“HARRISON BERGERON”

One-page Response
Two Paragraphs
They Say

Pick one from your grid – “message”

TAG Vonnegut’s claim

Exemplify x2

Significance/Concluding Sentence

PARAGRAPH 1

1 Say

Relationship to society today

PARAGRAPH 2

Clarify

Exemplify

Counter/Others say

Rebuttal/Why You’re Right

Significance/Concluding Sentence

So what? So why?/trigger

They Say

Pick one from your grid – “message”

TAG Vonnegut’s claim

Exemplify x2

Significance/Concluding Sentence

PARAGRAPH 1

I Say

Relationship to society today

PARAGRAPH 2

Clarify

Exemplify

Counter/Others say

Rebuttal/Why You’re Right

Significance/Concluding Sentence

So what? So why?/trigger
A general argument in Kurt Vonnegut’s satirical short story, “Harrison Bergeron,” is that people conform because more value is placed on mediocrity in the name of “equality” rather than excellence; thereby, losing the value of excellence. More specifically, excellence reveals our true potential, talents, and abilities not only as individuals, but as a society. Exemplified in the text, Hazel believes that those who show effort should be rewarded regardless of their ability (39). Furthermore, acceptance of mediocrity is seen when the ballerina “has to apologize at once for her voice, which is a very unfair voice for a woman to use. . . . a warm, luminous, timeless melody” (41). Clearly, these examples suggest that conformity and mediocrity exist in a symbiotic relationship, feeding off of one another.
Conforming to mediocrity has become prevalent in today’s society as well. In other words, ordinary has become acceptable. For example, participation and effort awards have become commonplace in both education and athletics. All participants receive awards regardless of the quality of their efforts. Consequently, these awards become devoid of meaning. Others may claim that effort is as equally important as excellence because everyone does not have the same ability nor opportunity. Additionally, feelings may get hurt or people may feel excluded.

However, this thinking can become dangerous because accepting a lower standard puts us at risk - nobody wants a doctor who has never treated a patient successfully. We must heed the warning Vonnegut has placed before us; conforming to less than our true potential cannot be acceptable. We as a society must be better than mediocre.
Symbiosis

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