

Good example of harrison bergeron essay

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Harrison Bergeron is a story written by Kurt Vonnegut. Vonnegut's story is a warning to the world about the quest of equality, which is spreading all round in many nations with America on the lead. The story shows the reader how the equality issue can have negative impacts on people's individuality, and the society. The story revolves around the protagonist, Harrison Bergeron who is an archetypical symbol that represents defiance, and individuality. He is used to represent the people who will stand up, and protest against cruel laws imposed by the state on equality, and encourage others to protest with him. Through the characterization of Harrison, George and Hazel, Vonnegut shows how the equality idea can go to the extreme. The characters are distracted by handicaps, and this affects their individuality and freedom. Vonnegut expresses his concerns about the issue of equality, and how it is taken to the extreme through his characters. The setting of the story is in the future, 2081 of what will be happening in the world. The story is told in third person limited point of view, whereby the narrator is not a character in the book. In addition, the narrator does not draw conclusions, make decisions, or make judgments about the events. The objectivity of the narrator suggests a distancing from the hostile world of the story. The tone used by the author is critical, humorous and satirical. The story is full of humor despite the fact that, it is full of dark themes of oppression. Every dark event in the story is accompanied by a light moment of melancholy comedy.

Kurt Vonnegut uses irony in the development of his story Harrison Bergeron, in order to allow the reader to understand the conditions of equality. He opens the first paragraph with sarcastic tones, and then pushes the reader

into an egalitarian society. Afterwards, Hazel Bergeron is introduced and gives a sardonic wit about their life, but ironically, she is not handicapped like the rest (Vonnegut 1513). Conversely, Hazel's husband is handicapped with forty-seven pounds of birdshot strapped to his neck, and he is obedient to the government's handicapped system. Vonnegut uses irony to demonstrate a dysfunctional Utopia in the society. In his story, Vonnegut uses irony to depict how easily a government can control its citizens, by assaulting their senses and individuality.

Harrison Bergeron is a valuable story that has underlying themes, which are very relevant in our current society. The theme of equality can be seen throughout the book, and it is the principle that is enshrined in America's constitution now, whereby they claim that all men are equal. Kurt Vonnegut demonstrates the issue of equality in a Utopian society. Vonnegut in his story, cautions Americans on the dangers of creating a truly equalitarian society, whereby citizens go to an extent of sacrificing their freedom, and individuality to the state, to create a place where all people are equal.

Vonnegut creates a society whereby, all people are made equal. The beautiful are forced to wear hideous masks to disfigure their beauty, those considered intelligent are to wear radio calls, and ear splitting noises that are supposed to impede their thinking, and the strong are forced to wear weights around their necks throughout the day. The author uses masks, and the weights as symbols to symbolize physical and emotional pain, and struggle that people have to go through in the quest for equality. The weights are supposed to wear down the strong people in every way possible, both physically, emotionally and spiritual pain, therefore, they are symbols of

oppression (Pettersen 102). They are used to symbolize the idea of how people will be oppressed by an authoritarian government, while implementing the equality idea. As one reads the text, one learns that equality in Harrison Bergeron does not create Utopia, but instead, it creates a number of zombies who are handicapped under the rules of the general, all in the name of balance or rather equality where all people are the same. In Harrison Bergeron, there is a constant search for equality for all the people. This is prevalent in our today's society as states are fighting for equality for all, as new ways to equalize, and create balance between individuals, classes and races are being searched even if it means at a price. The search for equality in Harrison Bergeron can be related to a number of issues in the world today, for example, same sex marriage, and health care. In America, they claim that all citizens are equal, and therefore should abide by the same laws. However, it is evident that, all men are created equal, but are not granted equal opportunities. For instance, in the healthcare industry, the medical services are only granted for people with affordable insurance, and this means that there is no equality.

Unlike the American Society, the Harrison Bergeron society prides itself on equality levels at all costs. The people are made equal in all aspects of their lives. The society attempts to make everyone in the society equal as Vonnegut writes, " everybody was finally equal [not only] equal before God and the law. [But] they were equal in every which way" (Vonnegut 1513). The citizens were handicapped, imprisoned, and mutilated in case it is noticed that they possess superior traits. In the Bergeron's society, mutilations and handicaps are imposed on the citizens to garner equality

between them for the reason of creating a society where all people are equal.

The Harrison Bergeron text is very important in the world today as it reveals, and cautions of a totalitarian government, and its effects to the citizens. In addition, the idea of finding a solution that could make all citizens equal, and stop inequalities exist in the world today, and can be related to many issues happening in the society today. The Bergeron society tried to make everyone equal, but Vonnegut writes, “ some things about living still weren’t right” (Vonnegut 1513). This idea that some things were not right serves as a caution to the readers, that the quest for equality for all men is not just a good idea. The Bergeron society used handicaps, and even imprisoned those who they thought were against the equality thing, but still, it did not work well for them. Therefore, this is a caution to the society where the issue of equality is on the rise that they should watch out on the means, and ways to get equality for all citizens. In the Bergeron society, the people’s freedom and individuality was sacrificed in order to have equality for all. They were forced to use radio transmitters in order to hinder their average intelligence. In addition, people like Harrison Bergeron were forced to have “ scrap metal hung all over him [making him look] like a “ walking junk yard” (Vonnegut 1515). The people were made like robots as they were forced to attach foreign objects to their bodies, to limit their intelligence and strength, and to disguise their humanity in the name of balance, and equality. Just like the society in Bergeron, people in our current society sacrifice their freedom at the hands of the government, but on an extreme basis. Things that happened in Vonnegut’s book are happening today as the society has

allowed the state to regulate almost everything that concerns their lives. When one reads this book, he/she should be able to analyze the effects of equality in the society through Vonnegut's characters, and the way they were affected by the handicap system imposed to them by the state, and implemented by the general. The readers are cautioned of the effects of an equalitarian society to citizens.

The Harrison Bergeron society demonstrates how citizens are made to believe that handicaps, and laws should be in existent in order to stop them from being “ back in the dark ages again, with everyone competing against everyone else[causing society] to fall apart” (Vonnegut 1514). The competition mentioned here suggests that inequality between individuals will lead to the downfall of the society. However, in reality, competition must be allowed in the society as it creates an opportunity for change, growth and development in the society.

In conclusion, Harrison Bergeron story provides the reader with a glimpse of how a truly egalitarian society can be in the future. America dreams of a this kind of society, but this book acts as a warning that if equality is created in the society, citizens will lose their freedom, and individuality because of an authoritarian government as they will be under surveillance all the time with their lives controlled. The author uses symbolism with masks, weights and radio calls to show how citizens will be oppressed with an equalitarian government. Symbolism is mainly used in the text to express Vonnegut's message to the people how an egalitarian government can affect the people adversely. This book is important because, it makes the reads to question the idea of equality in the society. In addition, it makes the reader compare

what is happening in the world today, with the rise of equality issues, and the effects it can have in the society just like the people in Harrison Bergeron were affected. Vonnegut suggests that, total equality is not the best thing to strive for through his writing. He wants his readers to know its effects, and that the quest for equality is disastrous. Harrison Bergeron is a valuable piece of literature that should be read world wide, so that everyone can be able to know what we are getting into with the issue of equality, and the effects of an authoritarian government.

Works Cited

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