“FROM GUILT TO SOLIDARITY: SWEATSHOPS AND POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY”

BY IRIS YOUNG

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND REFLECTION

1. What are the difficulties/limitations inherent in attempting to assign fault or blame to particular parties involved in the production of clothing under sweatshop conditions? Why might attempting to assign blame in this way also be a poor political strategy for anti-sweatshop activists?

2. Young proposes a different approach to addressing the social problem of sweatshops. She refers to it as political responsibility. What are the characteristics of political responsibility and how does this approach differ from assigning fault or blame to particular parties involved in clothing production/consumption? What are some of its potential advantages/disadvantages?

3. How might you apply Young’s idea of political responsibility to your own role as a clothing consumer? To other roles you play in other processes involving inequality and exploitation? To what extent do you and your peers at Trinity take political responsibility for the structural processes in which you participate?