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Reflections on Global Poverty

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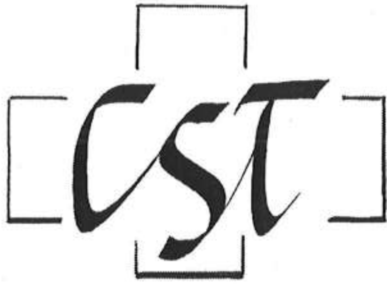

Catholic Social Teaching and World Poverty: Issues of Development and Justice

Villanova University

March 21-23, 2011

Villanova University invites papers and/or creative work on the following themes:

- Evaluation of the Millennium goals and steps for implementation; the financial crisis and implications for development and development strategies; critiques of income equality and strategies/policies/laws to deal with inordinate economic inequalities in society.

- Explorations of the "preferential option for the poor in current economic life; what would a new *Popolorum progressio* look like?; wealth creation and the common good; environmental degradation and the poor.

Papers should apply Catholic social teaching to these and related issues or illuminate new research in the humanities, social or natural sciences as well as public policy measures that can be brought into dialogue with Catholic social teaching.

The deadline for submitting papers for review is January 14, 2011.
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Maria Terese Dávila
Boston College
Daniel Groody, C.S.C.
University of Notre Dame
Stephen O'Connell
Swarthmore College

Jeff Madrick
Senior Fellow, Roosevelt Institute and the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis
Martin Ravallion
World Bank
Shaun Ferris
Catholic Relief Services, Senior Advisor in Agriculture and the Environment

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"Decisions [about our economic future] must be judged in light of what they do for the poor, what they do to the poor, and what they enable the poor to do for themselves. The fundamental moral criterion for all economic decisions, policies and institutions is this: They must be at the service of all people, *especially the poor*."

Economic Justice for All #24

Introduction

On October 15, 2010, Pope Benedict XVI in a " Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization on the Occasion of World Food Day 2010," stated " the recent worthy campaign *1 Billion Hungry*, by which FAO seeks to raise awareness of the urgency of the fight against hunger has highlighted the need for an adequate response both from individual countries and from the international community, even when the response is limited to assistance or emergency aid. This is why a reform of international institutions by themselves are not enough, because integral human development is primarily a vocation, and therefore it involves a free assumption of responsibility in solidarity on the part of everyone."[1] Benedict uses this occasion to bring a focus on the issue of the many millions of poor people who go to bed hungry, die of hunger and malnutrition. The plight of the poor has been a concern of the Church for centuries, especially in its official teaching.

From the framework of Catholic social teaching, Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* (1891) responded to the plight of the working poor.[2] "But all agree, and there can be no question whatever , that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the very large majority of the very poor." For over a century , Catholic social teaching has addressed the plight of the poor. Pope Paul VI in *Populorum progressio* (1967) addresses the concerns for wholistic human development throughout the world. He cites the mixed blessings of colonizers who brought scientific and technical knowledge to areas of the world in need of development. They also brought structures of Colonialism and its consequences . The Christian vision of development as developed by Paul VI includes a commitment to solidarity, the common good, as well as the will and desire for peace.[3] Perhaps *Populorum progressio* is most salient document in CST on this issue of world poverty and international development. Even so, one might ponder what *Populorum progressio* might look like if it were written today.

Within the United States, a fairly affluent country, there are many people who are poor and without the resources for human flourishing. Catholic Charities, USA brings Catholic social teaching into the context of public policy for the purpose of addressing poverty in the United States. On September 28, 2010 more than 700 Catholic Charities delegates from the United States lobbied members of Congress to become (correspond) of the National Opportunity and Community Renewal Act " A bill drafted by Catholic Charities that would transform the way federal, state, and local anti-poverty programs operate."[4] The goal of the bill is to reduce poverty in the U.S. in half within the next decade. Sen. Robert Casey introduced the bill in the Senate September 28 and Rep. James McGovern introduced it in the House.

Charles M.A. Clark and Sr. Helen Alford, O.P. provide a handy summary hat depicts the current state of poverty in the world. Greater sensitivity to the poor and different priorities could help address this challenge.

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[1] Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Jacques Diouf, Director General of the FAO on the Occasion of World Food Day, 2010. <http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/food/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20101015_world-food-day-2010_en.html.>

[2] O'Brien and Shannon, Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000, p.15.

[3] Ibid. p.244.

[4] Jerry Filteau. "Catholic Charities pushes new anti-poverty legislation," *National Catholic Reporter* , October 15, 2010, pp 5-.

Two Different Realities	
Reality of Poverty	**Reality of Wealth**
- The poorest 40% of the world's population accounts for 5% of global income. - In 2005, about 1.4 billion people lived below the international poverty line, earning less than $1.25/day. - 1 billion people do not have enough to eat. - 1.2. billion people have inadequate access to water and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. 1.8 billion people consume about 20 liters of water per day. - $550 billion have been paid in principal and interest over the past 3 decades on 540 billion dollars of loans, yet $523 billion of debt burden remain.	- The richest 20% accounts for 75% of world income - The world's billionaires - just 497 people were worth 3.5 trillion dollars, over 7% of the world's gross national product. - Over one billion people are overweight. - In the UK the average person uses over 50 liters of water per day just flushing toilets. Average total daily usage in the UK is 150 liters. Total daily usage in the United States is 600 liters. - The world's military expenditure in 2007 was estimated at 1339 trillion dollars.

Source: Charles M. A. Clark & Sr. Helen Alford, O.P, *Rich and Poor: Rebalancing the Economy*, London: Catholic Truth Society (2010) p.6.

In this issue of *Occasional Papers*, several of our faculty provide insight on the issues they encounter in addressing world poverty. Peter Spitaler provides an important and essential starting point for us with "The Biblical View of the Poor- A Very Brief Survey." The biblical view of history provides a glimpse of God's activity, "the biblical tradition constantly involves God's relationship with the poor and solidarity with, and advocacy for, the poor as matters of justice. Failure of the weal thy in relation to the poor equals alienation of their lives from the sphere of God. "

St. Augustine our institutional and spiritual mentor provides a view of poverty that reflects his understanding of the world in fourth century North Africa. T. J. van Bavel, O.S.A. shares his thoughts on Augustine's Option for the Poor: Preaching and Praxis. Justice toward the poor is part of a larger context of love of God and love of neighbor.

Kishor Thanawala explores the complex meaning of poverty and the difficulty economists have in measuring poverty in " Poverty and Development Economics." Meghan Keita's "A Political Economy of African Development" challenges conceptions of development that privilege an unquestioned colonial, postcolonial institutional framework. Kieta addresses the importance of agency on the part of peoples in developing countries.

The Middle East and its presence on the world scene attest to the many complex social and economic concerns of its people. Catherine Warwick's "Poverty and Vulnerability in the Middle East" indicates the status of the poor in these countries is reflected in the vulnerable lives of workers who struggle with "ongoing civil and international conflict, and the demographic trends that will not solve themselves – not through the invisible hand of the market nor the heavy hand of foreign military intervention."

Lastly, Jennifer Joyce Kisko teaches a course on poverty and homelessness in the United States. Her papers shows how the course attempts to "unpack some of the unexpected ethical challenges that tropes about homelessness pose," through examination of contemporary film, high fashion and recent works by Steve Lopez , Sherman Alexie, Ron Hall, Denver Moore, and HBO"s television series *The Wire*.

I hope you will all share these insights on poverty with your classes, families and friends.

Barbara E. Wall
Vice President for Mission and Ministry

The Biblical View of the Poor
A Very Brief Survey

By Peter Spitaler

The *topos* "poor" or "poverty" has an established place in the biblical traditions. It confronts us with the harsh living conditions of the poor in ancient Israel: home- or landlessness, abuse, socioeconomic exploitation, political oppression, legal bias, lack of sufficient food and water. The web of poverty was vast and densely woven, and the poor were found among diverse social groups living on the edge of existence: small farmers, day laborers, construction workers, beggars, debt slaves, village dwellers. What they had in common was lack of economic resources and material goods but also the experience of political and legal powerlessness.

There are a quite a few Hebrew words for "poverty" and "the poor;" and each has multiple layers of meaning. The lexical diversity attests to poverty being a significant reality in ancient Israelite society. It permitted biblical authors to convey nuanced aspects or circumstances of the phenomenon and its origins. For example, there were the beggarly poor (*ʾebyôn*) who suffered severe economic deprivation and/or legal distress (Pss 35:10; 40:18); the poor peasants (*dal*) who mostly were beleaguered farmers, politically weak, economically exploited, and physically worn out (Isa 10:2; 11:4; Amos 5:11); the lazy poor (*ma?sôr*) whose poverty was thought to result from laziness or excessive living (Prov 6:11; 14:23; 21:5.17; 24:34); the unjustly oppressed poor (*ʿānı ̂*) who were economically exploited, unjustly treated in legal decisions, and victimized through deception (Isa 3:15; 10:2; 32:7; Ezek 18:12); the socio-economically poor (*ʿănāwı ̂m*) who endured misery caused by oppression (Pss 25:9; 34:3; 69:33; 76:10; 147:6; 149:4); and the politically and economically poor (*rāš*) in the sense of political and economic inferiority, also frequently thought to result from personal laziness or disordered living (Prov 10:4; 13:23).

In the NT, the Greek word *ptōchos* is the usual term for the poor, occurring mostly in the synoptic gospels and in John, Paul, James, and Revelation. In Greek literature, *ptōchos* denotes the utterly destitute person who lacks the necessities of life (food, water, clothing, shelter, health, land/home, employment, freedom, dignity and honor) and experiences a level of poverty that includes begging as a way of life. Depending on the social, economic, historical or cultural perspective of the author, *ptōchos* can describe someone who will not work (the "permanent beggar") or someone who, through life's fortunes, has lost all possession or who cannot work for health reasons (the "unfortunate beggar"). A *ptōchos* is thus contrasted with a person who has little or no property but lives frugally and is able, albeit barely, to earn his or her living; for such a person, the ancient Greeks mostly used the word *penēs* (in the NT used only in 2 Cor 8:9).

The various Old Testament traditions (legal, prophetic, wisdom, and liturgical) and the New Testament traditions (gospel narratives, letters) usually see poverty as descriptive of God's unwavering concern for the poor and for the overall welfare of the community.

Legal texts regulate the treatment of the poor by offering some limited provisions to ease their burdens. In particular, the legal codes sought to ensure the social well-being of the poor through the redistribution of goods and food (Exod 23:11), and through the establishment of restrictions regarding slave ownership (Ex. 21:2; 23:10), the treatment of wage laborers (Deut 24:14-15), and the securing of loans (Deut 15:11).

Prophetic texts concern themselves with the poor as victims of social injustice (Isa 32:7; Amos 2:7; 8:4). Economically exploited by the large landowners and ruling members of ancient Israelite society they are unfairly treated in legal cases (Isa 10:2; 11:4), pay unfair taxes (on grain) to the large landowners (Amos 5:11), are abused in the debt-slavery system (Amos 8:6), and lack land for grazing (Isa 14:30). In these texts, God is depicted as the protector (Isa 25:4; Zeph 3:12) and the champion of the oppressed (Hab 3:14; Zeph 3:12). The poor are promised a just judge in a future king (Isa 11:4); they will rejoice before God when God topples the tyrants (29:19) and tramples those who are in power (Isa 26:5-6).

Wisdom texts offer divergent positions. Proverbs promotes the view that, to the wise, poverty is the consequence of laziness or the result of a divine judgment. Consequently, the wise were concerned about the dangers of idleness. Still, the "lazy poor" is not to be mocked; God creates all people (Prov 17:5; 22:2; 28:27; 29:13). Whereas the life of poverty is not a virtue, generosity toward the poor is; and helping the poor is a way to honor God (14:31). In this regard, the wise frequently warn of the dangers of mistreating the poor (14:31; 21:13; 22:16; 28:3,8,15); a lack of generosity can lead one into poverty (11:24; 22:16; 24:34) but showing favor to the brings fortune to the giver (14:21). In contrast, Job agrees with the prophetic analysis of poverty and understands it to be the result of political and economic injustices. Job, who had to defend himself against the charge that he has exploited the poor, viewed the poor as victims of economic oppression (24:4) and murder (24:14) and assisted and defended them as a father would (29:16). He also grieved for them in their misfortune (Job 30:25) and clothed them (31:19). The book emphasizes a concrete understanding of the situation of the poor and portrays concrete deeds as the basis of Job's innocence before his friends and God. In defending the cause of the poor (31:16) and rescuing those who cried out (29:12) Job's actions match those of God who hears the cry of the poor (34:28).

The ***Psalms*** acknowledge God as the agent who rescues, or provides for, the poor (12:6; 18:28; 22:25; 34:7; 35:10; 40:18; 68:11; 69:34; 70:6; 72:13; 82:3,4; 109:31; 113:7; 140:13). The psalmist offers prayers on their behalf, calling on God to help the poor (25:16; 40:18; 69:30; 86:1; 88:16; 102:1; 109:22) and not to ignore or forget them (9:13,9; 10:12,17; 70:6; 74:19).

The NT idea of the poor is informed by OT and Greek traditions. Acknowledging the persistent presence of the poor (Mk 14:5) and describing them as victims of abuse (Mk 12:42-43) and neglect (Lk 16:19-31), the *Gospels* give priority attention to the poor. They are the recipients of blessings (Lk 6:20; Mt 5:3), the good news (Mt 11:5) and healing (Jn 9:8), which corresponds with warnings against the dangers of wealth (Mk 10:23) and a rejection of wealth and the wealthy (Mk 10:21; Lk 6:24; 8:14; 12:15, 21; 14:33; 18:22,25). When one puts the concern for the poor in larger socio-cultural, ideological, and literary contexts one finds references to poverty also in texts that have no word for poor/poverty but nevertheless describe the phenomenon (Mt 25:31-46) and generally closely related to the concern for other socially weak and marginalized groups: the sick, the hungry, widows, the divorced, prostitutes, tax collectors, peasants, slaves. The concern for the poor is also evident in the fierce denunciation of oppression (Mt 23:1-36) and the importance attached to almsgiving (Mt 6:1-4; Lk 12:33). In contrast to many Greek traditions, in which giving alms is not regarded as a virtue, good works for the poor is the only criterion for the final judgment (Mt 25:31-46). Thus, Jesus understands his entire proclamation as good news for the poor (Lk 7:22).

In ***Paul's letters***, remembering the poor (Gal 2:10) is a non-negotiable element in the praxis of the faithful, as is the effort to raise funds for the poor in Jerusalem (Rom 15:26; 2 Cor 8-9). Jesus himself has become poor (2 Cor 8:9) in solidarity with the poor (2 Cor 8:2).

James contains a strong appeal to solidarity with orphans, widows (1:27), the poor (2:2,15), day workers (5:4), and the sick (5:14-15), and a vigorous denunciation on the wealthy both inside and outside the community (2:2). In continuity with the prophetic tradition, James never blames the victims; rather he focuses on "oppression" (2:6) as the basic cause of poverty: legal injustice against poor debtors (2:1-12); greedy merchants (4:13-17); landowners withholding wages (5:4). Wealth that oppresses and status-oriented models of interaction that perpetrate injustice are irreconcilable both with faith (2:1) and with God's choosing of the poor before the world (2:5). As in the gospels, being "doers of the word" (1:22) and performing "good works" (2:14-26) become the norms of communal practice. Advancing the gospel tradition, James commends that the oppressed respond to injustice wisely (1:3-4) with a mix of strategies: nonresistance (5:6), peace (4:17-18), prayer (1:5-7; 5:13–17) and, above all, a prophetic voice speaking out on their own behalves (5:10). Whereas poverty is a decisive issue in the biblical traditions, not all biblical authors concern themselves with the plight of the poor, and those that do present considerable diversity of perspectives regarding the poor/poverty. They also differ in their theologies and analyses of poverty and in their social visions and ideas about social justice. Still, behind the variety of cultural and socio-economical influences and perspectives, and in the plurality of notions about poverty and the poor, we also find continuity in perspectives on poverty and oppression and consistency in thought. In contrast with the Greek world that has little sympathy for the idea that the poor are under special divine protection, the biblical traditions consistently invoke God's relationship with the poor and solidarity with, and advocacy for, the poor as matters of justice. Failure of the wealthy in relation to the poor equals alienation of their lives from the sphere of God.

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Paugustine on Poverty and the Poor

By T. J. Van Bavel, OSA

Augustine's theological reflections on poverty and the poor are based on four principles:

1. God created the world for everyone.
2 All are born naked.
3. Helping the poor is a question of justice.
4. Greed is the main cause of poverty.

1) God's creation as ground of equality.

The earth is God's creation and He has given it to all without distinction. Accordingly, all goods are in principle common goods. The earth belongs equally to all as Augustine states: "We ourselves brought nothing into the world (1 *Tim.* 6: 7) at the moment of our birth. You have come into the world, and you have found there a well-filled table. But the earth is the Lord's and its fullness also *(Ps.* 24, 1). ...God gave the world to the poor as well as to the rich" *(Sermon* 39, 1, 2 - 2, 4. *PL* 38, 242). From the fact that God's creation was destined to all, it follows that the created goods belong primarily to God, and not to us. All that we have, we got it on loan from God. We are only stewards or dispensers, and we are not permitted to consider anything as our absolute property. Consequently, "A human person has never complete power over that which he possesses" *(S. on ps.* 49, 18. *PL* 36, 576).

Augustine hears as it were God saying to all of us: "Why should I ask you things which I myself have created? That which you possess, I have given it to you. Does it then not belong rather to Me who created it than to you?. ...If you are my servant, all your property is mine" *(S. on ps.* 49, 17. *PL* 36, 576). We are beggars in God's sight. In order for Him to acknowledge His beggars, we must also acknowledge those who beg of us. "What impudence you have to ask something of your Lord, you who do not recognize your equal". *(S.* 61, 6, 7 - 7, 8. *PL* 38, 411-412).

2) Our birth as ground of equality.

A poor person is our brother or sister, because we all are born from the same parents, Adam and Eve. We live under the same vault of heaven. The difference between rich and poor is only a question of external things which are after all not ours. Accordingly, we must make a distinction between what we are by nature, namely human beings, and what we possess, namely external things *(S. on ps.* 72, 13. *PL* 36, 920-921). At our birth we brought nothing into the world for we are born naked. The equality of all human beings finds its strongest expression when we look at the manner in which we have been born: "When children are born, let parents, servants, retainers depart, let the obsequious depart, and see if you can recognize the rich children as they cry. Let a rich and a poor woman give birth, let them give birth at' the same time. Let nobody attend the ones giving birth... and see whether you can recognize a difference. Behold, rich men and women, you have brought nothing into this world, nor are you able to bring anything hence. What I said of those who have been brought to birth I say also of those who have died. ...See if you can distinguish the bones of the rich from those of the poor" *(S.* 61, 8, 9. *PL* 38, 412).

Augustine draws the conclusion: nobody is born as a rich or as a poor person, and nobody dies as such. Therefore, by nature we are all equals.

3) Relief of the poor is a question of justice.

How can one deny the inference that as long as it is possible to find any who lack what abundance can provide, owners of superfluous goods are literally usurping their property? In Augustine's words: "The superfluous goods of the rich are the necessary goods for the poor. The rich possess things which belong to others *(res alienae)" (S. on ps.* 147, 12. *PL* 37, 1922. *S.* 206, 2. *PL* 38, 1041). The bishop of Hippo considers the refusal of help as a violation of justice, the virtue which preeminently enshrines respect for rights and dues: "What a person uses unjustly, does not by right belong to him or her" *(S.* 50, 2, 4. *PL* 38, 327). The individual owner is

bound by the norms of justice itself to base his conduct upon the principle that possessions held in superfluity belong by divine law to the Lazarus at his or her gate.. Augustine declares: "We are not looking after your wealth, but after your justice" *(S. on ps.* 146, *17. PL* 37, 1910). And we read in the *Confessions (XIII, 17,* 21) that we have to be like fruit-yielding trees, that is, "Rescuing the person who is the victim of injustice from the hand of the powerful, and giving him or her shelter and protection by the power and force of just judgment". To give help is nothing else than to repay a debt: "If you were giving something that was your own, then it would be pure largesse, but since you give what is God's, you are repaying a debt" *(S. on ps.* 95, 15. *PL* 37, 1236).

However, justice is not the last word, for according to Augustine justice is one of the many aspects of love, and the beginning of love is to give material goods to your brother and sister" *(Comm. on the first Letter of John* 5, 12. *PL* 35, 2018).

4) Greed as the main cause of poverty.

Avarice or greed is a vicious disposition that refuses to share or to hold in common. As such it is the root of all evils. Many people are possessed by material goods rather than possessors of them *(S. on ps.* 48, s. 1, 2. *PL* 36, 544). In the *City of God* (XIX, 12) Augustine writes: "Pride hates a fellowship of equality under God, and, as though a human being were God, the proud person loves to impose his own dominion on fellow human beings". Riches go hand in hand with covetousness and power. Augustine protests strongly against the motto of the misers, the rapacious and the oppressors of innocent people: "The more you have, the greater you are, that is your device, and this means the more money and property you have, the more powerful you are" *(En. on ps.* 51, 14. *PL* 36, 609). Such depravity resembles a dangerous sea wherein the big fish, that is, those who enjoy much power, prey voraciously upon weaker vulnerable victims. Augustine cautions such persons as follows: "Do attend, when a fish has devoured a smaller one, it is in turn devoured by a greater than itself' *(S. on ps.* 64, 9. *PL* 36, 780-781). In private goods there lurks always the danger of discord, division and drifting apart: "It is those private things which we possess as individuals that give rise to lawsuits, enmities, disagreements, civil wars, disturbances, social strife, scandals, sins, general wickedness, murders... Do we ever go to law for the sake of things which we possess in common?" *(S. on ps.* 131, 5-6. *PL* 37, 1718).

Accordingly, greed is one of the most important causes of poverty.

The identification of Christ with the poor.

This is a main theme of Augustine's theology for it forms part of his doctrine on the 'Total Christ". The identification of. Christ with the poor was the recognition of their human dignity, as well as a motive for feeding and clothing them. "Be faithful to Christ in His poverty" is for Augustine the same as saying "Be faithful to your neighbour in his poverty" *(S.* 41, 7. *PL* 38, 251-252). Augustine's effort to link Christ with the poor reflects his theological insight, based upon Mt. 25, how Christ is still present in this world and how He is to be grasped by the faithful. The suffering and poverty of Jesus Christ is continually reflected in the life and history of suffering and oppressed human beings. Here in this pilgrimage on earth, the hungry Christ is fed, the thirsty Christ is given to drink, the naked Christ is clothed, Christ is welcomed in the stranger, Christ is visited in the sick. When human persons are in want, it is Christ who is in want *(S.* 236, 3. *PL* 38, 1121). All this is beautifully expressed in the following text: "Perhaps you tell yourself: How blessed are those who merited to receive Christ! O if only I had been there! 0 if only I had been one of the two disciples he met on the road to Emmaus! Go out to the road. Christ the stranger is not absent. Do you think that you are not permitted to welcome Christ? How • can this be?, you ask. Once having risen from the dead, ...Christ ascended into heaven, did He not?...and will He not come again until the end of time to judge the living and the dead?...When

He bestows his kingdom, will His words then pertain to you: 'What you did to one of the least of mine, you did it to me'?. He who is rich is in need until the end of time. He is truly in need, not in His Head, but in His members.

Where is He in need? He suffered in His members when He said: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me'?" *(S.* 239, 6, 7. *PL* 38, 1129-1130. *S.* 25, 8, 8. *PL* 38, 170-171). Christ is present in the poor; when we give to the poor, it is Christ's hand which accepts *(S.* 86, 3, 3. *PL* 38, 524).

This is the reason why Sacred Scripture attributes so much to almsgiving - in the widest sense of this word - that the Lord announces beforehand that the fruit of this alone will be imputed as meritorious to those on His right hand *(Enchir.* 18, 69. *PL* 40, 265).

Is *the* religious motivation egoistic?

Augustine often repeats that alms are due to the poor in justice, that the earth is created for all, and that the superfluity of the rich is the property of the poor. However, some authors criticize Augustine contending that helping the poor is for him much more a self-centered spiritual exercise than the alleviation of social ills. It confers benefits on the giver, for in the poor we give to Christ himself, and heaven will be our reward. Do the poor then, not become a means to personal sanctification? Is there still room for the recognition of the individual nature of the poor? Did Augustine neglect the poor as persons, or did he see the problem of poverty only in terms of religious values?

It is true that Augustine emphasizes that we touch Christ in the poor, and that the poor are the porters who transfer the wealth which someone has accumulated from earth to heaven. However, we have to read these texts as exhortations meant for Christians. It is not difficult to quote a number of texts in which the poor are much more than means. Rich and poor have to bear one another's burden. Nobody is permitted to say: "Everyone shall carry his own burden" *(S.* 164, 7, 9. *PL* 38, 899). Rich and poor are, so to speak, interdependent. It is a question of mutuality in sharing the burden of humanity: "Although one gives and another receives, the one who ministers and the one for whom the ministry is performed are joined" *(S.* 259, 5. *PL* 38, 1200).

It is true that Augustine declares: "God made the poor to test the rich" *(S.* 39, 4, 6. *PL* 38, 243), but this is not to proclaim the goodness of poverty, but to exhort the faithful to perform works of mercy. The following text admits of no doubt: "It is better that no one should be impoverished than that you should perform a work of mercy. For a person who wishes others to be miserable, so that he or she can be merciful, is possessed by a cruel mercy, just as a doctor who would wish others to be sick, so that he might practice his art, would be a cruel healer" *(S. on ps.* 125, 14. *PL* 37, 1666. *Conf.* III, 2, 3).

We are not allowed to wish that there are hungry to feed, naked to clothe, dead to bury, quarrelling people to reconcile, for in giving, lurks the danger of power and domination: 'Take away misery, and there will be no room for works of mercy. ...Your love will be more true, if you love a happy person, on whom you have nothing to bestow. Such love will have a greater sincerity and a far more unspoilt purity. Once you have bestowed gifts on the unfortunate, you may easily yield to the temptation to exalt yourself over the poor and to keep him or her subject to yourself. They were in need and you shared. Because you have performed a service, you seem to be greater than the ones whom you have served. You should want them to be your equals, so that both of you may be subject to the One on whom no favour can be bestowed" *(Comm. on the first letter of John* 8, *5. PL* 35, 2038 2039). In the same work, Augustine stresses the equality of all human beings: "A true Christian should never set himself up over other human beings. God

gave you a place above the beasts. ...If you wish to be better than another person, you will grudge to see that person as your equal. Therefore, you ought to wish all equal to yourself' *(ib.* 8, 8. *PL* 35, 2040).

If the poor were simply means, then they would be no more than useful things, an idea rejected decidedly by Augustine: "Human persons are never to be loved as things to be consumed, but after the manner of friendship and goodwill, leading us to give to those we love. And if there is nothing we can give, goodwill alone is enough for the lover" *(ib.* 8, 5. *PL* 35, 2038).

From these texts, we may conclude that Augustine's eschatological and christological interpretation of assistance to the poor does not prevent him from having an open eye for the poor as persons. The aim of helping them is to eliminate misery, not to perpetuate it out of selfish love.

For more information, see *Augustine's Option for the Poor: Preaching and Praxis* by T. J. van Bavel, OSA, Augustinian Curia, Secretariate for Justice and Peace, Rome 1992. Used with permission.

Poverty and Development Economics

By Kishor Thanawala

Although it seems easy to identify people living under conditions of poverty, economists do not always agree on the definition of *poverty.*

Following casual observation of how poor people live, one approach uses an absolute measure. In this sense, *absolute poverty* is described as a condition where a person or a household has difficulty meeting their bare subsistence essential needs in terms of food, clothing and shelter to ensure continued survival. The limitation of this approach lies in the fact that what constitutes *bare subsistence essential needs* may differ in different places (in Mexico City, in Miami, in Minneapolis) or over time (in the year 1810, in 1910, in 2010).

Another approach interprets poverty in a relative sense. A household would be classified as poor, if its income is below a certain proportion of average (or sometimes, median) income. In this sense, a household whose is income is less than, say, 20% of median income would be classified as poor. An alternative way of measuring *relative poverty* is to specify a percentile in the size distribution of income. Thus, for example, households with the lowest, say, 10% of incomes would be classified as poor.

There is, therefore, a fair degree of arbitrariness in the definition and measurement of poverty. It is also important to note that a simple measure of how many households live under conditions of poverty (absolute or relative) does not take into account the *depth* of poverty. Depth refers to the difference between the poverty line and a poor household's income.

Regardless of how one defines poverty, knowing how many people or households live under conditions of poverty, helps in focusing attention on the nature and extent of poverty in a society. And, availability of relevant statistical data pertaining to the incidence of poverty is necessary in the process of formulation of appropriate policies for alleviating poverty.

From the perspective of an economist, a household may be poor for one or more of the following reasons: (a) members are unable to find jobs because of prevailing recession in the country; (b) even though members are employed in productive activities, their wage/salary levels are lower than poverty thresholds; (c) members are unable to work because of illness or physical handicaps; (d) natural disasters like earthquakes or floods have resulted in destruction of their homes, farms, and/or production tools.

Economists do not always agree on the question of what, if any, interventionist policies should be undertaken by governments. The disagreements among economists arise mostly because of differences in their views about the role of government in the working of the economy. Even among economists who agree that market failures

could lead to unfortunate consequences including significant increase in the incidence of poverty, there is no consensus about the appropriate government policy to address the situation. For example, some economists would argue that government intervention leads to price distortions resulting in inefficient allocation of resources, and therefore, should be avoided altogether.

Depending on how we define poverty, between 1 billion and 2.5 billion people in the world are estimated to be living under conditions of poverty. A majority of these poor people live in South Asia, in East/South-East Asia, and in Sub-Saharan Africa. We should note that substantial progress has been made in reducing poverty levels in recent years in countries like China.

The Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight goals, adopted by the United Nations in 2000, represent a collective resolve on the part of the global community to substantially reduce extreme poverty throughout the world. Among other things, the MDGs specify a target reduction of 50% in the proportion of people living on less than $1 a day as well as a similar target reduction in the proportion of people who suffer from starvation.

Since a large majority of poor people live in less developed countries, discussions pertaining to poverty reduction are the focus of study in the field of *development economics*. Development economists have often been criticized for devoting insufficient attention/time to the topic of poverty alleviation policies. For example, recently the President of the World Bank challenged research economists to fill the key knowledge gaps facing development practitioners instead of concentrating on questions they can study within the existing theoretical frameworks.

There is general agreement among development economists that in order to reduce poverty, a less developed country should follow policies that (1) promote economic growth, and (2) help poor people in the country contribute to, and share in, the opportunities that such growth presents. There is also general agreement that governments in developing countries face severe budget constraints as well as limited availability of statistical data and administrative or organizational capabilities. Beyond this, developing countries face difficult choices. For example, governments raise revenues to help fight poverty by adopting progressive income tax structures. Such progressive tax policies can come at the cost of a reduction in efficiency. Also, policies that aim to reduce current poverty levels may not always be consistent with those that are most suitable from the perspective of reducing poverty levels over a period of time.

Over the years, mainstream economists have discussed the problem of poverty in a framework of positive (as opposed to normative) science. For the most part, this has been true even in the case of discussions about poverty in developing countries. In recent years, the question of *values* has been raised in the context of conceptualizing what one means when one talks about development of a poor society/country. Some economists have advanced the view that core values like sustenance (in the sense of ability to meet basic needs), self-esteem (in the sense of having a sense of worth or self-respect) and freedom (in the sense of being able to choose) are common aspirations coveted/pursued by all people in every society.

Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has argued that income is not very meaningful in understanding what constitutes poverty. According to Sen, "capability to function" is more significant than income in determining whether a person is poor or not. Sen believes that economic growth and development should be "concerned with enhancing the lives we lead and the freedoms we enjoy." This expansion of the concept of poverty beyond income has created formidable problems for measurement of the incidence of poverty. This has led to discussions relating to *human development*, and to construction of *Human Development Index* and *Human Poverty Index* for countries.

While Sen's expansion of the concept of poverty is of relatively recent vintage, non-economic considerations in discussions relating to the topic of poverty have a much longer history. For example, philosophers as well as theologians have talked about the moral dimension of poverty over the centuries. Indeed, poverty has been described as a "worldwide form of injustice". One can find discussions about *The Common Good* and the *Preferential Option for the Poor* (or their equivalent) in scriptures of many religions. In the tradition of Catholic Social Thought, for example, several Papal Encyclicals have discussed aspects of poverty and income inequality:

> 1. Paul VI argued in *Populorum Progressio* (1967) that "Every nation must produce more and better quality goods to give to all its inhabitants a truly human standard of living, and also to contribute to the common development of the human race.";
>
> 2. John Paul II asserted in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1988) that "One must denounce the existence of economic, financial and social mechanisms which, although they are manipulated by people, often function almost automatically, thus accentuating the situation of wealth for some and poverty for the rest."

Although economic variables seem to dominate popular discussions about poverty, economic, social, institutional as well as moral considerations are relevant to, and need to be integrated in, a serious discourse on poverty.

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A Political Economy of African Development

By Maghan Keita

In 1991, Axelle Kabou wrote the dispiriting *Et si l'Afrique refussait le développement.* The year before, in an interview entitled "Don't Develop Us Anymore," Fantu Cheru struck a decidedly different tone when he stated that Africans are "resorting to a silent revolution" that consitituted "an alternative to…[an]…anti-people…status quo." While these positions seem to be contradictions in the study of political economy, from my standpoint, they are quite complementary. Kabou speaks of the inadequacies of a political elite; Cheru chronicles the responses of the politicized masses to them. A decade later, the world realized that the Chinese, and later the Indians had 'discovered' Africa. They were followed, ten or so years later, by the Brazilians. And so the second 'scramble' for Africa has commenced. Or so it seems. The question that centers on those politicized masses is what role they will have in shaping the political economy of African Development.

A political economy of African Development — even if such a thing was possible — has been inevitably shrouded in the privileging of colonialism, its tropes, and its attendant features: the 'anti-colonial,' 'neo-colonial,' and 'postcolonial' conditions. That colonial privileging may have caused many of us to miss the fundamental nature of African agency historically. This also may have hampered the ability of many of us, as students of that history, to project a future of potential for Africa. A political economy of African Development centers on African agency and the possibility of Africa, writ large, to marshal its resources on its own behalf.

One of the other paradoxes in this inability to imagine an African future based on Africa's history, is the imagination of a future of development that has been, for the most part, naïve. Naïve in the respect that many

who watched 'liberated' 'anti-colonial,' and 'postcolonial' Africa unfold, believed that 'liberation' was the dawn of some new age of egalitarianism in which all benefits of the social product would not simply be distributed in the new paradigm of equity, but that redistribution would be morally and ethically sound.

Development doesn't work that way; not even in the most enlightened of countries, on the most advanced of continents. How could it be so in Africa? This was, in part, the question posed by Axelle Kabou.
Yet, Cheru is still guardedly optimistic. Writing in 2002 of an "African Renaissance," he finds in globalization the possibilities for an "unprecedented demand for democracy and rule-based political systems." These need to be meshed with 'common sense' approaches to 'human development.'

Cheru charts the declines in the African investment in human capital in the 20 to 30 years that preceded his analyses, and he concludes that if Africa is going to become competitive in the new global economy it must invest in education — particularly that of women — agricultural reform, and technology. Cheru also believes that Africa must play a greater role — it must become an "effective advocate for changes in global economic governance." This is in line with his idea in 2000 that there is a possibility for "carving out a middle ground aimed at harnessing the opportunities offered by globalization." He ends his 2000 piece with the rather trenchant observation that the development prescriptions provided for Africa were out of sync with the strategies that led to the rise of the most dynamic economic powers of the late twentieth century, the "Asian Tigers."

Enter China and India. Through one lens, 'the Chinese entry into Africa' is a "neo-imperialistic resource grab." However, as Carol Paton and Claire Bisseker report in the Financial Mail of South Africa (online, 7/8/10), "in contrast to western suspicions over the 'new colonization of Africa' most African governments have welcomed Chinese involvement in their economies." And as one of Anthony Germain of the CBC's sources indicated, "China's efficiency is a bold challenge to several decades of failed western policies." (online,4/22/10)

These comments are re-contextualized through the rather jaundiced lens of Chinese alliance with despotic African regimes. The sub-title to Germain's piece is "Investments come without demands for democracy." As he puts it, there are "billions of dollars with few conditions."

Yet, as Daniel Large points out, there is "the current tendency to exaggerate the spectre of existing and imminent Chinese power in Africa" as one indication that "China is at war with the liberal development agenda." Large goes on to state that China's relation with some African regimes, no matter how distasteful, are a mirror of western complicity in Africa over the past several decades, but without the economic success.

Germain's concern about "billions of dollars with few conditions" overlooks the 'conditionality' of the most recent of western engagement with Africa which both Kabou and Cheru would say are iconic. On the one hand would be western concerns for 'stability and security.' These might be best illustrated in the Congo/Zaire debacle that produced Mobutu Sese Seko and the current round of chaos in that territory and among its neighbors. This is matched by western support of apartheid South Africa up to the last moments of that regime. As Large notes, Chinese support for African governments in conflict and post-conflict stages, looks less revolutionary and 'illiberal' than an endorsement of the traditional "existing political economy of natural resource extraction in Africa."

By the same token, the conditionalities of structural adjustment foisted on Africa by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are the very programs referenced by Cheru as having savaged the public sector in Africa and its crucial need at this very moment to invest in its human capital. So the fear of another spate of African victimization needs to be tempered by the most recent histories and by the recognition of African agency.

The Chinese (and Indian and Brazilian) 'rising tide' metaphor aside, we are back to Cheru's 1990's optimism

and his 2002 vision of an "African Renaissance." Both hinge on his notion of this new African 'revolution' among its political masses. And if this sounds far-fetched in terms of the prospects of an African political economy, we can conclude by taking critical stock of Germain's closing observations in 2010 :

> Most Africans I spoke to...don't blame the Chinese for making sure the wealth is spread around. They blame themselves. If the profits from a nation's resources seem to be squandered or spread about within the governing elites, they said, that is a matter for Africans to resolve.

"A matter for Africans to resolve." Cheru may be correct. In the political economic sense, something new may be emerging in Africa.

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Poverty and Vulnerability in the Middle East

By Catherine Warrick

Images of Middle East often focus on extraordinary wealth, from the extravagant lifestyles of Saudi princes to the architectural excesses of Dubai's skyscrapers and luxury shopping malls – one of which even has an indoor ski mountain with real snow. These images tell a story of fabulous wealth, captivating our attention and sometimes obscuring our ability to see the poverty alongside the riches.

For all its much-vaunted oil wealth, the Middle East as a whole remains a region with serious problems of poverty and economic underdevelopment. Petroleum resources are concentrated in only a few countries; Saudi Arabia has enjoyed decades of oil revenue, but Jordan and Yemen, its neighbors to the north and south, have no such resources. Yemen, in fact, is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita income of $2500 – about 1/20th that of the United States. Other non-oil producers like Syria and Egypt have average annual incomes of less than $6000. The countries without petroleum resources face the same problems as other parts of the developing world: low incomes, high rates of unemployment, and difficulty in stimulating and sustaining economic development.

Even the wealthy oil-producing countries, however, aren't perhaps as rich as we imagine. Kuwait's per capita income, at $52,000, is only slightly higher than that of the United States, while Saudi Arabia's is actually just under half that of the United States. However, this still reveals substantial disparities in national wealth between the poorest and richest countries in the region.

And of course, there are disparities of wealth not only between countries but within them. Some of the oil-wealthy countries of the Gulf are believed to have very high concentrations of wealth among the elite, leaving the worst-off in serious poverty. (This is hard to demonstrate numerically, though, because governments don't always release these numbers.)

Perhaps more surprising is the opposite finding: the concentration of wealth in Egypt is actually *less* unequal than in the United States. In Egypt, the wealthiest 10% of households account for 27% of income, while in the United States, the wealthiest 10% have 30% of income.

Unemployment is a problem across the Middle East. Many countries have an unemployment rate of between 9 and 12%, but some countries are sustaining Great-Depression-level rates of unemployment, not temporarily but year after year. Official unemployment numbers are often doctored, but it is widely agreed that Jordan's unemployment rate has been around 25% or higher since at least the 1990s. Unemployment in Yemen may currently be as high as 35%. Imagine what this does not only to countries and national economies, but to individuals and families. In addition, education rates are increasing, and very high percentages of young people obtain college and graduate degrees; as competition for professional employment grows, many find themselves underemployed relative to their qualifications.

No wonder, then, that there are such significant labor flows from country to country. Workers who cannot find jobs at home go abroad, with or often without their families, and send money home. These flows follow certain general patterns: Egypt, for example, exports manual and other labor, while Lebanese workers abroad are often in professional and technical fields. Some countries both import and export labor; despite its high unemployment rate, Jordan, which sends many workers to jobs in the Gulf, imports manual labor from Egypt and elsewhere, so that in net terms, the country imports slightly more labor than it exports. Saudi Arabia imports nearly 80% of its labor force, and the tiny Gulf country of Qatar imports so much labor that more than ¾ of all *residents* of the country are migrants. Without the flow of labor into the Gulf countries, their economies couldn't be sustained in their present form.

Even more vulnerable, though, are the countries sending workers abroad. Remittances sent home by expatriate workers contribute a significant proportion of the national income of countries like Lebanon, where in 2006, nearly 23% of GNP came from remittances, amounting to about $5 billion. In many ways, these worker remittances are good for the receiving economy – when things are going well. But they are dependent on favorable economic and political circumstances. During the first Gulf War, Jordan's economy was badly damaged by the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians who had been living and working in Kuwait, most of whom returned to families resident in Jordan. Jordan thereby suffered the double blow of the loss of those workers' remittances and a rise in its resident unemployed population.

But by far the most vulnerable are the workers themselves. Dependent on employment in countries where they have no rights of residency and often few legal protections, their economic vulnerability exposes them to exploitation. Domestic workers are the most affected. Primarily women from poor countries who seek work in the Gulf, they are not only poorly paid but usually required to turn over their passports to their employers as a means of controlling their movements. Their pay may be withheld until the end of their employment period, or in some cases not given as promised at all. Working out of sight in households, unable to flee without their passports, domestic workers are extraordinarily vulnerable to their employers. The periodic media reports of the abuse of maids in Saudi households have sadly become commonplace, and the harsh working conditions and poor treatment of manual laborers throughout the Gulf and elsewhere are widely known, yet few protections are in place to eliminate this exploitation.

Add to these factors the additional burdens of refugee populations (especially in Jordan and Syria), ongoing civil and international conflict, and demographic trends, and we can see that the problems of poverty in the Middle East will not solve themselves – not through the invisible hand of the market nor the heavy hand of foreign military intervention. But this is not to say that the problems are insoluble. Societies can be shaped and reshaped by their members, of course, but also by outside actors. Perhaps those of us outside the Middle East need to think differently about our priorities in the region, and to focus as much on the systems and practices that contribute to economic vulnerability and exploitation as we do on access to resources and strategic considerations.

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Poverty and Homelessness in the Classroom and in Our Own Backyard

By Jennifer Joyce Kissko

When thinking about world poverty, the United States oftentimes gets excluded. Yet one way to enter into dialogue with our students about global poverty is to start from a familiar place. Learning about poverty and homelessness in the U.S. can help students understand and relate not only to social problems in their own society, but it can provide a framework through which they can then examine these issues in a global context as well.

I teach a course entitled "Homeless Chic? U.S. Poverty & Privilege." In it, we examine poverty in its most extreme form – through the experience of homelessness. Though some Americans may wish to ignore the problem of domestic homelessness, the exploration of these particular underprivileged persons and their unique experience is crucial to the education of our students not only because the gap between rich and poor in this capitalism-driven country continues to widen, but because what it reflects about "being American" must be acknowledged – that we care and do not care, want to help and desire to maintain distance, and empathize with and marginalize those who are different from us. The class is an advanced English and Sociology elective through the Center for Peace and Justice Education. In the few semesters that it has been offered, the high demand suggests a real appetite among Villanova students to deeply consider what it means for fellow U.S. citizens living day to day without adequate, stable shelter.

Interestingly, this course attracts a wide-ranging student population – including service-learning sophomores, various student-athletes, and senior Honors majors. The first assignment asks students to write a "coming to class consciousness" piece, and from the intimate responses, it is clear that young people from privileged class backgrounds, from disadvantaged inner city upbringings, and those from spaces in between, are eager to enter into dialogue about our nation's poorest citizens. Thus, our discussions about the juxtaposition of poverty and privilege offers tremendous occasion for critical thinking about the intersections of class, identity, citizenship, and power in America, and this intellectual discourse sometimes gives way to practical application.

The term "Homeless chic" was inspired by a current trend in the world of couture where an "urban portfolio of street style meets high fashion" (IMG). After viewing images in fashion, reality television, and even the toy industry[1], my students are perplexed by contradictions between these cultural representations and current demographics on the realities and causes of homelessness. Although these manifestations of "homeless chic" in popular culture demonstrate the fact that homelessness is, in many ways, being "honored," celebrated, and aligned with American identity, the ambivalence first illuminated in the 1980s towards homelessness continues to sprout, especially in consideration of legal decisions[2] based on fear and the desire to separate the rich from the poor. In class we ask if this fashion trend reflects something deeper than an aesthetic choice. What might be at stake for the face of an American culture that fetishizes mass media images that reflect the very identity the legal system works to hide? Why are we both fascinated and repulsed by homelessness? How does one negotiate and maintain an individual, elevated social status while helping someone with considerable "throwaway" status? How can one empathize and reach out yet maintain a protective distance without marginalizing the "other"? The inconsistencies posed here strike a moral and political chord with students that like the oxymoronic fashion term "homeless chic," ultimately serve as a metaphor for U.S. culture's conflicted approach to homelessness.

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[1] In 2009, Mattel introduced a homeless doll, Gwen, to its American Girl Collection.

[2] Here I am referring to city ordinances regarding public space and homelessness

Using this term as an overarching guide, we explore and respond to certain problems and ethical questions with regards to the ways in which homelessness gets represented in literature and in the media. Students consider the challenges United States culture faces in its attempts to think differently about homelessness – at the ways it appropriates or makes use of figures of homelessness, and the ways literature markets, thematizes, racializes, and symbolizes homelessness.

Through contemporary American literature, film, politics, cultural geography, psychology, music, sociology, and journalism, we examine how U.S. culture actually likes certain narratives that challenge or block the ability to think differently. The readings model how conflicted American readers are on homelessness, illustrating that these contradictions are so deeply ingrained culturally that they then arise in cultural products.

From works by Steve Lopez, Sherman Alexie, and Ron Hall and Denver Moore, to HBO's television series The Wire and films like The Blindside, for example, we unpack some of the unexpected ethical challenges that tropes about homelessness pose. Moving beyond the paradigm of a romanticized or objectified experience of poverty as put forth by John Allen[3], we begin challenging definitions of literal and metaphorical homelessness and critiquing narratives that perpetuate the problem of homelessness. For instance, the film The Pursuit of Happyness sends the message that all persons experiencing homelessness can rise out of poverty and become extremely wealthy if they persevere. Yet students are quick to point out that not all people living without homes in this country are born with above-average intelligence. A movie like this makes housed audiences feel good – we are caring about an important social problem, but we can maintain our distance of comfort because the solution lies with the will of the homeless protagonist.

In Alexie's novel Indian Killer, however, homelessness gets re-imagined as a source of community and agency through its unending slew of characters with hybrid identities – racial, ethnic, schizophrenic, and religious, to name a few. Depicting all types of "homeless" figures marginalized by their identity, Alexie's text demonstrates that the definition of "home" extends beyond a dwelling place, and can function as a sense of belonging to a particular family, population, or group, or even a peaceful understanding of one's own history and identity. This resonates deeply with students' own understanding of "home." Alexie's Indian Killer expands on a traditional understanding of homelessness in contemporary culture, offering readers an experience of identifying with marginalized identities as they are forced to deal with the uncomfortable ethical quandary of how to respond to the cultural ambivalence toward contemporary forms and tropes of homelessness. Therefore, students arrive at the conclusion in class that these cultural products (books, films, etc.), are both complicit in perpetuating these narratives and committed to challenging them, indicative of our own ambivalence to homelessness.

Each semester, my "Homeless Chic" students wonder whether this problem will ever cease. They question why such an extreme form of poverty exists in our own backyard, particularly in contrast to the extreme wealth present in the U.S. Ultimately we conclude that although this social problem might never be solvable, it is worth participating in efforts to attempt to try, little by little. As we come to understand the structures in our society which enable homelessness, we discuss how one can educate, volunteer, contribute, or advocate as a means for creating change. In fact, as a colleague of mine reminded me, I suppose I model the first method, for my own academic and service experiences as an undergraduate here at Villanova essentially lead to my passion for this subject and enabled the development of this "Homeless Chic" course.

Despite the sobering outlook, there are definite bright spots in devoting time and attention in the classroom to the academic exploration of poverty and homelessness. Recently, one former "Homeless Chic" student emailed to share that she now works in the Bronx to at

[3] See Allen's book, *Homelessness in American Literature: Romanticism, Realism, and Testimony.*

a homeless shelter for women and children. Speaking with great enthusiasm, she noted, "Already it is so wonderful to see all that [we learned] in action and in real life right in our backyard. I still cannot even begin to thank you enough for teaching such a formative class that surely changed my heart and mind the most during my time at Villanova." Seeing students voluntarily transform what they have gained intellectually into serviceable action and participatory citizenship reconfirms the type of compassionate young men and women we have at Villanova and how education often extends far beyond the classroom. So although homelessness is not at all "chic," it seems learning about it is.

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