

Contemporary moral problems

[Science](#), [Social Science](#)



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The chapter that is titled Rich and Poor is an extremely interesting text since it highlights the issue of global poverty in great details, allowing people to make objective judgments about it. The first part of the chapter is devoted to a detailed examination of the phenomenon of poverty. Indeed, it should be noted that the latter might be divided into two groups: relative and absolute. While the former is an irreplaceable part of an economic system of country and depends on the standard of living in a particular state, the latter is a much more serious problem that should be dealt with. What is more important is that absolute poverty is responsible a considerable number of deaths that could have been prevented. The author gives a striking fact: more people died on September 11, 2001 because of poverty than in the outcome of the terroristic attacks.

Having examined absolute poverty, the author turns to its opposite – absolute affluence. There are several points that are stressed with this regard. First of all, the latter phenomenon exists and can be easily identified: it does not have to deal with extreme wealthy, but an ability to live a comfortable life which is something that numerous people in the world are deprived of. Secondly, it is suggested that the rich countries are encouraged to share their financial funds with the poor countries and only several wealthy states are able to live up to this expectation. Nevertheless, many countries, the economy of which is prospering, including the United States,

fail to do so.

A significant part of the chapter is devoted to examining the differences between killing a person and letting one die. The author does not make any categorical judgment, pointing out several points in which the above mentioned concepts are dramatically different. First of all, spending money on luxury is an act that directly hurt on one, so the role of it should not be exaggerated. Secondly, the society is ready to comply with the restriction not to kill rather than encouragement to save others. Thirdly, the degree of certainty in the two actions is different. Fourthly, it is difficult to identify a particular person or group of people responsible for a death of a specific person because of poverty. Finally, they question about responsibility for direct actions and indirect consequences is an open one.

The author formulates a particular argument. It is thought that people ought to perform an action that can prevent something extremely bad from happening if this does not require a sacrifice of something that is incomparable. Absolute poverty is surely such an issue. The latter can be dealt with without sacrificing something that is incomparably significant. Therefore, the governments of affluent countries ought to prevent absolute poverty.

In spite of the fact that the above mentioned argument seems quite plausible, the author also highlights some objections that are rather logical as well. First of all, it is thought that governments should take care of their own people first and other nations second. In addition to that, mandatory sharing of money is a violation of property rights – something that every person in the society is entitled to. Thirdly, by saving poor people, the

situation is not helped: it is worsened, since over population is one of the major causes of it. Fourthly, it is responsibility of the government to take care of the population and think about ways to help others nations, but ordinary citizens, since there are many aspects that should be taken into account while doing so. Finally, the standard for helping others might have been set too high to be achieved.

I was greatly affected by the chapter: now I can see that the issue of poverty is much more complex from ethical point of view. Looking back at my life, I see that is might fit the definition of absolute affluence and I am urged to think about my relationship to the global poverty. The chapter is great since it provides a person with a detailed way to examine the issue.