

MAY-JUNE 2011

RESEARCH REPORTER

“Andre Dubus’s Christian Aesthetic of Disability” by *Andrea Ivanov-Craig, Ph.D.*



Andrea Ivanov-Craig, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English, illuminates “an aesthetic of disability” in Andre Dubus’s “Broken Vessels” and “Dancing After Hours” in her “Andre Dubus’s Christian Aesthetic of Disability” (*Xavier Review* [2011 Special Edition] 30.2: 20-37). His characters are deeply moved by aesthetic experiences that sometimes can result in social change. “Broken Vessels” highlights a conversation between a struggling patient and his physical therapist: “the broken vessel has been transformed from an object of punishment to one of a ‘spiritual makeover,’” Ivanov-Craig comments. Dubus himself explains, “My physical mobility. . . . [has] been taken from me; but I remain. So my crippling is a daily and living sculpture of certain truths: we receive and we lose, and we must try to achieve gratitude; and with that gratitude to em-

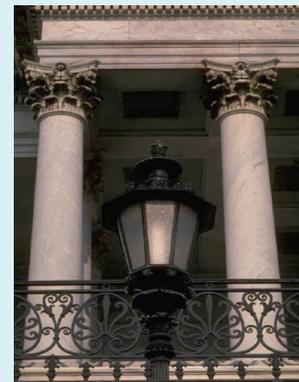
brace with whole hearts whatever of life that remains after the losses.” Important to Dubus’s aesthetics is portrayal of truth; he uses the frightening word “crippling” because it honestly and accurately describes his post-accident condition. He is being sculpted in a new way since losing power over his legs; he is not being punished.

One form of “disability aesthetics”, such as Tobin Siebers’, “refuses to beautify the human body, and it favors art made out of materials that spark powerful responses in beholders.” Both “Broken Vessels” and “Dancing After Hours” feature “crippled” characters along with those who enjoy deep aesthetic experiences. God is subtly involved in Dubus’s stories as well, since he wants to create “conditions for readers to become ‘like God, with that kind of compassion and love.’” Dubus also desires his readers to deeply understand his characters, both the obviously wounded and those with internal vulnerabilities. He remarks, “Living in the world as a cripple allows you to see more clearly the crippled hearts of some people whose bodies are whole and sound.”

Dubus’s aesthetics goes beyond many of the “disability” theories of aesthetics which Ivanov-Craig mentions (as well as Immanuel Kant’s and Jean François Lyotard’s) because this author links human broken-

ness to Christ’s brokenness in the Eucharist and demonstrates

that the “sculpting” of human beings through loving, understanding relationships with others relies on the *imago Dei*, the supreme Artist. This Christian enhancement of aesthetics has social implications as both characters and readers risk “seeing the (disabled) other without fear and with respect.” Ivanov-Craig concludes, “No character in ‘Dancing After Hours’ overcomes his or her disability. If they are successful, they use it to transform the way they see. Because most of the world was, and still is blinded by prejudice and their own sight, Dubus uses the disabled body as a trope to mediate a transformative, aesthetic vision.”—Carole J. Lambert





“Taxation, Human Capital Formation, and Long-run Growth with Private Investment in Education”

by Elwin Tobing, Ph.D.

“OUR RESULTS ALSO SUGGEST THAT IN THE ENDOGENOUS GROWTH MODEL, PUBLIC POLICY AIMED AT ENHANCING HUMAN CAPITAL IS MORE CONDUCTIVE TO GROWTH THAN A TAX REFORM AIMED AT ENCOURAGING PHYSICAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT.”

Elwin Tobing, Associate Professor of Economics, demonstrates the advantages that lowering the capital income tax rate produced in Indonesia in his “Taxation, Human Capital Formation, and Long-run Growth with Private Investment in Education” (*Journal of Asian Economics*, 22.1 (2011): 48-60). Using a carefully designed macroeconomic model, he extends “endogenous growth model to include (i) both public and private investments in human capital formation and (ii) endogenous population growth.” His amplified model demonstrates some important results of the Indonesian government’s policy to lower the capital income tax rate in the mid-1980s and raise public education spending in the mid-1990s. It indicates that “public policy aimed at enhancing human capital is more conducive to growth than a physical investment-encouraging tax reform”. Indeed, “the growth effects of changes in public spending on education are stronger than those of taxation.” The household’s allocation of time on learning as well as their private spending on education (both are geared toward human capital forma-

tion) are important factors in his analysis. Faced with three possible uses of time: working, learning, and rearing child(ren), spending more time on learning reduces a householder’s current wage income and lowers time spent with children while increasing human capital which in turn increases future earnings. Conversely, spending more time with children will decrease time allocated on working and human capital formation which results in lower current and future earnings. Meanwhile, a reduction in tax rate would give people more resources to invest in education, thus, overall, intensifying human capital formation. Quantitatively analyzing how household’s human capital formation changes in response to a capital income tax reform and higher public spending on education, Tobing’s equations indicate that “the growth effects of changes in public spending on education are higher than those of a tax reform (Fig. 2).” He continues, “This is because private education spending and the fractions of time spent on learning and child-rearing are more responsive to changes in public education spending than to a tax

reform.” The results of his study that show higher learning time and lower child-rearing time in response to the public policies on taxes and education spending are consistent with the Indonesian data. From 1970 to 1996 more women entered the work force, perhaps verified by a decrease in the fertility rate and in hours spent at home caring for children. More men in Indonesia gained secondary and tertiary educational experience followed by paid work, while more working women moved from a previous six years of schooling to eleven years. Interestingly, life expectancies for both men and women increased from 47.9 to 65 years. Tobing notes that India, in many ways similar to Indonesia, links schooling and health as mutually reinforcing complements. In conclusion, Tobing affirms, “Our results also suggest that in the endogenous growth model, public policy aimed at enhancing human capital is more conducive to growth than a tax reform aimed at encouraging physical capital investment.” Such findings could guide public policy in countries beyond Indonesia.—Carole J. Lambert





“Transition from Paraprofessionals to Bilingual Teachers: Latino Voices and Experiences in Education” by Patricia J. Bonner, Ph.D., Maria A. Pacino, Ed.D., and Beverly Hardcastle Stanford, Ph.D.

Patricia J. Bonner, Ph.D., Professor of Doctoral Studies in Education, **Maria A. Pacino, Ed.D.**, Professor of Education and Director of the School Library Programs, and **Beverly Hardcastle Stanford, Ph.D.**, Professor Emerita of Education and research consultant, demonstrate the joy and success of thirteen from the original cohort of fifteen “Weingart Scholars”, a group of Latino and Latina paraprofessionals who ten years prior had received financial, academic, and social support that assisted them in receiving their college degrees and teaching credentials from Azusa Pacific University. Private individual in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and findings from the Rokeach Value Survey and a Self-Anchoring Scale indicated that “they valued education for themselves and their children; they believed they were important role models for Latino children and families; they were proactive in mentoring Latino paraprofessionals to become credentialed teachers; and they viewed the [Weingart] program as critical in enabling them to become educators and leaders in their communities.” “Transition from Paraprofessionals to Bilingual Teachers: Latino Voices and Experiences in Education” (*Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* [26 April 2011]) provides proof

of success when strong investments are made in “human capital”. (Please see my review of Elwin Tobing’s essay on the previous page!)

The Weingart Foundation, along with Bank of America and Azusa Pacific University, implemented ten years ago a special program “in which 15 classroom instructional aides were assisted educationally and financially to complete the bachelor’s degree and a teaching credential program, culminating in their entering the teaching profession as bilingual classroom instructors in local urban, primarily Latino, schools where they had been employed as bilingual paraprofessionals.” Bonner’s, Pacino’s, and Stanford’s follow-up study of the Scholars they chose when initiating the program posed two research questions: “(a) What were the Weingart Scholars’ perceptions regarding the effects of the program on their personal and professional lives and (b) What impact did the scholars have in the lives of Latino children and families?” The Scholars affirmed that they had received an outstanding education, one which they could not have attained, at least in the near future, without the financial assistance provided for them. They now identified themselves as caring teachers and role models for both their students and their own children. One Scholar remarked,

“The program completely changed my life in a very positive way because now I am economically independent. . . . It was my dream come true.” Further, these Scholars actively encouraged Latino and Latina paraprofessionals currently in the roles from which they had emerged to also pursue a college degree and a teaching credential, following in their footsteps. The APU authors note, “This sense of obligation and identification also extended to individuals from other ethnic groups who could benefit from their modeling and advocacy.”

The Weingart Scholars are grateful for being a part of this life-enhancing program: “The Weingart Program was a successful, holistic, nurturing program which wrapped the scholars in a blanket of security and confidence that enabled them to attain academic success and immediate professional success as well as personal development and enrichment which was sustained as their personal and professional lives developed.” Amen.—Carole J. Lambert



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