her father. One of the major turning points in her relationship with the people was her speech to half a million people at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda: "We were all surprised" a participant in the meeting commented much later. "Not only did she look like her father, she spoke like him also: short, concise and right to the point" (Lintner, 1990:3).

Because of her upbringing she saw her role initially as a unifying force within the movement for democracy, especially during the period of national restlessness as the economy declined and government leadership failed to arrest the situation. When the opportunity came for democratic elections to be held, her role as a political leader developed to the point of her standing for election to parliament. But it was when she was placed under house arrest that her leadership took on national and international significance and from this point that she began to fulfil the role of Gramsci's organic intellectual.

By sharing in the suffering and other experiences of the people, she is accepted as a leader of the movement for democracy in her own right. Lintner illustrates how her popularity grew during her extensive tour of towns and villages in the outlying areas of the country. She carried on her speaking program in the face of military interference and drew crowds wherever she went (Lintner, 1990:22). Her ideas on democracy, based on the power of people and non-violence and integrated with Buddhist and other cultural traditions became popularly accepted as an alternative hegemony to the authoritarian regime.

Table 4: International Relations Theory

<p>1. The Laws of Human Nature</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Suffering b. Values c. Buddhism 	<p>2. Interest and Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Values b. Dialogue c. Peace and Security c. The international community e. Culture f. Economic development g. Accountable government 	<p>3. The Political Environment and Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. International community b. Democracy c. Empowerment d. Values e. Peace and Security f. SLORC
<p>4. Universal Moral Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Human rights b. Values c. Influences d. SLORC d. Economic Development 	<p>5. Universally agreed Moral Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Peace and happiness b. Values c. Human rights d. Influences e. National League for Democracy f. Justice 	<p>6. Politics and Civil Society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Justice b. Democracy c. Empowerment d. Women e. International Community f. Human rights g. Economic Development

Secondly, Aung San Suu Kyi must be dealt with in the international sphere. This is not only because the essence of international politics is intimately integrated with its domestic counterpart (Morgenthau), but because she calls on the international community to play a prominent role in assisting the transition to democracy in Burma. Realism theory, which has largely informed IR theory for the past fifty years, with its emphasis on interpreting every act by states, as ultimately a struggle for power, is of little help in understanding Aung San Suu Kyi as central to dealing with Burma's problems. How can the international community succeed in persuading SLORC to hand over power when states self interest is always understood to be the underlying motivation?

By comparing Aung San Suu Kyi's references to universal values, peace and security, the international community and the influences of Buddhism and Gandhi in particular, with Morgenthau's Realism in IR theory, we observe how she can be understood as an organic intellectual with ramifications in the international sphere. For the international community to help effect the transition to democracy in Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi needs to be granted the autonomy to establish the basis on which the international community can help her and the movement for democracy. This is the underlying appeal in her communication with the international community.

Another reason is the critical role she will play in the eventual transition to democracy in Burma. Recent political theory about transitions from authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell and Schmitter in Bermeo, 1990) indicates that the domestic environment is the key to change. As a significant player, Aung San Suu Kyi's actions will be a catalyst

for influencing a value change in the authoritarian regime. Other ingredients necessary for change will also hinder or speed the process (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1990).

A Content Analysis of Aung San Suu Kyi's Speeches

It is appropriate now to turn to the text of the speeches. The extracts that follow represent the significant themes that occur in her speeches from 1992 until 1997. The purpose of reproducing them is to show the line of Aung San Suu Kyi's thinking compared to the principles of the theoretical positions of Gramsci *et al.* and Morgenthau and to illustrate the principles used to interpret her text.

The first section focusses on the organic intellectual and is followed by excerpts relating to international relations political theory and political transitions theory. The material is organised according to the principles used for comparison and interpretation. All the excerpts from the sample material have been numbered to indicate the specific features that have been referred to in the text, using numbers in the left hand column.

The first characteristic of the "organic intellectual identifying with the masses" is illustrated by Aung San Suu Kyi's experience of sharing in the suffering of the people in Burma.

Figure 1: The organic intellectual identifies with the masses

Suffering:

- (i) The Burmese expression for refugee is “dukkha-the”, “one who has to bear dukkha, suffering” In that sense none of us can avoid knowing what it is to be a refugee. The refuge we all seek is protection from forces which wrench us away from the security and comfort, physical and mental, which give dignity and meaning to human existence. 1993:2A
- (ii) Those who have to tread the long and weary path of a life that sometimes seems to promise little beyond suffering and yet more suffering need to develop the capacity to draw strength from the very hardships that trouble their existence. It is from hardship rather than from ease that we gather wisdom. During my years under house arrest I learnt my most precious lesson from a poem by Rabindranath Tagore, any of whose verses even in unsatisfactory translation, reach out to that innemost, elusive land of the spirit that we are not always capable of exploring by ourselves. 1997:18
- (iii) This award (to her) demonstrates that the movement for democracy in Burma is recognised as one that seeks to alleviate the sufferings of the people of our country. 1995:5

From this sample of evidence from her speeches on suffering, Aung San Suu Kyi not only expresses her identification with the people as shown in (1: i,ii,iii), but she also makes some specific inferences about the value of that identification for herself as a leader, in relation to suffering. For example, in (1:iii), she argues that the suffering she shares with the people has had the positive benefit of allowing her (us) to “draw strength from the hardships”, to gain “wisdom” and to learn the significance of not being alone, i.e. “we are not always capable of exploring by ourselves” lessons about the inner spirit.

Even more explicit is her identification of herself and her award in terms of “seeking to alleviate the suffering of the people of our country” in (1:iv). This practice of acknowledging her awards as an identification of the struggles of the people, is a consistent form of sharing their suffering experience.

Figure 2: The organic intellectual identifies with the masses

House arrest:

- (i) I would like to explain why I cannot be with you in person today. Last month I was released from almost six years of house arrest.
- (ii) The regaining of my freedom has in turn imposed a duty on me to work for the freedom of other women and men in my country who have suffered far more, and continue to do so, than I have. It is this duty which prevents me from joining you today. 1995:4
- (iii) The last six years afforded me much time and food for thought. I came to the conclusion that the human race is not divided into two opposing camps of good and evil. It is made up of those who are capable of learning and those who are incapable of doing so. 1995:4

Aung San Suu Kyi's experience of house arrest represent another aspect of her identification with the masses. Her six years of house arrest and isolation not only identify her with others who have not regained their freedom (2: i,ii) but have the had the benefit of shaping her sense of purpose "to work for the freedom of other women and men in my country who have suffered far more, than I have" (2:ii). More than that, it can be seen from this excerpt of her speeches that during the period of enforced isolation she has taken the opportunity to reflect on human nature and human behaviour which points to the political strategy she will implement when she is free to do so (2:iii).

Figure 3: The organic intellectual identifies with the masses**Women:**

- (i) Our endeavours have also been sustained by the activities of strong and principled women all over the world who have campaigned not only for my own release but, more importantly, for our cause.
- (ii) The adversities that we have had to face together have taught all of us involved in the struggle to build a truly democratic political system in Burma,
- (iii) that there are no gender barriers that cannot be overcome. 1995:5

Aung San Suu Kyi, in her speech, shown by video, to the NGO Forum on Women in Beijing in 1995, takes the opportunity to identify herself with the women of Burma. The fact that she is a woman engaged in a political role gives her an identification with half of the Burmese people. (3:i,ii,) The adversities she has faced are not just in the political struggle but involve gender barriers (3:iii), which implies that she has had to overcome the barrier that it is Aung San's daughter, not his son, who has returned to Burma to take up her father's legacy (Lintner:1990:18).

Figure 4: The organic intellectual identifies with the masses

Deprivation of political rights:

- (i). And the restrictions placed on members of the NLD and supporters of the NLD are really excessive.
- (ii) It's not just that we are prevented from doing our political work, the families of supporters are subjected to a lot of economic pressure.
- (iii) My own road, the road to my house has been blocked off now for three months... And this of course is meant to stop us from carry on our NLD activities in my home.
- (iv) And every time people come to see me they have to get permission from the authorities. And when Burmese people come to see me they are asked for their national registration certificate. And sometimes they are kept waiting for a long time. 1997:17

This example of her continuing identification with the people is drawn from a speech in 1997 and shows a progression from the reflections on democracy during her period of house arrest to the implementation of her political program through the NLD and her personal contact with the people. We see from these excerpts that she shares in the political oppression by the regime in (4:i,ii,iv) and that she and her home are central to the development and propagation of alternative political ideas.

From these excerpts focussing on Gramsci's characteristic that the organic intellectual shares the experience of the masses, it can be seen that Aung San Suu Kyi's experiences are entwined with those of the people over an extended period. From this close identification with the people, her role as a political leader is legitimated. As an organic intellectual her response to the experience of suffering, imprisonment and political repression, is to draw wisdom and insight into human nature as well as to

develop her sense of political responsibility for the suffering of the people. It also points to the development of the basis for her strategies for the movement for democracy.

Another mark of the organic intellectual that is part of the internalisation/externalisation process is the power of the individual's will. This point is drawn out by James Joll (1977:89), in his discussion on the organic intellectuals with the observation that Gramsci believed in the power of the will. Joll believes Gramsci's prison experience led him to conclude that "one can arrive at a certain serenity even in the clash of the most absurd contradictions" (1977:88). This serenity, Gramsci proposes comes from "man's capacity to affect his development and surroundings by his understanding of the historical situation in which he finds himself, by thinking historically, dialectically and identifying one's own task with intellectual dispassionateness" (Joll, 1977:88).

Aung San Suu Kyi's imprisonment is an experience she has in common with Václav Havel and Nelson Mandela. Notwithstanding, the abuse, terror, fear and boredom that were their daily companions in prison, their response to the experience was to further their belief in an alternative political system. As in the case of Gramsci, the capacity of their willpower to survive and make sense of the experience was a transforming factor in their political development (Havel, 1990; Mandela, 1992; Klein, 1995).

The excerpts in this section give us some insights into that struggle.

Figure 5: Organic intellectuals and the power of the will

Aung San Suu Kyi on will power and overcoming adversity

- (i) A fulfilled life is not necessarily one constructed strictly in accordance with one's own blueprint: it can be a glorious collage of material that have come unexpectedly to hand. How wonderful it is that we do not know what tomorrow will bring. Of course we all hope that our tomorrow will be happy. But happiness takes on many forms.
- (ii) Political prisoners have known the most sublime moments of perfect communion with their highest ideals during periods when they were in isolation, cut off from contact with all that was familiar and dear to them. From where do those resources spring, if not from an innate strength at our core, a spiritual strength that transcends material bounds.
- (iii) My colleagues who spent years in harsh conditions of Burmese prisons, and I myself, have had to draw on such inner resources on many occasions.
- (iv) When we are struggling against overwhelming odds, when we are pitting ourselves against the combined might of the state apparatus and military power,
- (v) we are sometimes subject to doubts, usually the doubts of those whose belief in the permanence of an existing order is absolute.
- (vi) We have in us the power to change what needs to be changed but we are under no illusion that the transition from dictatorship to liberal democracy will be easy.
1997:12

In (5:i), Aung San Suu Kyi refers to “the fulfilled life” and in (5:ii), to “sublime moments of perfect communion with their highest ideals” even when faced with “isolation, cut off from contact with all that was familiar and dear to them.” In contrast to Gramsci’s intellectual who “thinks historically, dialectically and intellectual dispassionateness”, Aung San Suu Kyi takes “the collage of material that have come unexpectedly to hand” to experience a fulfilled life (5:i), drawing on “the innate strength at our core, a spiritual strength that transcends material bounds.

In (5: iv,vi) the struggle of the will is Gramsci's clash of absurd contradictions: Aung San Suu Kyi describes her own struggle of the powerless against power. She links the solution of the external political struggle to her own internal capacity to withstand (5:iv). Power for change comes from within. She is no stranger to "doubt" but identifies its source and challenges it with her underlying belief in the Buddhist principle of "anicca" or "impermanence" (Aung San Suu Kyi, 1997). She holds the fundamental belief that nothing lasts forever.

We now move from the dynamic of the internal/external struggle to Aung San Suu Kyi's political activities through which she transmits her ideas. According to Gramsci, the organic intellectual, through their rationality, intelligence and ideas have a critical role in challenging the dominant hegemony. They provide leadership in communicating new values and ideas that are necessary for achieving political and social change (Davidson,1977:44-47).

The alternative political philosophy of democracy that Aung San Suu Kyi propounds is not just a "catch phrase" that calls for a quick change from authoritarianism. In her essay, "Quest for Democracy", she discusses at length her views on democracy within a Buddhist framework (1995). Her quest to discover how democracy can be understood and explained in such a framework is based on two concerns. First, she is informed by an understanding of the failure of intellectuals to complete a Burmese renaissance against colonial administrators. Secondly, she wants to challenge the modern argument put forward by regional neighbours that democracy is an imposed "western" system that does not accommodate Asian values. (Lintner, 1990; Aung SanSuu Kyi, 1995; 1997).

Figure 6: The organic intellectual is involved in social and political change

Aung San Suu Kyi and her political role:

- (i) Those matters which occupy all my waking thoughts these days: peace, security, human rights and democracy. 1995:4
- (ii) The series "Letters from Burma" has certainly enabled me to let the people of Japan and other countries know about what is going on in our country today.
I explained that, as a politician, I will be writing mainly about politics. But politics for me is about people; it wears a very human face.
- (iii) I'm very privileged to be able to write of matters that are close to the hearts of many of my countrymen and women and to speak for them, for they cannot speak for themselves. 1996:6

This excerpt demonstrates that Aung San Suu Kyi's role in Burmese politics has developed from seeing herself as "a unifying force" (1995) to that of a political leader (6: i,ii,iii). Her role is given legitimacy by her activities in Japan (6:ii) and signal that her leadership and ideas have international currency. To some in the international political debates her views that "politics for me is about people; it wears a very human face and can be discussed within the social and cultural" context, may seem weak but it is consistent with her approach to democracy.

Figure 7: The organic intellectual is involved in social and political change

Aung San Suu Kyi on ideas about democracy

- (i) The struggle for democracy and human rights in Burma is a struggle for life and dignity. It is a struggle that encompasses our political, social and economic aspirations. The people of my country want the two freedoms that spell security: freedom from want and freedom from war.
- (ii) The Buddhist paravana ceremony at the end of the rainy season retreat was instituted by the Lord Buddha, who did not want human beings to live in silence (I quote) "like dumb animals". This ceremony in which monks ask mutual forgiveness for any offence given during the retreat, can be said to be a council of truth and reconciliation. It might also be considered a forerunner of that most democratic of institutions, the parliament, a meeting of peoples gathered together to talk over their shared problems.
- (iii) Ours is a non-violent movement that depends on faith in the human predilection for fair play and compassion.
- (iv) Some would insist that man is primarily an economic animal interested only in his material well being. This is too narrow a view of a species which has produced numberless brave men and women who are prepared to undergo relentless persecution for the sake of upholding deeply held beliefs and principles. It is my pride and inspiration that such men and women exist in my country today. 1997:12
- (v) The NLD or any other elected civilian government would have the mandate of the people. It would have the trust and the confidence of the people.
- (vi) A government that works on the basis of trust would be a lot more effective than a government that uses the power of arms to keep itself in control, at the helm of state power.
- (vii) A civilian government, a democratically elected civilian government would have to listen to the voice of the people.
- (viii) It would have to listen to the voice of the world and by listening, such a government would be able to discover what its mistakes are and be able to correct them. 1997:15

The broad concept that politics is about people, is elaborated here into her alternative vision (*Weltanschauung*) for democracy in Burma as "a struggle for life and

dignity ... that encompasses our political, social and economic aspirations that will ensure security for the people” (7:i).

She then communicates the visionary idea into practical concepts. And she goes further to integrate the unfamiliar idea of, “the parliament”, with the culturally familiar, “Buddhist paravana ceremony” (7:iii). Next she shows how these idea can be translated into practical political reality. First of all it is a movement that represents values that men and women aspire to achieve. (7:iii,iv). Secondly, the ideals of her vision can be manifested by a political party which is subject to the people (7:v-xiii).

Guided by Gramsci’s theory and the original data drawn from the collection of speeches, this analysis has demonstrated that Aung San Suu Kyi can be understood as an organic intellectual who has developed through her struggle against the military regime in Burma. She has shared the experiences of the people and in doing so has developed in her own wisdom and in insights about the relationship between human nature and politics. Through the wellsprings of her inner self she has faced and overcome power that has set out to destroy her. She develops her ideas about democracy within a religious and cultural framework that she then transmits through a political party based on values consistent with both Buddhism and democracy.

Realism and International Relations Theory

The complex relationship between foreign policy and domestic politics requires that we consider Aung San Suu Kyi in the light of hegemonic Realism in IR theory. Aung San Suu Kyi represents echoes of Idealism which had also influenced states behaviour in the early part of the century. The failure of states to secure a lasting peace

and to prevent a Second World War led a revision of idealism and the development of a new approach to peace.

In an attempt to firmly remove IR theory from utopian idealism based on a universal morality, Hans Morgantheau propounded an account of world politics that was based on the premise that international politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power (1948:24). His theory is essentially worked out in contradistinction to idealism and is based on principles that achieve some approximation of benefit to people through a system of checks and balances of self interest.

This ideological position leaves both individuals and nations vulnerable to those with military and economic power. Within a country like Burma, a military regime can rationalise its use of violence against its citizens in the name of unity but essentially to retain power. Power becomes the means and the end in itself. Realist theory also lets the international community down when confronted with a situation such as Burma where a political settlement cannot be negotiated on the basis of self interest when Aung San Suu Kyi, as the alternative leader operates from a different perspective of power.

Burchill has summarised Morgantheau's approach to Realist theory into six principles (1997:74) and excerpts from Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches will be compared with them as a way of illustrating the interpretation of her position in international politics. The themes represented by these excerpts relate to her values, her views on democracy and her appeals to the international community. The volume of evidence presented in the following tables represents the fact that these are the themes she most often refers to in her speeches to the international community.

Principle 1: Politics and the Objective Laws of Human Nature

The first principle that Morgenthau proposes is that politics is governed by objective laws which have their root in human nature. These laws do not change over time and are impervious to human preference. They provide certainty and confidence in predicting rational political behaviour (Burchill, 1996:74). The Realism advocated here in IR theory is very like the kind of realism that underlies economic rationalist discourse in economics. It is confronted by the more complex understanding of human nature and its political expressions evident in Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches.

Figure 8: IR theory

Principle 1: Aung San Suu Kyi response

- (i) Developed and developing nations alike suffer as a result of policies removed
- (ii) from a framework of values which uphold
- (iii) minimum standards of justice and (tolerance. (1993:2A:25)
- (iv) In the most troubled areas of the world, reserves of tolerance and compassion disappear, security becomes non-existent and creature comforts are reduced to a minimum –
- (v) but stockpiles of weapons abound. As a system of values this is totally mad. 1993:2A:27
- (vi) Possession of a significant surplus of material goods has never been a guarantee
- (vii) against covetousness, rapacity and the infinite variety of vice and pain that spring from such passions.
- (viii) Given that man's greed can be as bottomless as his stomach and that a psychological sense of deprivation can persist beyond the point where basic needs have been adequately met, it can hardly be expected that an increase in
- (ix) material prosperity alone would ensure even a decline in economic strife, let alone a mitigation of those myriad other forces that spawn earthly misery. 1993:2A:17

Figure 8: IR theory (continued)

- (ix) the teachings of Buddhism which delve into the various causes of suffering identify greed or lust – the passion for indulging an intemperate appetite – as the first of the Ten Impurities that stand in the way of a tranquil, wholesome state of mind. On the other hand
- (x) much value is attached to liberality or generosity, which heads such lists as the Ten Perfections of the Buddha. It is a recognition of the crucial importance of the liberal, generous spirit as an effective antidote to greed as well as a fount of virtues which engender happiness and harmony. 1993:2A
- (xi) The human predilection for freedom of expression and communication will surely triumph over all our obstacles. 1996:6

Aung San Suu Kyi amplifies and modifies Morgenthau's proposition. She agrees that human greed is bottomless (8: viii) and that politics can be based on this. In (8:x), she actually identifies "greed" and "lust" as causes of suffering. But she significantly modifies the principle by recognising that human nature also encompasses peoples' predilection for values such as freedom of expression in (8:xiii).

When those preferences are ignored she says that suffering, lack of security, greed, vice and pain result (8:i,v,vii and x). The human preference for positive qualities of the spirit such as freedom of expression, she claims in (8:xii and xiii), will eventually triumph.

Principle 2: *Interest and Power*

His second principle is that the key to understanding international politics is the concept of *interest* defined in terms of power. Interest as narrowly defined in Realist discourse is again contradicted by Aung San Suu Kyi.

Figure 9: IR Theory

Principle 2: Aung San Suu Kyi's response

- (i) In the most troubled areas of the world, reserves of tolerance and compassion disappear, security becomes non-existent and creature comforts are reduced to a minimum – but stockpiles of weapons abound. As a system of values this is totally mad.
- (ii) By the time it is accepted that the only way out of an impasse of hate, bloodshed and social and economic chaos created by men is for those men to get together to find a peaceful solution through dialogue and compromise, it is usually no longer easy to restore sanity. Those who have been conditioned by systems which make a mockery of the law by legalizing injustices and which attack the very foundations of harmony by perpetuating social, political and economic imbalances cannot adjust quickly -if at all-
- (iii) to the concept of a fair settlement which places general well-being and justice above partisan advantage. 1993:2A
- (iv) During the cold war the iniquities of ruthless governments and armed groups
- (v) were condoned for ideological reasons. The results have been far from happy. Although there is greater emphasis on justice and human rights today, there are still ardent
- (vi) advocates in favour of giving priority to political and economic expediency – increasingly the latter. 1993:2A
- (vii) It is widely accepted, if not too often articulated, that governments and international agencies should limit their efforts to the elimination of the more obvious forms of suffering rather than take on a task so uncertain, so abstruse and so susceptible to varying interpretations, as the promotion of happiness. 1993:2A
- (viii) individual happiness needs a base broader than the mere satisfaction of
- (ix) selfish passions. From there, it is not such a large step to the realisation that respecting the susceptibilities and rights of others is as important as defending one's own susceptibilities and rights if civilised society is to be safeguarded.
- (x) But the desirability of redressing imbalances which spoil the harmony of human relationships – the ultimate foundation for global peace and security – is not always appreciated. 1993:2A

Figure 9: IR Theory - continued

- (xi) But with sufficient resolve on the part of governments and institutions that influence public opinion and set international standards of behaviour, a
- (xii) greater proportion of the world's population could be made to realise that self-interest (whether as an individual, a community or a nation) cannot be divorced entirely from the interests of others. Instead of assuming that material progress will bring an improvement in social, political and ethical values might not only aid material progress but also help to ensure that its results are wisely and happily distributed? 1993:2A:21
- (xiii) We believe in self reliance and we depend on the strength of the people of Burma to achieve their own goals.
- (xiv) At the same time we also appreciate the moral support and practical help of the international community. In this day and age nobody can afford to ignore the opinions of the world around us. 1996:10:2
- (xv) The international community has two duties with regard to Burma at the moment. The first one is to focus on and to protest against the lawless activities of the authorities.
- (xvi) The second one is to do everything possible to implement the terms of the UNGA resolution with regard to the human rights situation in Burma. 1996:10:2
- (xvii) It is precisely because of the cultural diversity of the world that it is necessary for different nations and peoples to agree on those basic human values which will act as a unifying factor. When democracy and human rights are said to run counter to non-western culture, such culture is usually defined narrowly and presented as monolithic. In fact the values that democracy and human rights seek to promote can be found in many cultures.
- (xviii) Human beings the world over need freedom and security that they may be able to realise their full potential. The longing for a form of governance that provides security without destroying freedom goes back a long way. 1994:3:6
- (xix) This forum of non-governmental organisations represents the belief in the ability of intelligent human beings to resolve conflicting interests through exchange and dialogue. It also represents the conviction that governments alone cannot resolve all the problems of their countries. 1995:4:4

Figure 9: IR theory - continued

- xix) It is an abiding hope that the Games would contribute towards peaceful internationalism by demonstrating that “there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed nor Birth” when the world’s best athletes meet in honourable and friendly, if intense, competition. 1992:2:2
- (xx) The greatest threats to global security today come not from the economic deficiencies of the poorest nations but from religious, racial (or tribal) and political dissensions raging in those regions where
- (xxi) principles and practices which could reconcile the diverse instincts and aspirations of mankind have been ignored, repressed or distorted. Man made disasters are made by dominant individuals and cliques which refuse to move beyond the autistic confines of partisan interest.
- (xxii) An eminent development economist has observed that the best defence against famine is an accountable government. 1993:2A:25

Power, for Aung San Suu Kyi, should come from the people (9:xii). She confronts both the language of the power discourse in using words like “moral support” and “practical help” from the international community (9:xiii) and the practice, by asking them to “focus on”, to ‘protest’ and to “implement” in (9:xiv,xv). This indicates her view of power. For her it is not just an alternative theory of power, but she has actually implemented it by establishing the non-violence basis of her political party in Burma. Her reference to the United Nations (9:xvi) is an example of the importance to places on the UN to come to Burma’s assistance. It is consistent with Burma’s early policies of “peaceful co-existence” in foreign policy initiated by U Nu discussed in Chapter two of this thesis.

She mentions that the values of “happiness”, “well-being” and “justice” (9:iii), “happiness” in (9:v,vii,viii), and “harmony of human relations” in (9:x), ought to determine the behaviour of states. This is in stark contrast to Morgenthau’s claim that only power ought to determine behaviour of states.

Aung San Suu Kyi sees, “cultural diversity” (9:xvi), “non-government organisations, representing the efforts of ordinary people”, (9:xviii), and shared common humanity that has “no borders” (9:xvix) as the basis for unity. She uses “exchange and dialogue” (9:viii) and “accountable government” (9:xxii) not power, as the method to achieve “global security” (9:xx) and avert “man made disasters” (9:xxii).

Principle 3: The *Political Environment* and Power

The third principle that the forms and nature of state power will vary in time, place and context, but the concept of interest remains consistent. The political cultural and strategic environment will largely determine the form of power a state chooses to exercise. This understanding of the modern state is shown to be narrowly Euro-centric in the face of Aung San Suu Kyi’s analysis.

Figure 10: IR Theory

Principle 3: Aung San Suu Kyi’s response

- (i) The end of the Cold War has been represented as a signal for shifting the emphasis of national and international concern from ideology and politics to economics and trade. But it is open to debate whether politics heavily, if not
- (ii) wholly, influenced by economic considerations will make of the much bruited “New World Order” an era of progress and harmony such as is long for by peoples and nations weary of conflict and suffering. 1993:2A:15

Figure 10: IR Theory – continued

- (iii) In newly emergent democracies many who have been disappointed in their expectations of immediate material betterment have sought to work out their frustrations by subscribing to outmoded and obscure conspiracy theories that foster prejudice, paranoia and violence. The search for scapegoats is essentially an abnegation of responsibility: it indicates an inability to assess honestly and intelligently the true nature of the problems which lie at the root of social and economic difficulties and a lack of resolve in grappling with them. 1993:2A
- (iv) The “national culture” can become a bizarre graft of carefully selected historical incidents and distorted social values intended to justify the policies and actions of those in power. Many authoritarian governments wish to appear in the forefront of modern progress but are reluctant to institute genuine change. It is often in the name of cultural integrity as well as social stability and national security that democratic reform based on human rights are resisted by authoritarian governments...
- (v) A nation may choose a system that leaves the protection of the freedom and security of the many dependent on the inclinations of the empowered few, or it may choose institutions and practices that will sufficiently empower individuals and organisations to protect their own freedom and security.
- (vi) The choice will decide how far a nation will progress along the road to peace and human development. 1994:3:
- (vii) Developed and developing nations alike suffer as a result of policies removed from a framework of values which uphold minimum standards of justice and tolerance. 1993:2A:
- (viii) They have, as I am sure many of you will have heard, built up a so-called social welfare organisation called the Union Solidarity and Development Association, the USDA which they are using occasionally as a political arm and occasionally as a political arm and occasionally as just a gang of thugs, to harass and intimidate those who are working for democracy.
- (ix) In November it was members of the USDA who attacked the cars in which U Kyi Maung and U Tin U and I were travelling. So I have no inhibitions in saying that the USDA more than occasionally performs the work of mere thugs. Then this is not the way in which a responsible government should behave. A responsible government does not build up a gang of hooligans to attack those who it wishes to crush politically. 1997:17

The idea behind this principle is that states will deliberately create an environment that justifies the form of government that it chooses. Aung San Suu Kyi, acknowledges the reality of this proposition when she refers to the end of the Cold War and the emerging state systems in (10:i), newly emerging democracies in (10:iii), authoritarian governments in (10:iv), and systems that choose to empower a few in (10:v). She also says there is no difference in behaviour of states between developed and developing nations (10:vii,viii).

She is, herself, an example of how states create an environment to justify their behaviour. In (10 :viii,ix), she refers to the regime in Burma which has used extreme violence against her and her party to eliminate dissent and reinforce its style of government.

But, where Morgenthau's realist theory says that states accept this reality and work within it, Aung San Suu Kyi confronts it. She does this in (10: i,ii), by questioning whether "economics" is any better than "ideology or politics" in determining political systems. She points to "the inability (of states) to assess honestly and intelligently the true nature of problems which lie at the root of social and economic difficulties" in (10:iii) and by suggesting that states exercise "choice" in (10:vi) about their form of government. This indicates that she does not accept the inevitability of Morgenthau's proposition.

Principle 4: Universal Moral Principles

Fourthly, according to Morgenthau, universal moral principles do not guide state behaviour, though state behaviour will certainly have moral and ethical implications.

Realism's hesitancy about universal moral principles has been left far behind in the past few years (Falk, 1992, Part 1). Aung San Suu Kyi draws attention to the universal nature of ethics in global politics. Indeed, the formulation of universal global ethics has become a major concern in contemporary international relations. For example, the discussion between China and America over Tibet and Indonesia and America over East Timor.

Figure 11: IR Theory

Principle 4: Aung San Suu Kyi's Response

- (i) We need the basic rights that will give our people a sense of security and remove the shadows of mistrust and suspicions that darken their lives. The people also need to feel confident that they are in control of their own destiny, that their interests will be guarded and their will respected by those are in charge of the governance of the country. 1995:7:2
- (ii) Good government is not simply the result of a political system. It is indissolubly linked to the values that prevail within a society. Unless a nation can be reconstructed to enhance human values, independence will not mean a more fulfilling existence for its citizens. 1997:19:1
- (iii) in Burma despite half a century of self-government, good government is still somewhere in the nebulous future.
- (iv) as Gandhiji wrote(in 1929), 'In truth, a government that is ideal governs the least. It is no self-government that leaves nothing for the people to do. That is pupillage – our present stage.' 1997:19:1
- (v) Once again to quote Gandhi on the best kind of self-government: Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be attained by education the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority. 1997:19:2

Figure 11: IR Theory - continued

- (vi) The story of South Africa's victory over one of the most unjust systems man has ever devised is an inspiration to peoples of all races and creeds who accept that basic human dignity is inviolate. It is a unique heritage that includes intense pain, unexpected joys, ugliness and beauty, unimaginable brutality and glorious sacrifice. And, in the end, supreme triumph. 1997:18:1
- (vii) Now, we think that they (SLORC) have mismanaged the economy by mismanaging the people of Burma. Basically that's why they have made such a mess of the economy.
- (viii) They are not making proper use of our resources, our human resources as well as our material resources...
- (ix) they are spending much less on education now than was spent eight years ago before the democratic revolution, and of course,
- (x) they are spending much less money on health care. 1997:15:1

In referring to Gandhi and his views on the politics of India in (11:iv,v), and South Africa in (11:vi), Aung San Suu Kyi indicates that she believes that there are universal moral principles which should guide governments. She uses the example of Burma in (11:iii) and (11:vii,viii,ix,x) to demonstrate that without overriding universal values the moral and ethical implications of government behaviour are unacceptable.

Principle 5: *Universally Agreed Moral Principles*

The fifth principle states that there is no universally agreed set of moral principles. This disagreement misunderstands common themes and concerns of human rights and freedoms and how governments should be expected to behave and simply ignores the major principles that underpin cultural communities.

Figure: 12 IR Theory

Principle 5: Aung San Suu Kyi's response:

- (i) If peoples and nations cultivate a generous spirit that welcomes the happiness of others an enhancement of the happiness of the self, many seemingly insoluble problems would prove less intractable.
- (ii) The dream of a society ruled by loving kindness, reason and justice is a dream as old as civilised man. Does it have to be an impossible dream?
- (iii) Developed and developing nations alike suffer as a result of policies removed from a framework of values which uphold minimum standards of justice and tolerance. 1993:2A:25
- (iv) It is a world where there is a great need to reach out beyond the narrow and stultifying to universal values which will invigorate the spirit of peace and cooperation. 1992:2:2
- (v) The surest foundation of a life in which men can develop their potential is peace...based on justice, compassion and harmony, on a healthy balance between individual liberty and public order, between national duty and international awareness. 1992:2:2
- (vi) Einstein wrote: "Truth and justice are concepts which will never lose their pristine force in the battle of humankind to make of our planet a refuge large enough and compassionate enough for all its inhabitants....There is still much to be done. 1995:5:2
- (vii) There are those who argue that the concept of human rights is not applicable to all cultures. We in the NLD believe that human rights are of universal relevance.
- (viii) But even those who do not believe in human rights must certainly agree that the rule of law is most important. Without the rule of law there can be no peace. Either in a nation, a region or throughout the world. 1996:10:1-2
- (ix) There are enduring values that transcend national borders and centuries, there are also values that has to be discovered for our own times. 1996:10:2
- (x) The cause of liberty and justice finds sympathetic responses in far reaches of the `globe....people everywhere, understand the deeply rooted human need for a meaningful existence that goes beyond the mere gratification of material desires. 1997:12:2

Aung San Suu Kyi says that there are universal values in (12:iv,ix). She puts them in a global context by referring to ‘peoples’ and ‘nations’ in (12:i), and ‘world’ in (12:i,iv). However, her values are not based on political or economic systems but the positive inner qualities of the human spirit. Generosity of spirit, happiness, (12:i), kindness, reason and justice, (12:ii), compassion and harmony (12:v) are the underlying universal values she sees as “the surest foundation of a life in which men can develop their potential” (12: v).

After identifying the inner qualities that are common to all humanity, she then refers in (12:vii) to “human rights” and in (12:viii) to “the rule of law” as having “universal relevance” in safeguarding the aspirations of ‘people everywhere’ (12:x).

Not only does she hold this view but in using “we” indicates that her party, the NLD, also agrees with her 12(vii). She quotes the physicist, Einstein in (12:vi), to reinforce her own position. This quote speaks of the two values, “ truth and justice” in the context of “humankind”, “planet” and “all its inhabitants” (12:vi) which reinforces the universality of her message.

Aung San Suu Kyi’s response to Morgenthau’s proposition demonstrates clearly that she is an organic intellectual who stands as a contradiction to the limitations of Realism in IR theory. The evidence from her speeches presented here, also demonstrates that she stands outside the Marxist paradigm thus enabling Gramsci’s theory of the organic intellectual to be understood from a cultural and spiritual context.

Principle 6: The *autonomy* of Politics from Civil Society

The sixth and final principle is that intellectually, the political sphere is autonomous from every other sphere of human concern, whether they be legal, moral or economic. The autonomy Realism postulates has disintegrated totally in the light of a wide range of philosophical analyses and political developments in the post Morgenthau period. The interdependence of the public and private domains theorised brilliantly in much feminist discourse shows clearly that civil society and the state are complexly inter-related.

Figure: 13 IR Theory

Principle 6: Aung San Suu Kyi's response:

- (i) The greatest trial for the people in Burma is the lack of an independent judicial system that ensures protection under the law. To exercise the basic human rights of freedom of thought, speech and association requires courage and commitment.
- (ii) A large part of our struggle for democracy in Burma is concerned with asserting our right to freedom of expression. 1996:6
- (iii) We remain a nation in bondage after forty-nine years of independence. There can be no real freedom unless the mind and spirit are free. Self-government is meaningful only if it gives the people greater confidence in their own worth. 1997:19
- (iv) People must participate fully in the decisions and processes that shape their lives. In other words people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of the country. 1995: 4
- (v) If to these universal benefits of the growing emancipation of women can be added the "peace dividend" for human development offered by the end of the Cold War, spending less on the war toys of grown men and much more on the urgent needs of humanity as a whole, then truly the next millenia will be an age the like to which has never been seen in human history. 1995:4

Figure: 13 IR Theory - continued

- (v) The international community has two duties with regard to Burma at the moment. The first is to focus on and to protest against the lawless activities of the authorities. The second one is to ... implement the terms of the UNGA resolution with regard to the human rights situation in Burma. 1996:10:2
- (vii) Forced labour – this is a term which refers to people who are taken by the armed forces to work for them to carry their arms, their rations, and in many cases it has been clear they are used as human mine fields (sweepers).

Forced Labour Projects: Practically all roads built by the govt. used forced labour. Roads, bridges, clearing of jungle – all this needs forced labour because there is no other way the govt. can get these done.
- (viii) True development of human beings – much more than economic growth.... empowerment and inner fulfillment. Peoples participation in social and political transformation is the central issue of our time.
- (ix) Development requires democracy. 1994:3
- (x) Danger that those who believe economic reforms will bring political progress to Burma... Economics and politics cannot be separated. Economic reforms alone cannot bring democratisation to Burma. Economic reform cannot succeed in a country where there is no rule of law. 1996:10:3

Aung San Suu Kyi says that politics is not divorced from civil society. She states categorically in (13:x), that “economics and politics cannot be separated”, “people must be allowed to play a significant role in the governance of the country” in (13:iv,viii) and freedom of speech is integral to her own political struggle (13:ii).

The political sphere will be affected in the future by “the emancipation of women” (13:v) and “lawlessness” and “human rights” demand the attention of the international community (13:vi).

Her references to “forced labour” and “forced labour projects” (13 :vi,vii), in Burma highlight the relationship between politics and human rights. Governments and human rights groups such as Anti-Slavery International are addressing this relationship as one of the major issues of global economics.

Unlike realist theory, Aung San Suu Kyi does not divorce politics from people, the issues of gender, economic development, and the rule of law. She has a holistic world view in which politics encompasses the deepest needs of humanity as well as the external environment. Her position places her outside of the traditional power discourse of international relations political theory propounded by Morgenthau, Carr and others.

The evidence presented here suggests that she does not conform to the prevailing hegemony of Realism. Its underlying message is that the international community can only deal with her on her own terms. Burma’s problem, becomes an international one.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This examination of Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches to a variety of international forums has identified that they contain an underlying message which needs to be understood as part of the international dialogue about the transition to democracy in Burma. The message is that she is a leader who, as an organic intellectual, has a political philosophy that places her outside the dominant power discourses in Burma and Realist IR theory. She needs to be granted the autonomy to establish the basis on which the international community can contribute to the transition to democracy in Burma.

Aung San Suu Kyi makes a unique contribution as an "organic intellectual" in contemporary Burmese politics but precisely because she is an organic intellectual, poses a problem for the international community in their relationship with Burma. With a theory and data guided analysis of the nineteen speeches by Aung San Suu Kyi I have shown her development as an "organic intellectual". Gramsci's theory of the formation of organic intellectuals and his philosophy of praxis was developed within a Marxist economic and political paradigm. By applying it to the political/personal interactions of Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma, it can be extrapolated from the narrow Marxist analysis. As a result, this approach points to the possibility of applying Gramsci's theory more generally to understanding political leadership in transitions from authoritarian rule.

This particular example of Aung San Suu Kyi is a case unique to Burma, although she belongs in a group of national leaders who have engaged the international community in overturning an oppressive dominant hegemony. She is compared to Nelson Mandela, Václav Havel, and Martin Luther King Jr., among others, who have

stood outside their cultural experiences of racism and totalitarianism and succeeded in constructing an alternate political culture.

Aung San Suu Kyi's case demonstrates the processes that are involved in creating an alternative political culture and hegemony that challenges the imposed ideology. It also points to how she is contributing to a revived Idealist IR theory that takes into account the concerns of people in nation states whose basic human rights and freedoms are violated and dismissed in order for governments to preserve their own self interests, both economically and politically. The selection of data has emphasised Aung San Suu Kyi's references to her personal experiences in the dynamic events of the political upheaval in 1988 until early 1997. Her own reflections reveal that she is not just formed by her experiences, but by her own ideas and values. They all work in combination to reveal the strength with which she rejects the ideology and actions of the Burmese military regime and the political learning she derives from it. Aung San Suu Kyi carries within herself personal aspects of a family legacy that is closely tied to the national political conscience and a profound belief system which in themselves may produce her own dramatic response to the situation in Burma, but may not be replicated with the same results elsewhere. Organic leaders are particular to their own situation and environment.

Stepping back from the particular example of Burma, the foundations of Realism in IR theory have been applied to other data from her speeches to contextualise her in relation to the traditional power discourse. International diplomats who operate on the basis of maintaining a balance of power, and only have an interest in the means to do so, have a problem relating to the non-realist (Rothstein, 1996:412). Consequently, because Aung San Suu Kyi insists that the means of achieving democracy through non-violence is

the only way it will be take hold makes the struggle likely to be protracted and difficult with no obvious means to achieving it. Aung San Suu Kyi's challenge to the international community is that the goal of democracy for the Burmese people is of itself worthwhile. In this way she is breaking new ground in contemporary international pohtics in which concerns for human rights are becoming part of the political discourse.

The data-driven and theory-driven approach used in this thesis demonstrates the potential to add new information to the understanding of the role of charismatic figures in transitions from authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1990). Other aspects of their transition theory such as the behaviour of elites, the role of political parties, tactics of key players, and the state of the economy, would also benefit from a similar analysis and contribute to the international political discourse. In the case of Burma such an analysis based on data from Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches would be fruitful in pointing to what can be done to create the environment for political change.

I have argued that using the theoretical principles of Gramsci and Morgantheu and applying a rigorous qualitative analysis to data based on a selection of her speeches to the international community explains how Aung San Suu Kyi developed as an organic intellectual. She is also making a leading contribution to the understanding of international relations in contemporary world politics. The analysis adds to Gramsci's role of the organic intellectual in social and political change since his theory was confined within a Marxist model of socialist revolution. In building this case for understanding Aung San Suu Kyi as an organic leader, this thesis has laid the foundation for examining other aspects of a transition from authoritarian rule in Burma.

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