**The Bystander Effect**

Most people agree that humankind is not perfect. One of our many imperfections has been seen throughout history: it is difficult for humans to react differently from one another when we are in large groups. This phenomenon has been called the *bystander effect* by sociologists and journalists. Numerous examples exist that show large groups of humans doing nothing to stop violence or other injustices that are occurring before their very eyes. In “Why We Still Look Away,” several instances of the bystander effect are summarized, including a scenario in which a group did nothing after a woman collapsed in an emergency room in Brooklyn: she died before anyone moved to assist her, including nurses and doctors. The bystander effect also plays out in *The Hunger Games*. This effect brings to mind the question of guilt. What makes a person guilty: action or inaction? Given the complexity of human ethical questions, it is worth examining the question of guilt in our lives.

*Read and carefully consider these perspectives. Each suggests a particular way of thinking about the events in The Hunger Games and the article entitled “Why We Still Look Away.”*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Perspective One** | **Perspective Two** | **Perspective Three** |
| By watching others as they suffer without interfering to help them in any way, we are guilty because we are obligated by basic human ethics and morals to help others. Watching others suffer is just as incriminating as causing the suffering. All humans are connected by the human experience. As such, we are obligated to help others in any situation because the power of humanity exists only when we take care of one another.  | We are only obligated to help ourselves. There is no reason to help others. It is not the job of every human to protect every other human.   | The most important factor in our lives is taking care of ourselves and the people we love. Sometimes, we have to stand by and watch the pain of others in order to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe.When it comes to crime, one can only experience guilt if one commits the crime: we are not obligated to help others if we ourselves are protecting ourselves and our loved ones.  |

 **Essay Task**

Write a unified, coherent essay about the question of guilt through action or inaction in our lives. In your essay, be sure to:

* Develop a thesis that is original. It must be specific enough to be manageable in a short analysis, but general enough to find information and leave you room to explore the topic.
* Clearly state your own perspective on the issue and analyze the relationship between your perspective and at least one other perspective given.
* Develop and support your ideas with reasoning and examples from the texts provided (both the novel and the article)
* Organize your ideas clearly and logically
* Communicate your ideas effectively in standard written English

Your perspective may be in full agreement with any of those given, in partial agreement, or completely different.