

What the future could hold essay sample

Literature



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Many advancements have happened in the United States. Most of them have had positive effects; some have had negative effects. Government intervention has strongly increased as our demographics grows in age and population. Depending on a citizen's political views, this increased government intervention could be good for the United States, or it could be just the opposite. Few have been living with the same government their whole life, so they wouldn't know what is legal or illegal. In Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron", the future consists of a more strict United States government, strongly overpowering the citizens.

Hazel and George Bergeron are the parents of Harrison Bergeron. Harrison is a 14-year-old boy who is exactly seven feet tall. He intelligent and has abnormal strength and athleticism. Vonnegut has made Harrison a flat character, and states his traits very directly. Harrison is very stubborn. "Harrison Bergeron, age fourteen," she said in a grackle squawk, " has just escaped from jail, where he was held on suspicion of plotting to overthrow the government. He is a genius and an athlete, is under-handicapped, and should be regarded as extremely dangerous"" (Vonnegut Jr. 202). He doesn't want to obey the laws, so instead, he has tried to overthrow the government. This is the reason why he is being held by the government against his will. Hazel is perfectly average in this society. She doesn't need a mask to mask her beauty, weights to decrease her strength, or a little radio in her ear to regulate her thoughts. She is a static character because her traits didn't change throughout the story.

Since she has no tools preventing her from doing certain things, she is overall pretty retarded. She just goes with the flow and obeys all of the laws

even with her son being in jail. George is also a static character. He has both abnormal athleticism/strength and intelligence. Because of his unique traits, the government has blocked his unique traits out of his life. He is pretty oblivious to everything that is going on because of the radio in his head that regulates his thoughts. Diana Moon Glampers is the Handicapper General in this society. Her job is to regulate any unique traits her citizens may have. She remains a static character in this story. Like Harrison, Diana is also very stubborn. She doesn't like anybody disobeying her. This is why she shoots and kills Harrison for breaking the law. Because of her stubbornness, Diana is a predictable character.

This story takes place in the year 2081, in the United States. " All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of agents of the United States Handicapper General" (Vonnegut Jr. 200). Most of the story takes place in the Bergeron household.

In the year 2081, there are about 200 new amendments that legislate that there shall be total equality throughout the United States. These amendments result in handicaps, which are tools that regulate unique traits certain people may hold. Hazel, on the other hand, is already " normal" in this society. Therefore, she doesn't need any handicaps.

As the action rises, Hazel states the regulations she'd create and/or destroy if she was made the Handicapper General. "" If I was Diana Moon Glampers," said Hazel, " I'd have chimes on Sunday—just chimes. Kind of honor of

religion”” (Vonnegut Jr. 201). Her babbling was interrupted by her husband hearing a “ twenty-one-gun salute” in his head.

The television in Hazel and George’s room are in shows an image of their son, Harrison. He has just escaped from jail, after being held there for plotting to overthrow the government. Harrison runs into the studio and declares that he is the emperor, in need of his Empress. He takes off all of his handicaps and reveals his true self. “ He flung away his rubber-ball nose, revealed a man that would have awed Thor, the god of thunder” (Vonnegut Jr. 203). A ballerina stands up, and Harrison removes all of her handicaps also. Harrison also removes the handicaps off of the musicians so Harrison and his Empress could dance. They began dancing and eventually kiss the thirty-foot high ceiling. All of a sudden, the Handicapper General comes in with a loaded shotgun, and shoots Harrison and the Empress dead. She then reloads, and aims the gun at the musicians telling them they have ten seconds to put their handicaps back on.

During this whole scene, George got up to grab a beer, and is oblivious to the fact that his son was just shot dead. Due to short term memory, Hazel forgets the whole incident and doesn’t even know why she is crying.

This story is told in third person objective. The narrator doesn’t side with any of the characters. Instead, he is very neutral, allowing the reader to decide whether what happens in this story is justified. Kurt Vonnegut’s tone can be described as pretty serious. Vonnegut Jr. may think the future holds an overpowering government that restricts the rights of citizens. His ideas

portrayed in this story could be an exaggeration, to try and scare his audience into thinking that the future might not be so bright after all.

Intelligent people in this society are often interrupted by sudden, loud noises in their heads. These sounds could symbolize the opinions of the people. In the future, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. may think that the government won't let the people have a say in what goes on in the country. This could be laws, the job you have, whether you're allowed to have a job, health insurance, how much food you get, what kind of food you get, etc. This could be his way of predicting how the government will take away citizens' individuality.

Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" strongly portrayed the dangers of total equality. The only way to have total equality is having a stronger power force people to have certain things. For example, the Handicapper General was in charge of making people who were unique, not unique with handicaps. Anyone who disobeys the Handicapper General, may be killed. Kurt Vonnegut might be foreshadowing his opinion on what will happen in the future. National equality is impossible. There is no realistic way the government would be able to make every human being the same. But the government is going to do the best they can to get relatively close to total equality.

Work Cited

Vonnegut, Kurt, Jr. "Harrison Bergeron" Backpack Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Writing. Eds. X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. New York: Learning Solutions, 2010. 199-205. Print.