

Harrison Bergeron

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“Harrison Bergeron” is a story about Big Government forcing equality on citizens by the use of handicaps; in doing so they hold everyone back from their fullest potential. The year 2081 is oppressive to say the least; people are punished for being above average in intelligence, beauty, physical abilities or any variety of capabilities. No one is supposed to be more attractive, stronger, more intelligent or quicker than anyone else. The quest for egalitarianism is faulty; people who are born gifted are hindered by ridiculous weight bags, glasses to cause blindness and headaches, ear radios that send nerve racking noises every twenty seconds courtesy of a government transmitter and hideous masks are a few objects implemented to make everyone equal. The government, in trying to even the playing field to give everyone the same, fair chance, handicapped the gifted far beyond the point of making them equal to the average citizen. In the story “Harrison Bergeron,” Hazel is developed primarily through her average intelligence, limited imagination, and empathy toward her husband as well as others to suggest the central idea that a totalitarianism government leads to the degradation of one’s humanity.

Hazel is of average intelligence and in the year 2081 average intelligence meant, “She couldn’t think about anything except in short bursts” (846). The average citizen has such short attention spans that they are not capable of intelligent thought, the short bursts of

thought prevents in-depth cogitation. The story begins with Hazel and her husband George watching ballerinas dancing on the television. "There were tears on Hazel's cheeks, but she she'd forgotten for the moment what they were about" (846). Hazel has the [attention span](#) ...

... middle of paper ...

...n regards to looks or intelligence or the countless other ways we compare ourselves in our current society. The third paragraph reveals that the equal society presented to us was a lie. Hazel was not required to wear any of the government mandated handicaps; however, her husband who had above average intelligence was forced to wear the transmitter and a weight around his neck. One persistent question I asked throughout the story was how are these handicaps fair? Hazel has compassion for the burdens George lives with but never comes to the conclusion that society would be better without the handicaps. In fact, she comments that society would fall apart and how much she would dislike a world where people weren't equal.

Works Cited

Vonnegut Jr., Kurt. "[Harrison Bergeron](#)." The Story and Its Writer. 8th ed Ann Charters. Boston: Bedford, 2011. 846-50. Print.

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