

and funders is obvious, the questions of *mechanics* with which this volume deals are just as important, if not more, than delineating the contours of the institutional ideal as has been the preoccupation of the mainstream rule of law discourse. The smaller scale, more incremental reform agenda based on close engagement with—and learning from—local context that this book advocates may make less-ambitious promises than the over-night tectonic shifts that reform programs normally attempt, but holds the promise for a more embedded and durable mode of transformation with impacts for some of the most vulnerable communities in the world. The volume should be of interest to legal scholars and students interested in the transposition of the rule of law from the classroom to the real world, but is particularly recommended for policy makers in the position to allocate precious resources better and more effectively—as a reminder of the often uncomfortable and inconvenient realities of the world we inhabit.

## Reference

Ostrom, Elinor (1990) *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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*Saffron Shadows and Salvaged Scripts: Literary Life in Myanmar Under Censorship and in Transition*. By Ellen Wiles. New York: Columbia University Press, 2015. 288 pp. \$50 cloth.

Reviewed by Sarah Polcz, Stanford Law School

Myanmar turns a historic corner this year: the National League for Democracy party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, has just formed the majority of a new democratically elected parliament. The military government, which came to power in 1962, has been peacefully relinquishing control, albeit retaining a 25 percent presence in parliament which gives them the continued power of veto. A key indicator of change is the military's relaxation of its stranglehold on free speech, which supported half a century of repressive rule. At long last, Myanmar is on track to join the ranks of countries which protect freedom of expression. *Saffron Shadows* by Ellen Wiles is an important record of Burmese cultural production during this transition to democracy. Sociolegal scholars interested in censorship

and the rule of law will welcome the rich interviews with contemporary writers that comprise the core of this book. They provide the first empirical study of the Burmese literary community since 2012 when the government stopped rigorously enforcing censorship laws. Each interview is paired with newly translated selections of the writer's work. The selected pieces are, on the whole, strong in their own right, so *Saffron Shadows* will appeal to readers interested in contemporary Asian poetry and literature as well.

Wiles is a human rights lawyer; she conducted the ethnography while in Myanmar in 2013 training Burmese lawyers on the rule of law. Through this work, she explains, she encountered politically active poets and authors, who introduced her to the wider literary community. In all, 50 years of censorship profoundly impacted three generations of contemporary writers. Chapters Two, Three, and Four contain their selected writings, often alongside heart-wrenching testimonies of spiritual resilience in the face of brutal persecution by the authorities. The sampling of selections offers readers a peek into the mind of the censor. These works were treated by the censors in one of three ways: there are those that were banned completely and only published after 2012; some were heavily censored, only then receiving the stamp of approval; while others were readily approved, with the junta even bestowing special honors on their authors. Unsurprisingly, censors banned outright or partially censored writing that overtly depicted challenges to the military's authority. For example, one of the translations in the book is a chapter excerpt from a novel describing a young man who is thrown in jail, simply for walking alongside protesting monks during the 2007 Saffron Revolution. When it was submitted to the censors, the whole novel was banned and the author's own publishing house was immediately shut down. The book was only published again after the lifting of the most repressive censorship laws in 2012. Off-limits topics also extended beyond politics. Burmese censors struck out passages of prose for offending conservative Burmese cultural norms; a scene in which a woman proposes marriage to a man would be enough to provoke their ire. Although prose, by virtue of its realism in comparison to poetry, was most likely to overtly criticize the regime, one of the interviewees' most interesting claims is that not prose but poetry was the literary form censors were most likely to ban or edit heavily. Censors were hyper-attuned, often correctly, to the poets' use of metaphor and symbolism to convey politically subversive sentiments. The poem "The Tiger" (p. 68) written by legendary poet and activist Win Tin during his decades-long imprisonment, is a deeply moving illustrative example of objectionable metaphor, although it could not have been published in any event as Win Tin was on the regime's blacklist. Win Tin's story exposes the ruthless punishment the military meted out to those who refused to comply with

ensorship mandates. Wiles' skill as an ethnographer is on display here. Through her engaging narrative, as a reader I was transported to Win Tin's humble rural abode to bear witness to his retelling of his own story, in his own words.

A notable common thread among the interviewees is that their desire to write fiction has been superseded by a drive to express their thoughts openly, eschewing the metaphorical and symbolic devices that were required to circumvent censorship. Several have been working frenetically on factual and opinion pieces now that they are at last permitted speak more freely. With this burst of energy, they have become important voices in Myanmar's burgeoning political and economic renaissance. Wiles' concluding analysis addresses the question "does literature inevitably decrease in meaning and significance in a transition phase, when it ceases to operate as it did as a form of resistance against law?" She notes that as with other historic examples of literary cultures immediately following a period of repressive censorship, such as post-1989 Germany, many Burmese writers are likely to take a break from literary writing (p. 232). Wiles observes that in post-Soviet era Russia, there was similarly a "thawing" period before people dared to break taboos again (p. 234). It is perhaps inevitable, especially after so many years, that writers from older generations will be hamstrung by self-censorship and old habits. All that said, it may only be a question of time. Wiles notes encouraging stirrings: several writers are already actively trying to strengthen ties in the literary community through conferences and by establishing links with international organizations. While the future of free expression in Myanmar is not yet fully clear, *Safefrom Shadows* is a thought-provoking and timely account of the triumph of the artistic spirit; Wiles succeeds in giving voice to the experiences and resilience of Burmese writers.

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*What Makes Law: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Law.* By Liam Murphy. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. 216 pp. \$34.99 paperback.

Reviewed by William Rose, Department of Political Science, Albion College

Liam Murphy's *What Makes Law: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Law* is offered as an "advanced introduction" to some central questions in general jurisprudence. Murphy, who holds faculty lines in