

Humorous Tragedy

Dan Gonzalez and Tom McCafferty

Vonnegut's short satire "Harrison Bergeron" on equality strikes to the heart of America's quest for equality through use of regulatory laws such as affirmative action and quotas. A satire is the technique that employs wit to ridicule a subject with the intention to inspire reform. In the year 2081, all Americans are made equal by law. Any ability above normal was handicapped by regulation. A noise emitter that disrupted his thoughts at intervals handicapped George, Harrison's dad, who was very intelligent. Harrison, who was extremely strong and intelligent, had harnesses and weights and all kinds of ridiculous contraptions designed to keep him "average."

The system of keeping everyone "average" has just about destroyed the creative arts in the 2080's. All areas of life have been lowered to the lowest common denominator. Because everyone is so "average", Harrison feels he is god-like because of his abilities.

Harrison's death at the end of the story is inevitable. He will not accept the limitations placed on him by society, so he must be removed from that society. His example would just encourage others to be the best they could be and the end result would be competition. When people compete and strive to improve themselves, they improve the world and society around them. But, in 2081, no one is allowed to feel the pangs of inadequacy because they may not be as good as someone else. This also removes any reason for trying to be any better.

Vonnegut exemplifies humor to show how ridiculous total equality really is. Even in today's world, people are trying to make everything equal. Life is not fair. Everybody is different. People are short, tall, dark, light, etc. But what is one without the other. Excellence must be gauged against the average. Some differences make no difference such as color, race, or religion. But being able to aspire to an example of excellence makes the human race better and better.

Change

Leonard Savoleo

As W. Edwards Deming, an internationally praised statistician once said, “It is not necessary to change. Survival is not mandatory.” In my opinion, his view could not be more wrong in today’s world. Each and every day, millions of people turn to the news to find out what has changed in the world around them. In our cities, states, and countries, our music, economy, health; our entire culture changes daily. Even philosophical concepts such as perfection and world peace change from day to day, as new thinkers and developments occur world-wide.

Our world is changing. Each and every second, people grow older, the world turns further around the sun, decisions are made, and things happen. Even as you read this piece of paper, your body is aging, and your mind is thinking differently, because you chose to study this essay. The words printed here are changing, as language evolves to keep up with our culture, and the ink these words made out of ages and corrodes. Everything changes, and in this new world to live life, we must adapt and change in order to survive and succeed.

In today’s society, “survival” as Deming put it, can be redefined as success. The new human race lives a life where achieving financial security and personal success are what matters most. To succeed, we must adapt, or change, to fit out surroundings. Deming’s phrase becomes obsolete—It is not necessary to adapt. Success is not mandatory. If this is noy true, why do we spend years of our life in school ourselves, preparing for college, and for careers? Humanity is taught from a young age to strive to be the best, and to prepare for the future. We can prove Deming wrong, and claim that success *is* mandatory in this world. Those who do not succeed are placed beneath the successful and affluent, and do not truly live.

So if success is mandatory, and adaptation is necessary, where does it end? In truth, it doesn’t. We adapt to meet the requirements of an ever-changing world. Each adaptation we make is quickly replaced by a new adaptation. In short, utopia is impossible, perfection is obsolete as soon as it exists, and ambition is the only driving force in life. A quote such as Deming’s, then, is not a guideline to my life so much as it is a reminder. We, as human beings, can only try to solve the universe. We have to keep going; we cannot get discouraged, for if we do, we stop changing, stop surviving, and stop living. In the game of life, the only rule is that you get through it, so I don’t intend to stop playing.

Homeland Security

Daniel Boyle

“Any man, who would sacrifice freedom for security, does not deserve either.”

Sometime around two hundred years ago, a bunch of folks from Europe got together and decided to come to America and look for two guys by the names of Freedom and Prosperity. Now it took them a while, mainly because they kept walking around in circles and fighting one another, but eventually they found them both. Freedom came first though. They all sat down and decided that everybody had the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (It took them a while to get this right, too.)

Ultimately not everybody thought the way those folks did, and a lot of other people were jealous of both Freedom and Prosperity, mostly Prosperity though, they had to get someone to protect Freedom and Prosperity, and Security has been doing that job for what seems like forever now, with virtually no failures on his record, that were not avenged.

It was a normal day, like any other, as Freedom, Prosperity and Security did their rounds. Then out of the cold nowhere an assassin’s bullet slipped right past Security and struck both Freedom and Prosperity. The empty gun was recovered but not the assassin, and there were too many prints on the gun to tell exactly who pulled the trigger, although logic points to some suspects.

Freedom and Prosperity were rushed to the hospital where they received the best of care. Many people died trying to save them, and their deaths were not in vain. Prosperity was released pretty soon because without him they couldn’t keep the hospital open, but Security was afraid to let Freedom leave. A lot of people now complain about not being able to see Freedom because of Security, but Security just says, “Safety First” and moves them along. He lets people in to pay their respects and visit, but even then certain people are not allowed in. They look too much like the assassin you see.

Security feels pretty bad about what happened and he feels that he left everybody down. He never wants to see that happen again. He’s decided he has to be more proactive and Freedom has to be more careful. “Things have to change” he thinks to himself during this bedside vigil.

“That’s enough,” Freedom says quietly. “I can’t stay here any longer.”

“What are you talking about?” “It’s not safe out there!” Security exclaimed.

“I can’t stay here and longer.” Freedom repeated as he rose from the bed and started for the door.

“The people need me.”

Security quickly stood up and blocked his way. “No! The people have Prosperity! That’s enough to keep them happy!” He said, struggling to regain control.

Then Freedom looked him in the eyes and said, “That won’t keep them happy for long. I have a job to do, just like you, and you can’t do your job right if I’m not doing mine. These types of things happen and you just have to get up and try again, but we can’t sacrifice Freedom and security because Security exists to protect our Freedom.

Security thought for a moment and then stepped aside. They both got together with Prosperity and they went back to their rounds. As the years went by problems came and went, but they knew the best way to triumph was for Freedom, Security and Prosperity to work together, not in spite of one another.

My One Act Play

Michael Herron

The Casting

They told me I had cancer
What two days ago was simply a curious bump,
Now was a death sentence handed down by a guy in a white coat.
Staring at death in the eyes isn't as bad as you imagine,
Especially because for 16 years I had refused to even glance at life.
A life was about to end that had never begun.

The Dress Rehearsal

The night before the surgery
The fever rose
My body ached from the medicine, killing my cells.
Try to vomit to relieve the pain;
Yet, all I can do is hold myself curled in a ball on the bathroom floor
Screaming tears of anguish
Pulling my suit to the floor
Crawling inside, fighting the picture racing through my head of a pale me
Lying in a coffin dressed in the same gray three-piece suit
The cab driver helps me to the car and we away, to what all signs point to as
The last time I'll see a midsummer's night.

The Performance

My decision at the beginning was to keep my disease buried deep inside
The only way the cancer wins if I let it spread to others
So tonight will be the greatest performance of my life
From the moment my once 170 pound muscular body stepped out of the cab
To the second my now 95 pound corpse collapsed inside my house,
I was playing a role
I danced and kept up the conversation until the pain grew unbearable
I locked myself in the bathroom and while huddled in a ball screamed into my jacket to muffle the
sound
I washed the tearing redness from my face and forcibly shoved myself back on stage.

The Intermission

That night I was for the first time truly terrified. I was positive the fever would
Send me into a state of unconsciousness, but then it happened
For the very first moment I saw her that's when I knew
She opened the door and stared into my eyes and the pain was gone
Knocked me over stone cold sober
Nothing I could say or do –she set off an explosion that set loose my heart of stone
My life had finally begun.

The Curtain Call

The cancer disappeared from the x-ray
The religious community refers to it as a miracle
The doctors called it a mistake
But I knew what it really was
It was her –she cured me
Her tender lips had kissed my soul and destroyed the cancer with her love
Love, love, love. Now I'm all love.

The Critique

It just wasn't real enough
I wish I could tell our story ends with a white picket fence and three kids in the yard.
But this isn't Walt Disney...real life very rarely is.
She left for college and didn't eve say goodbye.
She met a guy that's mean and possessive and never returns her call.

The cancer resurfaced, and this time there's no angel to save me.
I still perform to alleviate what pain I could bring to others.
Yet, as my condition gets worse it becomes harder and harder.
I find myself sleeping a lot lately.
In my dreams I try to figure out who I am
My dreams are as real as my everyday life
I don't know where one stops and the other begins
But I'm no longer alone,
Love burns in my heart
And leads me like a candle in a dark forest
Everywhere I go she'll be.

Closing Night

So I guess you know how my one act play ends.
Nobody ever really escapes from cancer
One day I will "Sleep perchance to dream."
My heart will stop, my mortal body will give out and
I will be lost in an everlasting slumber
A place with no X-rays or doctors or chemo-therapy
But a stage filled with music, dancing, and love
So please don't weep for me
Every play's curtain must close.
Every actor must take his final bow.
And a new play must begin.

EveryFrere

Patrick Smith and Jeremiah Dalton

Characters: **Everyfrere**
 Wrongthing to do Pompidou
 The Wrightway

Setting: Post-War France
 Versailles Palace, Conference room 212

Conflict:
 Every has the opportunity to usurp the French Presidency with the support of the Culture Party. As of now, he is Prime Minister, and President DeGaulle's right hand man. In order to achieve power, he must "whack" DeGaulle.

"Ultimately, the only power to which man should aspire is that which he exercises over himself."

Enter TheWrightway (Everyfrere's good side)

The Wrightway:
 Everyfrere wants power
 For the presidency he will try
 Why he wants to do this,
 Nobody knows why.

 His fate is doomed
 This he does not know
 The culture Party supports him
 As his power does grow

Enter Thewrongthing to do Pompidou (Everyfrere's alter-ego)

Thewrongthing to do Pompidou:
 Everyfrere will be ruler
 This much is true
 He will build his own palace
 On the premier rue.

Enter Everyfrere

Everyfrere: Bonjour tout le monde

Both: Bonjour Mon Frere!

TheWrightway:
 Little does he know
 His power will be as plenty as his hair!

Everyfrere:
 DeGaulle will return at sunset
 I can't think of a plan neater
 Than to whack that bad boy

Msgr Farrell H.S.
LOGOS 34

With my neuf millimeter.

Control will be mine
All of France and the bureaus
I will be tres riche Monsieurs!
Having every franc and all the Euros.

The wrong thing to do Pompidou:

Oui! Everyfrere
And heed my advice
Steal his exalted seat
Power you will have times thrice!

You will inherit all supremacy
And the title of Sire
With command of the fleets, the legions
And the French Empire

From the islands of Micromania
And Singapore you will seek
To the riches of the Caribbean
Of Guedeloupe and Martinique.

Yes, Everyfrere
You will have them all
And the world's great powers
At your feet they will fall.

Everyfrere:

Indeed, mon ami
What you say will be true
I will rise to the top
And to thank you, Pompidou

Make ready the troops and the ships
To me they will cater
The French people will hail me
As their leader and dictator!

The Wrightway:

Very well Everyfrere
Listen to that minion
Take hold of the glory
And all its dominion

But heed my words
And find a solution
Tower to the thrown
In the flames of a bloody revolution

Everyfrere:

A revolution mon ami?
Of glory they do not cry?

Msgr Farrell H.S.
LOGOS 35

They will rebel against moi?
My crown they will defy?

TheWrightway:

Oui, Monsieur
You have begun to see
Power corrupts
Every man wants to be free!

Everyfrere:

C'est incroyable!
I suppose you are right
It doesn't matter at all
To have the power and might.

Thewringthing to do Pomidou:

Monsieur!
Do you not care?
Forget his foolish inkling
Call the French Militaire!

TheWrightway:

Alright Everyfrere
They are at your command
But to thousands of foreign armies
Will they ever stand?

Everyfrere:

Although this power
Seems appealing
The thought of fruitless warfare
Gives me a bad feeling.

Yes, The Wrightway
You're point is made
Pompidou, I will not stand
Behind the French barricade!

Thewringthing to do Pompidou:

Mais!

Everyfrere:

Away with your Pompidou
Your plots are wicked and dirty
Get out of 212
Or stay at 2:30

Exit Thewringthing to do Pompidou