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The Hunger Games by Suzanne Collins

Introduction

The novel “The Hunger Games” is a 2008 science fiction by American writer Suzanne Collins. The book is written in the voice of Katniss Everdeen, a 16-year old who lives in Panem, which is a post-apocalyptic country. The Capitol of the country is a highly advanced metropolis that exercises political control over all other parts of the nation. The Hunger Games is actually an annual event in which one girl and one boy aged between 12 and 18 years from each of the 12 districts around the Capitol are picked randomly through a lottery system to participate in a televised competition based on a death battle (Collins 2).

Thesis statement

The novel *The Hunger Games* is focused on highlighting several issues like poverty, oppression, rebellion, government, media and teen identity that affected Panem nation and the modern society by extension through reality TV shows in the mainstream media.

Thesis

Panem is a fragmented post-apocalyptic society, which is under the control of fascistic Capitol. The Capitol keeps the citizens quiet by principally feeding them with

reality war games that features youngsters who must fight using any means and weapon in order to survive. The citizens of Panem districts must participate in the Hunger Games. They do this despite the fact they are starving and lack what to eat. The reason why they are involved in the Hunger Games is purely for self-preservation. The atmosphere during the hunger games is that of helplessness and the main characters try to actually overcome their fight in order to survive. Katniss Everdeen takes the responsibility of providing food for her family through hunting. For example she says:

“What must it be like, I wonder, to live in a world where food appears at the press of a button? How would I spend the hours I now commit to comb the woods for sustenance if it were so easy to come by? What do they do all day, these people in the Capitol, besides decorating their bodies and waiting around for a new shipment of tributes to reel in and die for their entertainment?” (Collin, 57)

This sees her to develop skills that are useful and essential to her in the Hunger Games. She develops proficiency in using a bow and an arrow. Even though Katniss is good at using deadly weapons such as a bow and arrow, she must woe the viewers into sending her medicine and food. Having acquired the skills, Katniss represents her rejection of the rules of the Capitols despite the life-threatening situations she faces. This is seen in the excerpt below (Collin, 3)

“My name is Katniss Everdeen. I am seventeen years old. My home is District 12. I was in the Hunger Games. I escaped. The Capitol hates me.....”

The other message that Suzanne Collins is putting across is that of personal identity. For example, despite the fact that Katniss is only sixteen years of age, she is

obsessed with the familiar teen emotions, being the desire to stand out and be special by competing in the Hunger Games. The writer is not writing about teenagers in general but is focused on the war for adolescents. It is worth noting that the concept of The Hunger Games is based on reality TV shows. Collins successfully passes the idea of the society. The novel shows the modern culture who likes being entertained by watching movies where the main characters are teenagers who fight and brutally kill each other. Collins is trying to open the eyes of the audience and the society at large to look beyond entertainment. The truth is that even children watch these movies, due to popular demand for entertainment; but the question is, “will the teenagers grow up with good morals?” In fact, it is not easy to control the teenagers when they consume such movies from the mainstream media. Therefore, the purpose of media as a provider of good entertainment is dully lost since those who are to be entertained change to acquire beastly behaviors. As in the case of Katniss, she uses primitive tools such as bows and arrows to violently kill in the book “The Hunger Games”. Katniss says;

“All those months of taking it for granted that Peeta thought I was wonderful are over. Finally, he can see me for who I really am. Violent. Distrustful. Manipulative. Deadly. And I hate him for it.” (Collin, 40)

Consequently, people need to critically look at the entertainment they consume and realize that these types of exaggerated media may evolve into bigger violence in future. Based on historical data, the magnitude of violence in videos and films is today alarming. In fact, reality TV shows where teenagers fight each other should be controlled in the modern society. Collins is concerned about the amount of reality TV shows people watch.

The Hunger Games is also a story of a trilogy. It shows the government's control of the nation known as Panem (Henthorne 31). The government depicts itself as a villain but not the tributes. The tributes are the teenage fighters. The teenage fighters are simply doing what they must do in such kind of scenario so as to survive. The teenage fighters are in a class of their own. They are trained brutal killers and how to volunteer in the Hunger Games.

The government is seen as doing very little to stop this menace of teenage fight. They are actually in the forefront of encouraging it by organizing it. This could be analogous to the modern day TV reality shows which the government is unable to control or censure. Instead, they abet it. Collins is left to wonder the exact role of the government in trying to upbring a less violent society. In addition, Collins is trying to pass a message on government involvement in political wars like the one that happened in Vietnam when the U.S government attacked the Asian country. Teenagers were engaged as child soldiers and killed those who were seen as sympathizers of the U.S army or traitors (Egan 77).

Conclusion

Indeed the novel *The Hunger Games* has succeeded on highlighting major societal issues like poverty, oppression, rebellion, government, media and teen identity that affected Panem nation and the modern society by extension through reality TV shows in the mainstream media. For example, Katniss is only sixteen years of age but she is obsessed with the familiar teen emotions, which were the desire to stand out and be special by competing in the Hunger Games.

The citizens of Panem districts must participate in the Hunger Games despite the fact that they are starving. Notably, The Hunger Games is also a story of a trilogy. It shows the government's control of the nation known as Panem. The government depicts itself as a villain but not the tributes.

Works cited

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