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As a society we would like to believe that everyone is treated equally regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation or any other background individuals may have. However, is that always the case? Marc Lamont Hill displays several occurrences throughout America of attacks on our nation’s most vulnerable in his book, Nobody. Most of the cases exposed in Hill’s work happened within the past few years, showing how we may not be making as much progress as a united society as we think. Three important values in life are discovery, community and individual worth, and Hill portrays these values as not up to acceptable levels for the unified, progressive society we should all be aiming to achieve.

When we think of the word discovery, we think of finding out a piece of information that was not previously known. The value of discovery is found in Nobody; in fact, it seems to be a common theme throughout the entire book. Every story told in this book reveals a similar lesson that if we open our minds and stop the judgement and mistreatment of our nation’s most vulnerable, we may discover that there is no reason to look upon them the way many people do. The issue of mass incarceration in our country has directly affected the lives of many of our minorities, or most vulnerable. Hill describes this situation by saying that we tend to take the vulnerable “and put them in a cage, where they will be invisible to the rest of us. We do not want
to know that the vulnerable exist” (126). If we can stop jumping to conclusions about particular
groups of people, we may discover that they deserve more of a chance than they are given.

To most people, the word community represents a welcoming group of people who
embrace each others’ differences and not only accept, but encourage diversity into their lives. Sadly, many “communities” throughout our country are not as accepting as we should be, leaving the black, Latino, poor, uneducated, gay and many more minorities vulnerable. This vulnerability of minorities is shown repeatedly in Nobody. For example, after being shot dead, Michael Brown’s body was left on the hot pavement for hours, “discarded like animal entrails behind a butcher shop,” while people of the community passed by, not wanting to be bothered by doing something about it. So they just moved on, “like he ain’t belong to nobody” (Hill 10). A true community should value the lives of each and every individual in it, regardless of their backgrounds, especially the factors they cannot change.

Finally, individual worth is a value portrayed as needing improvement in today’s society. In Nobody, Hill stresses the importance of the lives of each and every individual, and the significance of valuing every member of society’s lives no matter what circumstances. It is easy for us to make assumptions about people we pass by in life and judge them, but the reality is that we do not know their background or the circumstances that people are in, which is why we need to believe that every individual has worth and stop the persecution of the most vulnerable. Throughout Nobody, Hill demonstrates how many times in our nation’s history minorities have been stopped and questioned or even arrested for no reason other than high suspicions because of their background, most commonly race. For example, after her violent arrest, jail officials failed to put Sandra Bland on the suicide watch list even with clear indications that she should be closely watched, and as a result, died within the first few days of being in jail. Hill compiles this
case by writing, “Sandra Bland was ultimately a casualty of a broken criminal justice system that criminalizes vulnerability and, more specifically, Black womanhood” (66). Had Sandra not been black or a woman, it’s hard to say if the situation would have turned out differently, but often times minorities are not given the kind of individual worth they deserve, resulting in terrible situations that could have possibly been prevented if our society cared more about the individual lives of everyone, especially the vulnerable.

Without strong values of discovery, community and individual worth, our society would be nothing. That is why we need to unite as a whole to strengthen these values to improve the society in which we live today. Our nation’s most vulnerable deserve a chance to succeed.

Works Cited