

Harrison bergeron literary analysis essay



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Kurt Vonnegut Junior's passage "Harrison and Bergeron" is a brief story written in 1961. It is about Harrison Bergeron, an inmate who is forced to diminish his abilities because they are more enhanced than everyone else's. When Harrison tries to rebel against the laws of the land, he is shot and killed. "Harrison Bergeron" is similar to "1984", a book written in 1948 by George Orwell. In "1984" every single leader of society is overthrown by Big Brother and everyone has to conform to the same rules or he or she will be killed, or taken out of society.

"Harrison Bergeron" and "1984" have many similarities that give an insight to what is to come in the near future for society. "Harrison Bergeron" describes the year as being, "2081 and everyone was finally equal." "Nobody was smarter" "better looking", "stronger or quicker, than anybody else" (216). This suggests that society has dramatically changed since the time the story was written, 120 years ago. George Orwell had this same insight in "1984", which was set thirty-six years ahead of its time. Vonnegut and Orwell obviously see something that everyone else does not.

They see that one day, one day soon, society will be forced to conform to rules that will make everyone equal in every way possible. Vonnegut gives a dialogue of George and Hazel, Harrison's parents, which gives the reason of why no one can rebel. "If there was some way we could make a little hole in the bottom of the bag, and just take out a few of them balls. Just a few", said Hazel. Two years in prison and two thousand dollars fine for every ball I took out," said George. "I don't call that a bargain." "If you could just take a few out when you come home from work," said Hazel.

I mean—you don't compete with anybody around here. You just set around. " If I tried to get away with it," said George, " then other people'd get away with it—and pretty soon we'd be right back to the dark ages again, with everybody competing against everybody else. You wouldn't like that, would you? " " I'd hate it," said Hazel. " There you are," said George. " The minute people start cheating on law, what do you think happens to society? " The dialogue suggests that if one person decides to cheat the laws, then other people will try as well. Therefore eventually causing society to return to the way it previously was.

Orwell provides an example using the main character, Winston Smith, of how society would fall apart if people were allowed to rise up and disobey the laws. Throughout the entire novel Orwell describes Smith's plans to revolt and how he is brought back into the system of the land. " Harrison Bergeron" and " 1984" demonstrate how some people will suffer if everyone is obligated to be the equal. Vonnegut demonstrates this by having the characters of his story wear masks so no one's beauty can show, or wear devices in their ears so no one's thoughts are more advanced than others and no one can have thoughts of rebelling.

Orwell has books, games, and other things of individuality removed from society. This way no one can read about different types of worlds, or dream about places they wish were real. Today's society is getting closer and closer to becoming the humanity Vonnegut and Orwell wrote about. There cameras on lamp post and streets, which makes it so people are always being watched. There is uniform required not only in the work place, but also in

schools. Now everyone is dressing alike on a regular basis, making everyone look similar. No one's clothes are better than someone else's.

The media only lets us know about things they want us to know about. If 200 civilians were killed in Iraq in an attempt to kill one person, the media has a choice on whether the public should know about that. The choice is usually no, because the media wants the public to believe that our country can do no wrong, and every decision our government makes is the best decision. If these things continue to go on without any one stepping up and changing them, then society will most certainly become just like the world Vonnegut and Orwell predicted.