

Kurt is able to both
establish a reason



Kurt Vonnegut's "Harrison Bergeron" is used to criticize politics. While at first it seems the work solely argues against communist and socialist ideals, further examination reveals Vonnegut's disdain for aspects of both sides of the political spectrum. Darryl Hattenhauer, author of "The Politics Of Kurt Vonnegut's 'Harrison Bergeron'", argues that Vonnegut uses his skills as a satirist to criticize both right and left wing politics. Author P.

L. Thomas, in his work "Lost In Adaptation: Kurt Vonnegut's Radical Humor in Film and Print", further agrees with and argues for this sentiment. By employing hyperbole in the completely equal future of 2081 America, and using the story as an allegory for America's political shortcomings, Kurt Vonnegut displays his disdain with political aspects of both capitalism and communism, as well as the social aspects of conservatism and liberalism. Throughout Vonnegut's work, allegories are used to deliver his message without being explicit regarding his true beliefs. Nearly everything within the story serves a double meaning, with perhaps the most obvious being the world of 2081 America, which represents the America of Vonnegut's time. The oppressive equality of "Harrison Bergeron"'s world is, obviously, representative of a communist, or even socialist, state. However, this allegory is meant also to criticize right wing views on socialism, as well as its extremist views towards such a topic. Hattenhauer agrees with this sentiment, stating "So the narrator's definition of America's equality begins not by positing a future equality as much as exposing the misunderstanding of it in the past and present" (Hattenhauer 389).

As much as the overtly equal world of 2081 America acts as a criticism of socialist ideals and policies, the way in which it is portrayed to the reader

acts almost as a parody of satirical views of socialism and communism. Vonnegut's tendencies to satirize the topics of his works are often fulfilled through his extensive use of hyperbole. By overly exaggerating the equal state of 2081 America, Vonnegut is able to both establish a reason to despise socialist views, and also mocks the radical view many conservatives take against socialist ideals.

This satiric representation of right wing views is much more subtle than the glaringly obvious criticism of the left, and often leaves readers believing that Vonnegut held disdain strictly for socialism and communism, as opposed to politics of his time as a whole. As is common of Vonnegut, he manages to use humor and satire to deliver his message, in a way that can easily be misinterpreted or missed entirely by readers. Thomas expresses this sentiment in his work, stating " The ambiguity and inherent contradictory possibilities of Vonnegut's vision, ideology, and tragic-comic tone appear to be driven by his role as critical comedian..

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Throughout Kurt Vonnegut's " Harrison Bergeron", numerous literary techniques are used. Through his use of hyperbole and allegories, Vonnegut delivers a criticism of the politics of his time. While the popular view is that Vonnegut solely disliked socialist, left wing ideals, the truth is that he held a disdain for political policies in general, and showed it in his work. By using 2081 America as an allegory for a communist state of his time, as well as using hyperbole to satirize both left and right wing politics, Kurt Vonnegut is

able to criticize the politics of his time as a whole. Kurt Vonnegut held his own specific stance towards politics, and “ Harrison Bergeron” is the harbinger of his opinion.