

By: Charis Ovwigho

Social Injustice in Society:



Sinful nature turns our heads and allows us to disregard those who society views as lesser.

Disregard:

Upon seeing the title of this post, you might be thinking, *here's another blogger complaining about how unfair and messed up society is*. If you're thinking this, you're not completely wrong. Society is quite unjust today, but I'm not here to complain; I am simply here to inform and persuade. There are groups of people who are viewed as lesser in society. The book *Of Mice and Men* and the movie *Hotel Rwanda* demonstrate how certain people

or groups of people are treated poorly and disregarded within society.

The book *Of Mice and Men* tells a story about the main characters, Lennie and George. Lennie suffers from mental defectiveness, and he and George grew up together. George takes care of him, but sometimes Lennie messes up badly. George obviously cares about Lennie, but he also feels some sort of resentment towards Lennie as he is not able to live a normal life with a wife and kids. George sometimes takes his anger out on Lennie and calls him stupid or other rude names. George views Lennie like how people today view homeless people. The lead researcher, Susan Fiske, on a Princeton University study says, "Our research shows that homeless people are seen as the lowest of the low and utterly incompetent, as well as untrustworthy, and people feel disgust toward such groups in society" (Proscia). In *Of Mice and Men*, it is blatant that George thinks of Lennie this way. He says to Lennie at the beginning of the book, "When I think of the swell time I could have without you, I go nuts. I never get no peace" (Steinbeck 12). He feels disgust towards Lennie and his mental disability. He sees Lennie as someone incompetent.

The movie *Hotel Rwanda* also connects to societal views. This movie portrays the war between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes in Rwanda. It shows political corruption and its effects on innocent people. A man named Paul Rusesabagina runs a hotel in

Rwanda. He is Hutu, but his wife and children are Tutsi. Paul allows many innocent Tutsi people to stay in his hotel in order to protect them from the destruction. Paul reaches out to many of his contacts to find help for these people. In the beginning, the United Nations tells him that they cannot help him and the Tutsi people. Colonel Oliver explains



This image shows the scene in *Hotel Rwanda* where the United Nations comes and rescues all of the visitors and Europeans from the hotel, but leaves all of the Rwandans.

that the world will not help because, “You’re black. You’re not even a nigger. You’re an African” (*Hotel Rwanda*). This is because citizens of other countries, like the United States don’t value Africans as much. This selfish and unjust view of a group of people is seen with how we view homeless people. In a study led by Princeton University, “The researchers found the majority of the undergraduate student participants’ brains did not recognize homeless people as fellow human beings” (Proscia). Paul and the others staying at his hotel are not receiving help because they are not being recognized as fellow human beings. After seeing what is happening in Rwanda or

seeing a homeless person on the side of the street, people pause for “sympathy” and then carry on with their cozy lives. The Rwandans are disregarded by the United Nations and other countries, just like the homeless people being disregarded by others.

Hotel Rwanda and *Of Mice and Men* also have similarities relating to an unjust society. George sometimes treats Lennie very poorly because of his mental disability and who he is, and the United Nations treats Paul and the other innocent Rwandans poorly because of their race and status. Crooks, an African American stable worker in *Of Mice and Men*, is also treated with the same disregard. In a conversation with Lennie, Crooks tells him, “Cause I’m black. They play cards in there, but I can’t play because I’m black. They say I stink” (Steinbeck 68). They are not seen as humans, just like how homeless people are viewed by society today. They are disregarded by others because people tend to focus more on themselves. Instead of trying to help or fix the issue, humans selfishly look away from other people’s problems. During a study, “when researchers showed the participants pictures of homeless people, their brains reacted the same way as when shown images of vomit” (Proscia). They are not seen as humans and they are not treated with the same respect and dignity as others because of their situation, race, or disabilities.

As demonstrated in *Of Mice and Men* and *Hotel Rwanda*, society today has disregarded certain groups of people and



human beings. This type of attitude is a result of sinful nature and self thinking. The Rwandans, Lennie, and homeless people are all viewed and treated in similar, poor ways. People in society need to work towards changing their views on people as they are unfair and unjust.

Works Cited:

- “Apparently Most People Don't See Homeless People as Human Beings.” *Practical Ethics*, <http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2015/04/apparently-most-people-dont-see-homeless-people-as-human-beings/>
- Proscia, Amanda “Disposable Humans.” *Focus on First World*, 10 Dec. 2014, <https://focusonfirstworld.wordpress.com/consumerism/>
- George, Terry, director. *Hotel Rwanda*. Lionsgate, 2004.
- McCartney, William. “The Story and Interview of an Ex-Homeless Man Who Will Now Be Sharing His Views with Theresa May.” *Diss.*, 20 Nov. 2016, <http://diss.ltd/story-interview-ex-homeless-man-will-now-sharing-views-theresa-may>
- Reports, Staff. “10 Photos from 'Hotel Rwanda'.” *BORGEN*, 15 Mar. 2017, www.borgenmagazine.com/10-photos-hotel-rwanda/.
- Steinbeck, John, and John Steinbeck. *Of Mice and Men*. Penguin, 1986.