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Essay #1 Argument Review

Keep Flogging in the Fog

Jeff Jacoby author of "Bringing Back Flogging" states in his essay that harsh punishments that date back to early colonial America such as whipping and pillory need to be set as consequences for criminals of today. Jacoby also claims in his essay that prisons are synonymous to caging. Using prison costs and information on the number of prisoners, Jacoby argues that it is useless to have prisons however; it is more cost effective and quick to follow the punishments of the Puritans of early colonial America instead of caging criminals and releasing them to repeat their criminal acts and influence others to become criminals. (Jacoby 191-93)

In the essay "Bringing Back Flogging," Jacoby begins his argument on a historical fashion declaring, "Boston's Puritan forefathers did not indulge miscreants lightly" (Jacoby 191). This single statement sets the idea those historical societies of the United States approved of handling miscreants or criminals rather harshly. Jacoby goes on further giving examples of how these Puritans punished people who committed crimes such as selling goods to Indians, swearing, and committing acts of adultery were through whipping, withdrawing tongues, and branding the criminal for their bad behavior.

The structure of the essay is chronologically organized from a past to present representation of corporal punishment. Jacoby depicts the Puritan lifestyle first and then includes that corporal punishment was still active in Delaware until it was repealed in 1972. Interestingly, Jacoby notes that corporal punishment has been out of date for 150 years. He moves on to focusing on the modern punishment for all criminals in the United States imprisonment.

The style of the essay is upfront and ultimately persuasive. Claiming that imprisonment is not an effective punishment, Jacoby states that "...the price of keeping criminals in cages is appalling...common estimate is \$30,000 per inmate per year" (192). Using data like this piece is surely proving that it can be cost effective to whip the criminal publically, instead of keeping them in a cage and releasing them thereafter so that eventually they can wind up back in the prison cell.

Jacoby presents his argument rather forcefully and effectively. Showing how early colonial people handled criminals and comparing it to modern imprisonment; nonetheless the dignity of human beings has to be taken into consideration Jacoby lacks this element. Jacoby states rather sarcastically that "Now we practice a more enlightened, more humane way of disciplining wrongdoers: We lock them up in cages" (192). This statement is

targeting imprisonment; however in many opinions, caging someone is a better way to punish rather inflicting pain and the United States Constitution does ban cruel and unusual punishment against U.S. citizens so flogging may be a traditional and Puritan way of punishment, but it simply goes against the Constitution of today.

In conclusion, I encourage people to be placed in prison cells for their wrongful acts as oppose to Jacoby's alternative Puritan punishments because pain is not a blissful experience for any human being. Imprisonment enables criminals to pay for their crime without being tortured as the Puritans did in early America. I enjoy having my fingers intact to type and my tongue to taste foods and talk, do you?

Works Cited

Jacoby, Jeff. "Bring Back Flogging." *Current Issues and Enduring Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking and Argument, with Readings*. Ed. Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2008. 191-93. Print.