
The Themes Of Political Control And Power In The Hunger Games

Power through entertainment is one of the most important strategies of the Capitol demonstrated in The Hunger Games. The citizens in The Capitol are under the control of their government through use of entertainment and food. To make sure the citizens will listen to them over any other, the Panem government provides them with entertainment through the brutal murder of District children in The Hunger Games itself. The government also takes food and resources from the Districts, so the Capitol citizens can abuse it. This gives a level of power to the Capitol citizens that then make them dehumanise anyone of lower status than them. The Capitol utilizes an almost authoritarian style government where strict control over districts is exercised. "At one o'clock, we head of the square. Attendance is mandatory unless you are on deaths door. This evening, officials will come around and check to see if this is the case. If not you will be imprisoned". Therefore, we can see that the Capitol forces the people to participate in the reaping through threats. "When I was younger, I scared my mother to death, the things I would blurt out about District 12, about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol. Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts". Katniss needs to disregard her sentiments and stay quiet to keep her from causing more harm by standing up. Individuals are frightened of the legislature, the Capitol moves fear and that is one reason why they make the amusements, to influence individuals to be perplexed and not assault them.

The Hunger Games deal with oppression by many ways. "It's time for the drawing. Effie Trinket says as she always does, "Ladies first!" and crosses to the glass ball with the girls' names. She reaches in, digs her hand deep into the ball, and pulls out a slip of paper". The legislature mistreats the general population of the Seam since they were sentenced to play the Hunger Games each year to get some resources to live. Individuals live on the grounds that they don't know whether the individual that will be chosen for the Games is a member of their family or themselves, and that one unfortunate day through chance, life can change for the worst.

Dehumanisation is how the government of Panem justifies its inequitable treatment of the Districts. This is explored through the character Effie Trinket who has many moments of where she says or does actions that dehumanise a lower class, such as a moment on the train to the Capitol where Katniss sits down to eat dinner and picks up her knife and fork, Effie continues to comment with "At least you two have decent manners, the pair last year ate everything with

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their hands like a couple of savages. It completely upset my digestion.” The children referred to were likely to have been deprived of food and shelter for most of their lives. For them to eat with their hands is therefore expected, When Effie calls them savages, she disregards the fact that these children came from such uninhabitable conditions. This is because of the Capitol's system of resource restriction which promotes unequal treatment of the Districts. District 12 has pretty much no food for anyone and most are starving. This helps the Capitol control its nation because the citizens of the lower Districts know that if they were to rebel their already low supply of resources would be cut and they would not be able to sustain it. The low resources also help keep the citizens physically weak so any rebellion would be easily crushed. The Panem government uses the restriction of resources to keep everything localised. Katniss makes a comment that “At school everything always comes back to coal.” This is so that the Capitol can make sure that if rebellion was to resurface, it would be abolished and very few people would know of the location of other Districts whose help could be called upon. It additionally ensures that no weapons can be created as the main individuals who know how to make weapons are in the most trusted areas of Panem, and it is likely that they would not sell out the legislature of Panem. However, this is just a single of numerous social and political issues all through the world communicated through The Hunger Games.

Although dystopian fiction, the novel's integration of themes surrounding political control and power are applicable to contemporary society. These include control through entertainment, dehumanisation to justify inequality, restriction of resources and restriction of information. Furthermore, the Capitol is comparable to other totalitarian regimes and hegemonies in the world, such as those in North Korea or the USSR. Suzanne Collins uses her writing to draw parallels between Panem and our world today, providing a cautionary tale for the consequences that arise when totalitarian power is taken to its extremes. Young adults, as the novel's target audience, are introduced to the types of themes which will encourage them to become critical thinkers and draw parallels to their own environments.

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