Marginalization and the Multiplicity of Rationalities: 
A Discourse Theory of Poverty

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This essay argues for the necessity for a rationality based theory of poverty. It explains how the roots of poverty are rooted in the marginalization of the rationalities of the so called poor, a marginalization that renders them disempowered from realizing their conception of the good life. It argues that the genuine liberation of the poor demands their empowerment founded in the liberation of their rationalities. This means that reformers must focus on building systems of discourse that allow the marginalized to participate in the shaping of the dominant rationalities that govern us all.

KEYWORDS: Discourse, Discourse Theory, Jurgen Habermas, Marginalization, Poverty, Rationality, Empowerment.

The roots of global poverty are often explored from a purely economic perspective. Its main causes have been attributed to the exploitative practices of the dominant economies of the first world and the continued imposition of unfair and unjust trade relations with the global south. From the dire and unabashed exploitation of natural resources and manpower during the colonial era to today’s almost manic imposition of

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