

The Modest Proposal by Jonathan Swift

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Social Responsibility Toward Marginalized Communities

Every community in the world has a weak and inferior class whose well-being becomes the responsibility of the rich and powerful class of society. When the upper strata of society recognize the needs of the weak people and employ equality, justice, and fair play to everybody only then the society becomes a welfare community. It is the responsibility and obligation of the prominent individuals with power they respond to the deplorable conditions in their communities by letting everyone enjoy the same rights and privileges as any other citizens. By doing so, they may play their rightful part in the affairs of the community and contribute to the betterment of the community.

Jonathan Swift's Satirical Proposal

Jonathan Swift gives his suggestion to improve the quality of life of the poor people in the Irish Commonwealth. The complete name of the essay is "A Modest Proposal For Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland From Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Public (Swift, 1992)." It is a satirical essay written in 1729. In this essay, the writer laments the deplorable conditions of the poverty-stricken Irish children who roam around in the streets in search of food and grow into thieves. Swift proposes a solution to this problem: he recommends that the poor people should fatten up their children and sell them to prosperous landlords. He says that children could be sold to butchers as early as they turn one year old, which would give low-income families some money with which they can sustain themselves. By doing so, they will be spared the expenses of bringing up so many children. He is satirical and, through the shocking idea, he wants to deliver the message to the people of his community (clearly, he would not fancy people selling their children as food.)

Etheridge Knight and the Criminalized Underclass

An American Poet, Etheridge Knight, in one of her bold poems, "[Hard Rock Returns to Prison](#) from the Hospital for the Criminal Insane," shows how the social order fabricates particular behaviours in the members of its weak, enslaved underclass that criminalize them (Knight, 1986). Society then gives different logic to keep them in punitive chains. The poet generalizes this behaviour of society through American society. The modern upper social class often dehumanizes the politically weak class of society. If the powerful people of the society give equal rights and opportunities in the affairs of the

community, then there would be no rebellion, and the government would not have to be afraid of people like “Hard Rock.” In this poem, the poet raises her voice against the way the whites in America treat African Americans.

Martin Luther King Jr and Racial Injustice

In his famous “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Martin Luther King Jr. responds to the apprehensions of the white clergymen in America (King, 1968). He describes the anguish that the blacks face in their daily lives. He speaks against the segregation in Birmingham and the unjust treatment of the blacks. The whites, who were the powerful people of the society, tried to suppress the blacks who were weak by declaring King an extremist. However, he is hopeful that they will not remain oppressed for a long time. Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent leader of the marginalized black community of twentieth-century America who stood up for the rights of his community. In the speech, he successfully delivers his message about the unending ethnic discrimination and segregation in Birmingham and, in turn, in America.

Nelson Mandela and Resistance to Domination

The former president of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, stood up against white domination and fought for the equal rights of black and free society in South Africa (Mandela, 1964). Nelson Mandela was imprisoned for his opposition to the white government and its Apartheid policies of racial, political, and economic discrimination against the nonwhite majority. On 20th April 1964, he gave his public three-hour speech called “I Am Prepared to Die.” The address showed his intentions to bring the white and black Africans together and his courage to stand up against the government. It reflects Mandela’s most important goal in life, that is, to end the disparity and segregation prevalent in South Africa. He fought for equality within the whole community. He spent his entire life fighting for political rights, education and equal opportunity for every person in his country.

Aristotle on Political Conflict and the Common Good

Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher of the 4th century B.C., in his book on political philosophy, “Politics,” gives the best answer to the question under discussion (Aristotle, 2015). He says that the most significant conflict in any community is the shared antipathy between the poor and the rich. Though it is not compulsory to grant every person the same share in a public office, it is by no means sensible to leave out any of the groups from power. The dissatisfaction of the poor faction leads to the movement against those in power. To keep the peace, Aristotle proposes education, moderation, and inclusiveness. By allowing everyone an equal amount of authority, the interests of the poor majority and wealthy minority can be balanced. He also advocates a code of decentralized justice by saying

that benefits should be awarded to the citizens differently, according to the contribution they make to the well-being of the state.

Conclusion on Justice and Community Welfare

An ideal community should be working to ensure the happiness of all of its citizens. Communities in which the prominent individuals respond to the deplorable conditions of the society are the welfare communities which provide the feelings of fellowship among its members. Equal rights and opportunities for education and politics are the essential ingredients to address the deplorable conditions of people which is why the great leaders around the world stood up to ensure these rights for their people.

References

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