

Harrison bergeron theme of competition



Harrison Bergeron was written to give the reader some sort of idea as to what it would be like if there was no competition in the world. The main character is 14, tall, handsome, strong, athletic, smart, and above average in every way imaginable. The author uses humor and irony to depict a rather horrible story of a dystopian society where, all people were truly and fully made equal in every aspect imaginable under the law of the land.

The government made sure that no one could be smarter, prettier, stronger, or in anyway better than the next person. It is not only a story of government control but also a story about social boundaries and conforming to social norms in this made up society.

Competition is in our nature as people. There is always someone out there that is better, smarter, stronger, etc that we are trying to get ahead of. In this short story a woman named Diana Moon Glampers who was the handicapper general was required to come up with ideas to make sure that no one had an unfair advantage over anyone else. If someone was more than average in their intelligence, like the main character in this short story, they were required to wear an earpiece twenty-four hours a day that transmitted horrible noises into their ears in twenty second intervals to blast out the thoughts. Everyone in this society was required to wear sacks with a certain number of lead balls in them depending on their size, strength and other factors determined by the handicapper general, to weigh them down so that they couldn't move faster than others.

Although unrealistic, this dystopian society draws parallels to the world we live in today. Everyone always competing to see who has the best job, the

best house, the best car, etc. In everything we do we are competing against or siblings, peers, and the rest of the world for some sort of gratification. All children get a trophy for being on a sports team just for showing up for practices and games, just so that they don't feel inferior to the children that are athletically inclined or the children who work harder and put in more time than the others to make themselves better.

The author uses extreme irony throughout the short story to illustrate just how ridiculous life was in this made up world. All TV/radio announcers had some sort of speech impediment, sometimes so severe that they couldn't make the announcements that they were supposed to make. For example when the ballerina decided to read the announcement over live tv the narrator said She had to apologize at once for her voice, which was a very unfair voice for a woman to use. Her voice was a warm, luminous, timeless melody. Excuse me- she said and began again making her voice completely uncompetitive.

The advancement of technology is a big theme in this writing because of the use of all the handicapping devices. Everyone in this society had to wear a bag chained around their neck with a certain number of lead balls so no one would be stronger or faster than anyone else. For every ball you took out of your bag it was \$2000 and 2 years in jail. If you had more than average intelligence you were to wear a mental handicap which played piercing noises in your ears so that you were not able to think clearly. If you could see better than everyone else, you would have to wear glasses to impair your vision. And if you didn't look average, you would have to wear a mask so that no one felt threatened by your beauty. The more above average you

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looked, the uglier the mask you were made to wear. The main character, Harrison, had to wear big headphones that covered his ears, glasses that impaired his vision as well as giving him debilitating migraines. He was made to carry three hundred pounds of scrap metal on his body and, because of his good looks, was always made to wear a red ball on his nose 24 hours a day and to keep his eyebrows shaved.