

## A Story that Needs Telling

*by Jonathan Hall*

Like many Georgists, I know that the ‘lift off’ is going to include a dramatic work that puts a face to the wrong that is resource privilege. But few have a skill set that includes both insight into economic life and compelling storytelling. Yet this is still a “must do” avenue for the movement. I saw something today that was dramatic and could help.

It was from a piece of fiction, but very real, almost even a cliché. There was a giant movie project that involved hundreds of lives, and it could not go forward because the son of the financier was jealous of the lead’s girlfriend.

Corny? Sure — but this is what rent does: it gives great power to people who haven’t earned it, and that power gets abused for the pettiest of reasons. Just about every class-conscious piece of fiction exposes the decadence of the privileged class as it rains collateral damage on the serfs that make it all work.

We have an almost comic example of this, writ large, running around the country pretending to be worthy of the White House. A man whose father left him \$200 million in real estate — had he not, we’d never have heard of him. And his support seems to come from nothing other than a) he hates the “bad” people; b) he’s very, very rich. It’s a rent cult!

Here in Kern County, California, I’ve seen some of the nation’s most profound poverty, and the culture of “faith” dependency. I was stuck looking at the wrong end of the story. How hard people try to make their business work, but they just cannot stay ahead of the rent payments! Landed privilege forces people to bust, even when there is 50% plus commercial vacancy.

We need a Great American Story that ties these two ends together. This country is aching for a tale of decadence and revolution: something more organic, more human, than vampires of Jupiter Ascending, or the faceless aristocracy of Hunger Games.