***Harrison Bergeron* Analysis Essay**

The short story *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut was first published in 1961. Kurt Vonnegut's novel is set in a dystopian future in which the Handicapper General renders everyone "equal." Everyone in this society must wear technologies that offset their physical or mental advantages to "level the playing field," Weights and masks are examples of handicapping equipment. Harrison Bergeron, a fourteen-year-old child who fights against the system, is the novel's protagonist. He overcomes his handicaps and proclaims himself Emperor of the United States. Unfortunately, his liberty is cut short when he is shot and killed by the Handicapper General. The story depicts the difficulties of a society that wants to make everyone equal at any cost, including sacrificing their freedoms and uniqueness. *Harrison Bergeron* functions as a warning against the dangers of totalitarianism and a reminder of the values of individualism through its themes. The short story *Harrison Bergeron* explores the themes of freedom, the dangers of tyranny, and the individual's power, illustrating how these concepts can be both liberating and oppressive.

**Freedom**

Freedom is one of the significant themes portrayed in *Harrison Bergeron*. The oppressive government in the story searches for a way to eradicate any sense of freedom by compelling its citizens to be equal and similar in every way. Harrison is among the subjects affected by the exploitative government. However, he is the only individual who seems to realize the significance of freedom. He is ready and prepared to do whatever it takes to break free from the repressive government (Joodaki & Mahdiany, 2013). He symbolizes the idea that freedom is something that people must pursue and fight for because it is worth the struggle. The concept of freedom is further emphasized by the fact that even after the government eliminates Harrison, his memory lives on and encourages others to fight for their freedom.

**The Power of the Individual**

Another theme in *Harrison Bergeron* is the power of the individual. Harrison, the protagonist character in the story, is the only one determined to defy the unjust government that forces the citizens to put on handicaps to decrease their intelligence and physical capabilities. In his efforts to free himself of the handicaps, Harrison symbolizes an individual strength in an oppressive government. He is ready to handle the risks and fight for what he believes in, despite the obstacles he encounters. His actions show the power of an individual to stand up and fight for the change they want to see in society, regardless of how difficult the odds may appear. Through Harrison's story, Vonnegut displays that individuals can fight against oppressive forces and that it is possible to make a difference. When Harrison stood up against the oppressive government, he showed that the individual's power is strong and can be used to repel oppressive forces.

**Dangers for a Totalitarian Government**

The dangers of a totalitarian government are also a theme evident in *Harrison Bergeron*. Such a government tortures the country's citizens to ensure that their equality objective is achieved. It makes their subjects feel it is wrong to be smarter or better than others. Therefore the most intelligent people are subjected to radios that produce noise in their ears and thus hinder and interrupt their thinking. The powerful and graceful individuals in the story must always carry weights around their necks. Therefore, due to the government's obsession with total equality, people are forced to hide their distinctive talents. As a result of such a dystopian society, America has turned into a nation of timid, illiterate, and slow people (Hudaya, 2019). Therefore, even though equality is attained in America, it is achieved at the expense of personal and national freedom and development, thus leading to a society that suppresses any potential progress and lacks diversity.

**Symbolism**

Vonnegut has also utilized symbolism to convey his themes further. For example, the Handicapper General, Diana Moon Glampers, symbolizes the oppressive government (Aldstadt, 2019). Her name implies that she is in charge of the handicapping of citizens to maintain equality. She is also described as having "a monstrous plastic smile," a metaphor for the false sense of happiness the government attempts to instill in its citizens. This symbolism illustrates Vonnegut's themes and emphasizes that extreme equality is oppressive and can lead to a lack of individualism and creativity.

**Conclusion**

The themes of freedom, the power of the individual, and the dangers of totalitarianism are evident in the story *Harrison Bergeron*. Vonnegut's novel warns against the dangers of totalitarianism and reminds us of the essence of individualism. Furthermore, the tale acts as a reminder to us that freedom and the power of the individual are factors that should be fought for and that they are worth the struggle. Vonnegut effectively and memorably conveys these powerful messages through themes, symbolism, and other literary techniques. Therefore, in today's world, where authoritarian governments have escalated, *Harrison Bergeron* is a powerful reminder of the essence of freedom, individuality, and the power of the individual in society.

**References**

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