

Lens: Marxist (Class Struggle)

This lens looks to examine how class struggle is illustrated in literature. In what ways are the “lower class” kept down by the economic or societal forces. How is mankind forced to accept less than a meaningful life for the benefit of the rich/upper classes?

Tips

1. While we will study Marxism more in depth later, it is important to know that it is part of the basis for communism: the idea that all wealth should be shared equally as opposed to the rich controlling far more than the poor.
2. Does the book look to keep the “working man” in his place by perpetuating the “need” for society to continue as it is?
3. Does the book acknowledge class struggle? Does it present the hardships that ordinary people face? Does it only follow the problems of the rich and privileged?
4. Whom does the work/goals in the book benefit? The rich? The poor? Someone else?
5. In what ways are the common/lower class oppressed and kept down?
6. How does the society in the book promote equality of all? Does it? What way does the society perpetuate the need for rich to rule over the poor?

QUICK ANALYSIS OF SECTION 10+11 THROUGH MARXIST LENS

Chapter 10

- Graff and Anderson talk about giving Ender an army
 - it's bad for Ender because he's isolated again...a problem for the privileged who has all his worldly needs met otherwise.
- Graff is fat. (not dealing with hunger)
- Ender's biggest problems are with his rule prohibitions for his army (no trades etc.)
- They are playing a mock game in space while people struggle to get by on earth.
 - Everyone on battle school is privileged (bourgeoisie)
- Ender as commander. The idea that one has to rule over others. Why is there a commander? Why can't the army come to consensus instead of being ordered around?
 - We are mocked for our poverty instead of helped.
- “Ender was mentally grouping them into slow learners and fast learners”
 - Again, the weak/slow/poor are singled out, while the privileged will be advanced

- While people on Earth suffer from real gun violence and death, these kids get to play make-believe with laser tag guns
- Ender singles out Bean and makes fun of him for being undersized (In *Ender's Shadow* we learn that Bean is poor and homeless), thus Ender is making fun of the poorest kid in his army, including making fun of his size (which is probably from malnutrition)
- Graff "manipulating the lives of little boys so they turn out factory perfect, generals and admirals ready to lead the fleet in defense of the homeland"
- The rich/privileged are making the soldiers (poor) who will do the fighting and die in the war.
- "beat him until he gets in line with everybody else" □ must conform to society
- Alai and Ender's interaction. Ender is the dominant party(privilege), Alai considered second class (race/religion)

Chapter 11

- Ender's Game is like capitalism. The few at the top (the teachers/capitalists) have it rigged against the common person(kids). They change the rules when they want, they promote those that they want, and at the end of the day, most never will be the "hero".
- "How America ought to use the I.F. to destroy the Warsaw Pact..."
Capitalist America looking to exploit its leverage of the workers of the world.
- Follows Ender to the "Commander's mess hall" □ we only follow the stories of the powerful elites. (what is going on with the normal soldiers who do the work?)

THE ASSIGNMENT: Analyze section 3 of *Ender's Game* (Chapters 12, 13) with this lens. Document and analyze how social class plays a part in this section. Who's stories do we follow? Do we hear the voice of the "common man"? How do the rich suppress the poor?