

The Merit of English Section

Junior Division

Name of Winner : Chan Wing Yan Dorothy

Name of School : St. Paul's Convent School

Book Title : *Ender's Game*

Author : Orson Scott Card

Publisher : Little, Brown Book Group

Imagine how the world would be in the future. Creating genetically-modified child prodigies? Experiencing 'Star Wars' in reality? *Ender's Game*, written by Orson Scott Card, is a compelling novel with a thrilling yet inspiring plot which I devoured in a sheer few hours.

The story begins with Ender Wiggin, a third to a family of phenomenal children, was selected by the international military authority to be monitored every

single moment in order to be recruited into an interstellar war training to rescue mankind from potential alien invasion of the Buggers. When the training commenced, Ender proved himself to be sagacious, which sparked resentment, rivalry and rancor among his comrades or 'competitors'. However, his personal charisma attracted friendships and the sense of camaraderie supported him to surmount his psychological battles of loneliness, unsettling terror and pressure. Meanwhile, a danger emerged. Peter, Ender's ruthless and sadistic brother, coaxed Valentine, Ender's sister, into assisting him in satisfying his unlimited ambitions, while Valentine surrendered in hope of creating a positive outcome. Back to the camp, Ender's performance impressed leaders and thus was made commander of Dragon Army. Despite being challenged by increasingly difficult trials with advantages landing on the opposing team, by collaborative teamwork while working individually, they never lost. Upon promoting to the control centre of the

International Fleet, Ender faced numerous simulated battles to compete for the title, 'army conductor', only to find out later that they were real. Perplexed by the confusion, Ender learnt that he had caused the extinction of the buggers and the authority hid the truth due to their awareness of his frequent bewildering thoughts of communicating with the enemy through signals. To make up for his wrongdoings, Ender set out to take the queen pupa of the Bugger to establish a new colony for them.

Not only was I fascinated by the intricate universe created by the author, Mr. Card, but also astonished by how he depicted contrasting characters with great details, yet somehow allows readers to find resemblances. Ender Wiggin is, without a doubt, the most diversified character with three-dimensional characteristics. This protagonist is a far cry from the ones in different books, who are molded from idealism and perfectionism. Ender truly depicts that 'nobody is perfect'. Although he is equipped

with applaudable specialties, such as extraordinary intelligence and great leadership, he also shows the dark side of man: the tendency to violence, a bit similar to Peter. However, Ender sees violence as a last resort to evilness which demonstrates how we, as human beings can do our best while protecting our pure true self.

In addition, Valentine is a captivating supporting character. What intrigued me the most is the striking contrast between Peter and her. Even though they are both precocious child prodigies, unlike Peter, Valentine does not wish to intervene others through force and control by exploiting their weaknesses. Instead, she wishes to effectively utilize her wisdom and compassion to save humanity, rather than seizing power.

Applying my past knowledge to analyze this book, I discovered that the author had applied the technique of foreshadowing. Being a third child was a bizarre

phenomenon as it required government's approval, which symbolizes that Ender is deemed to be remarkable and peculiar. In addition, at the beginning of each chapter, it showcases the conversation between two people which creates the suspense of the upcoming events. This is a great literary device worth learning.

The themes of the novel left me mesmerizing the most. As the proverb goes, 'No man is an island.' Despite Commander Graff's attempt to isolate Ender from his peers by publicly complimenting his outstanding wits, Ender befriended one of the 'launchies', Alai, who assisted him in integrating into the social circle by alleviating enmity and clearing his self-doubt. In a nutshell, interpersonal relationship is vital for survival and friendship is the most powerful element in the universe.

Compassion is shown throughout the plot, a

fundamental stem of humanity. Valentine's compassion for Ender pulled him out of the midst of despair. Bearing this in mind, Ender was able to deter himself from falling prey into being ambitious and quenched his thirst for manipulation, a talent gifted to this prodigy since birth. Moreover, Ender, with a similar compassionate personality trait as Valentine, experienced severe guilt, regret and sorrow for the buggers, the alien species that he almost wiped out, and that drove him to repay for his wrongful deeds: starting a new bugger colony with the only existing queen. As we can see, compassion is a crucial necessity for maintaining peer relationships, family bonds and all kinds of social interactions. Compassion assembles people and brings hope to the future ahead.

All in all, *Ender's Game* is truly an exhilarating science fiction which not only creates an all-rounded plot, but also dives into the philosophies of life.