

Collectivism enforced by the government

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Synthesis Essay Halley Dunlop In the books, Anthem, Fahrenheit 451, Harrison Burgeon, and the movies The Hunger Games, and Wall-E, the government contains all of the people to make them equal. They strictly control the societies and allow no differences. Within all of these sources, there are certain individuals who choose to rebel against their government, but with rebellion comes the need to find yourself first. The pitfalls of the quest for equality are the lack of individuality, inability to be creative, and lack of intelligence.

One of the pitfalls is the lack of Individuality. In the book, Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury, Montag finds himself following the society because that is the way that he grew up and he believes he is happy doing it. When Montag meets a girl, Clarice, she began to help him come to realize that he was unhappy and that he must become an individual. "Darkness. He wore his happiness as a mask. (pg. 91)" This quote is important because it is the first time that Montag questions the way he is living, and the first time that he thinks about his Individual happiness.

Because Clarice is already an Individual, she has to help Montag overcome the government's fear of concealing his personality and help him to be himself. Also, in the book, Anthem by Ayn Rand, the government restricts all possible factors of being an individual. Equality attempts to showcase his invention of electricity to the council members, and they said, "What is not done collectively cannot be good. (pg. 73)" This quote is significant because it shows how council believes that any kind of individuality is a crime.

The government has drilled the idea of "we" into the minds of their whole society to make sure they have no thoughts about themselves as individuals. In addition to the other books, Harrison Burgeon by Evensong, the government overtakes the society and forces them to wear handicaps so no one person is any better or worse than the next. This act of collectivism restricts all individuality. "She must have been extraordinarily beautiful, because the mask she wore was hideous. And it was easy to see that she was the strongest and most graceful of the dancers, for her handicap bags were as big as those worn by two-hundred-pound men. (pg. 169)" This quote is important because it puts an image in our mind about how much the government tries to make sure that every man and woman is stripped of their own selves. Individuality is non-existent in this story because the handicaps given to the society do not allow them to have complete thoughts. The government believes that when the people have complete thoughts, they might be thinking about themselves, or how to overthrow them, or how to escape their handicaps. In all of these books, collectivism is present in the society to make it more difficult for someone to stand out, be different, or cause someone to be jealous.

Equality, Harrison, and Montage are the ones who managed to overcome the government to make a statement and ultimately find who they really are and make themselves happy. The next pitfall of the quest for equality is the inability to be creative. When the government takes away the society's individuality in *Fahrenheit 451*, their ability to have creative thoughts and actions is taken away. "Stuff your! It's more fantastic than any dream made

or paid for in factories. " This quote by Montage is basically stating that people should live how they want with no regrets.

It goes along with the idea of creativity because your own wonders and dreams are ways of thinking creatively. Since that is not allowed in their society, it is considered a risk, so if they are living life as if they were to die in ten seconds, it would be better to have creativity in that time instead of sitting around and watching TV and being anti-social. In addition to that example, in the book *Anthem*, when Equality is in the Home of the Infants, he explains how everything was plain and boring. " The sleeping halls were white and clean and bare of all things, save one-hundred beds. (pg. 2)" This quote shows the reader how their society wants the children to grow up; plain and bare of all things. They do not want the walls painted colors, or the children to have toys because then they will start asking questions and that is not a part of their society. Creativity is an individual trait, and the collectivism in that book does not allow individuality. The final example of a society that inhibits creativity is in the movie, *The Hunger Games* by Gary Ross, based on the book by Suzanne Collins.

In the movie, Katniss Everdeen is a very creative girl, which makes her stronger than the others and therefore she is frowned upon by her opponents and the government. At the end of the movie, Katniss and her partner, Peeta, are the only contestants left, but only one person can win. She uses her creativity and finds a way out of the government's rules and makes sure they don't get their way. Katniss pulls out poisonous berries and they were

to either eat them, and have no winner, or just threaten to eat them, so they could both win.

This ties in to the pitfall because in her quest for equality, she found a loophole in the restrictions on creativity, but she will later be punished for her actions. These examples show how the lack of creativity is a major setback in a society. The final pitfall in the quest for equality is the lack of intelligence. In *Fahrenheit 451*, Mildred is a good example of how uneducated someone could be, in a society with collectivism. Mildred is completely under the spell that the government has cast over the society and she constantly is forgetting things.

Education and individual intelligence is not a priority in their society; therefore everyone relies on their technology. Maybe you took two pills and then forgot and took two more, and forgot again, and were so doozy you kept right on until you had thirty or forty of them in you. (pg. 17)" This quote shows how Mildred can be senseless to the point where she can't recognize when she is putting her life in danger. This is an issue because in order to find equality, one must have the brains and be able to rely on their own instincts. Also, in *Anthem*, intelligence is allowed to some people but not to others.

Equality wants to be in the Home of the Scholars, but because he is so smart, the nuncio makes him a street sweeper which involves no intelligence at all. " We would accept of life mandate, and we would work for our brothers, gladly and willingly, and we would erase our sin against them, which they did not know, but we did. (pg. 25)" When Equality says that, he

shows that he is accepting the Job that the council has given him, but he is not necessarily happy about it. He wants to expand his intelligence but he can't because the government no longer allows him to do studies.

When he said, " erase our sin against them", he is talking about the fact that he was society. The last example of how the government causes their society to lack intelligence comes from the movie Wall-E. In the movie, the move all of the people into space because the earth is no longer able to sustain human life. The captain, who is like the government but only for the spaceship, does not give the people on the ship information about earth. They are completely oblivious to the fact that Earth has been destroyed. This ties along to the other books because of how the influence of the government can make people so clueless.

Hunger Games, and Wall-E, the collectivism that is enforced by the government intros and brainwashes the society. The three major pitfalls while looking for equivalence and equality are the lack of individuality, inability to be creative, and lack of intelligence. Without individuality, you cannot be creative. When you do not have creativity, you have no way of being truly intelligent. These three pitfalls cause a domino effect because without one, you cannot have the other. This is why the societies in the stories are not functioning the way they should, and is also why people are chose to disobey the government.