

The symbols in harrison bergeron by kurt vonnegut



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In "Harrison Bergeron" Kurt Vonnegut criticized the way government took advantage of the power they had over civilians and demolished people's strongest capabilities. A few years later, Joseph Alvarez wrote "An Overview of Harrison Bergeron" to analyze the work. He believed Vonnegut's use of the television is a way of telling how powerful technology can be. This is one aspect of it but Alvarez thought that this was Harrison's only reason for being so influential. Brian Pearl also wrote a critical essay on Harrison Bergeron and included Alvarez's thoughts. Pearl agreed and added in that "fighting for your freedom is not worth it when you live in an authoritative society". Harrison has the ability to rebel against the government and the will to fight because of all the potential that was concealed by his handicaps. The television made the word of Bergeron travel faster but the uprising would have been just as persuasive and this could be proved using imagery and symbolism.

Although the television made Harrison's boycott of the handicaps seem very important it would have been an even bigger deal if it wasn't aired.

Vonnegut vividly describes the way that Harrison and the beautiful ballerina defied the laws of gravity by floating into the air. "They reeled, whirled, swiveled, flounced, capered, gamboled, and spun. They leaped like deer on the moon". All the people in the studio during the uprising came to watch a ballet recital but witnessed the death of two young adolescents with so much potential. There were many people in the room like ballerinas, technicians, musicians, and announcers. Sooner or later everyone would be gossiping about the "recital" and all the citizens would be in shock. The word of mouth is just as significant as the power of the television. "Harrison's power to

reach the people and make a new reality (declaring himself emperor), stems from controlling television". Another aspect is that Harrison's power comes from the way he rebelled against the government. He could have started a revolution by doing this. He knew what he was getting into but living with all the handicaps just wasn't much of a life at all.

In Pearl's review, he states " Harrison Bergeron shows that fighting for your freedom is not worth it when you live in an authoritative society". Another way to look at it is if you don't fight, you can't live the way that is just.

Pearl's statement is just like saying that all of Martin Luther King Jr.'s protesting wasn't worth it because he got assassinated. Martin Luther King Jr. wanted justice for everyone just like Harrison. They knew that what they were doing could get them into loads of trouble, but they did it because they didn't like their quality of life. Harrison couldn't think about one thing for more than thirty seconds without being interrupted by a random noise. He had to shave off his eyebrows and carry an enormous weight because he was too strong and handsome. The handicaps in the story symbolizes the limited freedom experienced across the world. They represent all that society could be if it wasn't so limited. All the handicaps can make someone's personality completely different. Pearl states " A citizen who lets their government take away their rights without a fight loses his or her soul in the process". For this exact reason, Harrison fought and sacrificed his life in the hopes that others would rebel as well.

In conclusion, most of the symbols in Harrison Bergeron are prominent in today's world. An example is the power of television. Television has become an everyday type of thing for many people all over the world. It makes news <https://assignbuster.com/the-symbols-in-harrison-bergeron-by-kurt-vonnegut/>

spread faster and to more areas but it isn't the only way a message could get around. Also, one person can make a difference. Pearl said "...Harrison's death shows us... isn't worth it because it takes more than one person to take down a whole government". This can be disputed because everything has to start with one person. Nothing major can just change overnight. Modification takes time and patience.