

In "Harrison Bergeron" Kurt Vonnegut depicts a society in which everyone is mentally, physically, and socially equal. Throughout the history of our country, Americans have sought racial, gender, and socio-economic equality. On paper such a society seems ideal. Through the story one might infer that Vonnegut views the concept of total equality as ludicrous. Equality can be interpreted many ways. One point of view is the American belief that everybody should be treated equally and another view is the one represented in the story that everybody is equal. I completely agree with Mr. Vonnegut's view of the perfect society as being absurd.

Having everybody equal looks fantastic in planning but it would never work out that way. If the government was allowed to impose handicaps on the naturally gifted, how could civilization ever make advancements? The great thinkers would not be able to envision new ideas because of the mental handicap radios they had to wear in their ears. Technology would come to a stand still with the gifted not being able to finish a complete thought because of the sharp sounds produced by the mental handicaps. With the handicaps imposed there would not be the breakthroughs that are needed to improve the population's way of life. Suppose someone did not have the ability to invent the automobile. It would be difficult to commute to school or work. Imagine if you had to walk to work every day no matter how bad the weather is. Now-a-days people complain about having to simply walk out to their car in the morning and wait for it to warm up. Many jobs would have never been created if there were not any cars. Without technological advancements, the economy would also come to a stand still.

If new goods and services were not being produced, the economy could not survive. Monopolies would eventually form and eliminate competition because new and improved products would not be replacing the old and obsolete products. The formation of these monopolies brings the nation one step closer to communism. When you look at it, the perfect society is what Russia was looking to achieve before they realized it could not work. The price of products will continually increase while the quality of the products continues to diminish without competition. This is not the only area where competition will disappear.

With the limitations imposed on the gifted athletes by the physical handicaps, sports too would disappear. The superb athletes would not be able to display their abilities because they were weighed down by sash-weights and bags of birdshot. Try to picture Barry Sanders attempting to run through a hole in the offensive line while wearing sixty pounds of weights around his neck. It would be impossible. If the naturally athletic citizens were brought down to the level of the average person there would not be any point of even playing a sport. Thus eliminating sports altogether.

Kurt Vonnegut's views might be a little exaggerated, but that is what he intended. He used satire in attempt to reform the belief that the perfect society can be obtained.

