

Ender's Game Study Guide

Ender's Game by Orson Scott Card

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Contents

Ender's Game Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Author Biography.....	5
Plot Summary.....	6
Chapter 1 "Third".....	10
Chapter 2 "Peter".....	11
Chapter 3 "Graff".....	12
Chapter 4 "Launch".....	14
Chapter 5 "Games".....	16
Chapter 6 "The Giant's Drink".....	18
Chapter 7 "Salamander".....	20
Chapter 8 "Rat".....	23
Chapter 9 "Locke and Demosthenes".....	27
Chapter 10 "Dragon".....	30
Chapter 11 "Veni Vidi Vici".....	32
Chapter 12 "Bonzo".....	35
Chapter 13 "Valentine".....	38
Chapter 14 "Ender's Teacher".....	41
Chapter 15 "Speaker of the Dead".....	44
Characters.....	46
Themes.....	52
Style.....	55
Historical Context.....	57
Critical Overview.....	60



Criticism..... 62

Critical Essay #1..... 63

Critical Essay #2..... 66

Critical Essay #3..... 72

Adaptations..... 76

Topics for Further Study..... 77

What Do I Read Next?..... 78

Further Study..... 79

Bibliography..... 81

Copyright Information..... 82



Introduction

Orson Scott Card first wrote *Ender's Game* as a short story in 1975. He submitted the work to a leading science fiction magazine, *Analog*, hoping to make some money to help pay his school debts. Not only did *Analog* publish the story, the 1977 World Science Fiction Convention nominated it for a Hugo Award and gave Card the John W. Campbell Award for best new writer. In 1985, the author developed *Ender's Game* into a novel, and it became the work which established his reputation as one of science fiction's most prominent new writers. This longer version swept both the Hugo and Nebula Awards, the most prestigious accolades given to science fiction and fantasy works. A favorite with readers, the novel has inspired three additional works featuring Ender Wiggin and his struggles to understand the universe.

Ender's Game follows the training of Andrew "Ender" Wiggin, a six-year-old genius who may be Earth's only hope for Victory against an invasion of insectoid aliens. While most critics consider the plot elements of human-against-alien and the child soldier to be science-fiction cliché, Card renders them new with his stress on the underlying themes of empathy, compassion, and moral intent. It is only Ender's ability to empathize with the "buggers" that enables him to overcome them, and the reader experiences his solitude, anguish, and remorse over his various "victories." As a result, Michael Collings noted in the *Fantasy Review*, the novel "succeed[s] equally as straightforward SF adventure and as [an] allegorical, analogical disquisition ... on humanity, morality, salvation, and redemption."



Author Biography

Born to Willard and Peggy Card on August 24, 1951, Card grew up in Utah, where he was raised in the Mormon faith. When he was sixteen, he read Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* trilogy, which had a profound effect on his thinking about the future. The plot of *Foundation* implies that history repeats itself, regardless of the people involved or the specific situations that they encounter. Asimov softens this message through his idea that humans can learn these patterns and work, to minimize the most harmful effects of change. Since Card's Mormon beliefs hold that people are basically good, he liked Asimov's notion that human beings are capable of overcoming adversity through self-improvement and cooperation. As a result of his thinking about Asimov's message, Card decided he wanted to write stories that would affect others in the positive way that Asimov's writing had affected him.

At the time, he focused on military topics. His brother served in the army, and Card had read Bruce Catton's three-volume *Army of the Potomac*. He learned from his reading that leadership makes the difference in an army's success. This led him to think about how future leaders would successfully train their armies, particularly for battles in space. His thinking led to his creation of the Battle Room in *Ender's Game*, where the children warriors practice for three-dimensional warfare with three-dimensional games. The young Card had little experience writing, however, and the idea would remain undeveloped for almost ten years.

Card graduated from high school as a junior in 1968 and went on to study archaeology at Brigham Young University. He soon found he preferred writing plays to digging for artifacts and studied theater instead. After returning from a stint as a Mormon missionary in Brazil, Card graduated with distinction from Brigham Young University in 1975. The "Battle Room" had lived in the back of Card's mind since he first imagined it as a boy of sixteen. In debt for his college education, he decided to try to incorporate the Battle Room idea into a story. He began the short-story version of *Ender's Game* on an afternoon outing with a friend and her children. The short-story version won Card the 1977 John W. Campbell Award for best new writer, which launched his career. That same year Card married his wife, Kristine. The couple are the parents of five children.

Card had published five novels to little notice when he began reworking the story "Ender's Game" into a novel. He intended the work to set up his second novel featuring Ender Wiggin, *Speaker for the Dead*. The success of the novel version surprised Card, winning both the Nebula (1985) and Hugo (1986) awards. The author achieved an unprecedented "double-double" when *Speaker for the Dead* duplicated the sweep the following year. Since then, Card has continued to write science fiction, while also branching out into fantasy, horror, and mainstream fiction. He has also penned an award-winning guide to writing science fiction and fantasy, and frequently contributes columns to various writing, genre, and computing magazines.



Plot Summary

Earth

Each chapter of *Ender's Game* opens with a conversation between the government officials who are responsible for finding a military genius to lead Earth to victory against the alien "bugger" fleet. From these conversations, the reader learns that Andrew "Ender" Wiggin is considered humanity's best hope for such a leader. It is also made clear that these officials will isolate and test Ender as much as possible to mold him into the effective military leader they so desperately need.

Ender's story opens as he is finally losing the monitor implanted in the base of his neck, a device which allows government officials to see and hear whatever he experiences. He is later than most in having the device removed-six years old-thus separating him from his peers. He is also the third child of his family, in a futuristic society that seldom allows more than two children. Although Ender is a legal "Third," he is still an object of scorn and derision. After the monitor is removed, an older, bigger boy, Stilson, leads a group of bullies against Ender. Ender fights him viciously, attempting to discourage further attacks in the future. (The fact that Stilson dies in the process is not revealed until the book's later chapters.)

At home, Ender's older sister Valentine sympathizes with him, but his sadistic brother Peter brutalizes him and says that someday he will kill Ender and Valentine. The following day, Colonial Hyrum Graff of the International Fleet comes to the house and convinces Ender to accompany him to Battle School. There he will train to fight the Buggers, a race of insect-like aliens that has invaded Earth twice already and nearly destroyed humankind. Ender agrees to go, due to a combination of three things: love for his sister; fear of his brother; and the knowledge that his conception as a Third was only allowed because it might produce a qualified candidate for the school. In the spaceship that takes new cadets to the orbiting Battle School, Graff shows preferential treatment to Ender. An older boy bullies Ender because of this, and Ender responds too hard for the weightlessness of space, breaking the other boy's arm. Even before entering the school, Ender has once again been set apart from the other children.

Battle School

From the first, Ender is the object of bullying at Battle School, in part because the school's leaders intend for him to be isolated and feared. He wins some respect by devising clever new strategies in battle simulation games and for cracking the security codes on his tormentors' computer files. He and his fellow beginners, called "Launchies," are finally introduced to the null-gravity battleroom, where the older recruits learn strategy by conducting battles against each other's armies. Just as Ender begins making friends, he is promoted from the Launchies into a student army, the Salamanders. Not quite seven, he is at least a year early for the promotion. He



becomes an outcast once again; his commander, Bonzo Madrid, forbids him to participate in battles and vows to trade him away at the earliest opportunity.

A fellow soldier in his army, Petra Arkanian, helps Ender learn some of the basics of fighting in the battleroom. Forbidden to work with the Salamander Army, Ender begins practicing with his old Launchy comrades. Ender later wins a crucial battle by disregarding Bonzo's orders. From then on, Ender's imaginative strategies draw attention to him as he is transferred from one army to another, absorbing effective and ineffective military techniques by observing his commanders. Some of the older children resent him, however, and try to break up his Launchy session. He is once again forced into violence to protect himself. The frustration he feels spills over into the fantasy computer game he plays, and Ender fears he is becoming a cold-blooded killer like his brother Peter.

When Ender is given command of his own army it is not, as usual, manned with soldiers from other armies, but is filled with new recruits; they are inexperienced but intelligent and inventive, and not held down by outdated strategies. The maneuvers Ender devises are imaginative and complex, and his Dragon Army maintains a perfect record. The Battle School rules change to keep pressure on Ender's army: instead of getting three months to prepare for their first battle, they are given a few weeks; instead of fighting every second week they face other armies daily; finally, they have to face two opposing armies at once. Ender resents the way the game changes to challenge him, but he adapts new strategies and wins. The other commanders resent his success, and a group of boys, led by Bonzo Madrid, confront Ender in the shower. Ender defends himself, and, as with Stilson on Earth, he is not told that he has left the other boy dead.

Earth

While Ender has been growing up at Battle School, his twelve-year-old brother Peter has been concocting a plot to gain political power. Peter has noticed that, despite international cooperation in the war against the aliens, the Russians seem to be maneuvering troops for a war. He and ten-year-old Valentine devise fictitious personalities, Locke and Demosthenes, to publish political essays on the internet. Valentine's character, Demosthenes, is more radical and favors war, which is the opposite of what she really believes. Locke, on the other hand, is tolerant in a way Peter is not. Their essays are so persuasive that soon major news organizations are carrying columns by them both. Their Views are cited in political speeches, their thoughts are affecting policy decisions, and no one suspects that the writers are children.

Ender, his spirit broken by the increasingly meaningless battle games and by his own surprising cruelty in the fight with Bonzo Madrid, graduates from Battle School. He returns to Earth and is allowed to rest for a few months, but he refuses to cooperate with the military any more. Colonial Graff brings Valentine, now twelve, to see him at the lake cabin where he is kept. They have a discussion while Ender agonizes over all that is being asked of him. Out of concern for all mankind, especially his sister, and for the natural beauty of planet Earth, he agrees to continue with his training.



Eros

Ender is taken to the International Fleet's command post on Eros, where top secret plans are explained to him. He is told of the First and Second Invasions. In the First Invasion the enemy was defeated because they were surprised to find humans capable of intelligence. The hero of the Second Invasion, Mazer Rackham, teaches Ender that he won the war because of a lucky hunch. Guessing that the Buggers would behave like insects, he destroyed the invasion's central ship, killing the queen and thereby shutting down the mental abilities of their entire fleet. Currently, Ender is told, the Earth is invading the Buggers' home planet, with ships that left five years earlier. They will be within attacking distance very soon, which is why Ender's training has been at such an accelerated pace.

For over a year, Ender studies alone, tutored by individuals and tested by more realistic computer simulations. He trains with Mazer Rackham, and learns more about his Bigger opponents. Eventually, he is reunited with his closest and most respected colleagues from the Battle School. Together they compete against what seems to be a series of computer simulations. While Ender's forces always win, his dreams are tormented by visions of the buggers. He stumbles through his training until he is posed with a "final exam." After winning this last, particularly difficult battle, Ender is told that he has not been playing against the computer for months. Instead, he has been leading the invading fleet, and he has just destroyed the Buggers' home planet, wiping their race into extinction. He is eleven.

The Colony

After the war, Ender stays on Eros, but he receives word of wars on Earth, where he is known worldwide as the hero who saved the human race. Ender is promoted to admiral, and so the truth cannot be kept from him any more. He watches Colonel Graff on trial for war crimes and child abuse, and sees broadcast footage of himself killing Stilson and Bonzo. He learns about a worldwide peace treaty engineered by Locke, whom he knows is his brother Peter. He knows he can never return home, as Peter will attempt to make him a political pawn. He is also uncomfortable with the admiration he is receiving for having murdered an entire sentient race.

Valentine comes to him, however, and suggests that he join her as part of the first colonial expedition to occupy one of the Buggers' planets. At the new colony, Valentine becomes an historian and Ender becomes the colony's governor. Years pass, until Ender comes across a familiar structure while looking for land for a new colony: It is an abandoned city, built inside the decayed skeleton of a giant. It is an exact duplicate of a scene that haunted him from the video game he played in Battle School. He realizes that the Buggers were able to monitor his game, that they knew he would come to destroy them, and so they built this imitation as a sign to him.

At a symbolic place in the city he finds a Bigger queen egg, and it communicates with him telepathically. He takes the egg with him, promising to let it hatch when he can find



some place safe for it. To atone for his crime, he writes a book telling the Hive Queen's story, signing it "Speaker for the Dead." After Ender's brother Peter dies, having ruled Earth as the Hegemon, Ender writes a similar book, again signing it anonymously. A religion forms around the writings, even though nobody knows who wrote them. Speakers for the Dead arise to interpret the lives, in all their goodness and cruelty, of people who have passed. Seeking a new home for the Queen, Ender takes Valentine, now a historian, into space. There they travel the galaxy, learning and interpreting the stones of the living and the dead.



Chapter 1 "Third"

Chapter 1 "Third" Summary

Two unidentified voices discuss Ender's fate, one of whom has been sharing a sensor link with Ender for the last three years. The two discuss whether or not, despite the failure of his two siblings, Ender is indeed "the one." Concerned that Ender is too eager to please, the two consider keeping him constantly surrounded by enemies. After citing the threat posed by the "buggers" and agreeing that the safety of the world is at stake, they rationalize taking the boy.

Finally washed out of the program, six year-old Andrew Wiggin, a.k.a. Ender, is to have the monitor removed from the back of his neck. He contemplates being a normal boy and hopes his abusive brother Peter won't be too angry that Ender lasted a year longer in the program than he did. The removal procedure proves more painful than expected. Ender returns to his classroom fifteen minutes before the bell. In class, Ender is teased for being a "Third," something which Ender doesn't feel is his fault since the government authorized his birth.

After class, Ender is surrounded by bullies anxious to abuse the now unmonitored "Third." Resigned to fight, Ender desperately knocks the boy, Stilson, off of his feet. Realizing that he has to make an example of him, Ender viciously kicks the prone Stilson in the ribs and crotch, pausing to warn the mob against messing with him in the future, then plants one final kick into Stilson's face. Moments later, Ender waits for the bus in tears, horrified that he's become like his brother, Peter.

Chapter 1 "Third" Analysis

Ender has no love of violence. His actions, while brutal, are not sadistic, but measured and precise. Ironically, the Stilson encounter introduces the theme of Empathy. As Ender can place himself in the minds of the other children, he knows that savaging Stilson will inspire in them the fear necessary to discourage future violence. The sword cuts both ways of course, as Ender also empathizes with his victim, inciting tremendous guilt within himself.

Stilson's death, while accidental, also lends itself to the theme of Sacrifice. Ender sacrifices Stilson to ensure his own safety. The I.F. sacrifices Stilson to test Ender's readiness. Ender's killing of Stilson foreshadows his later killing of Bonzo and, ultimately, the genocide of the entire bugger race. In each case, Ender is insulated from the consequences of his own brutality. He isn't allowed to know that he's exacting a sacrifice.



Chapter 2 "Peter"

Chapter 2 "Peter" Summary

The two disembodied voices again discuss Ender, impressed by his performance with the bullies. Ender's former monitor asks if the boy has passed according to the judgment of the committee. The second voice still wants to see how Ender handles his brother. The monitor expresses concern, confesses a liking for the boy, and fears they're going to screw him up. The second voice remarks that screwing Ender up is precisely their goal.

Ender is home. Valentine, his sister, is sympathetic to Ender being washed out. Ten-year-old Peter, however, is jealous that Ender stayed in the program longer than he had. Peter challenges Ender to a game of buggers and astronauts, a children's game mockery of the bugger invasion, now eighty years past. Ender agrees, donning a bugger mask. Peter assaults his younger brother, wrestling him to the ground and applying pressure to Ender's chest, declaring that he intends to smother Ender. Valentine, suddenly appears at the doorway. Peter threatens to kill her. Valentine warns that the mysterious death of a sibling would scandalize Peter's ambitions of one day holding an elected office. Peter, seemingly foiled, prophesies that Ender will die in an "accident" long after Valentine has let her guard down, thinking Peter a changed man. Peter then, shifting gears suddenly, laughs the whole thing off as a joke. Later, as Ender lay in bed, Peter stalks up to his bed-side to apologize and profess his love. Ender waits for Peter to fall asleep, then cries.

Chapter 2 "Peter" Analysis

While Peter is clearly malevolent, he's also ambiguous. He's abusive toward Ender, certainly, but it isn't clear whether he wants to kill his little brother or simply just scare him. Peter's threats could be just another form of abuse, a head game. As Peter understands people well enough to know what will hurt them, Peter, like Ender, is empathic. Unlike his brother, however, Peter is without compassion. The mask symbolizes this empathic disconnect, denying the humanity of whomever wears it and offering a subtle corollary to the misunderstanding between the humans and the buggers.



Chapter 3 "Graff"

Chapter 3 "Graff" Summary

The two voices are worried that Ender won't want to leave his sister. Convincing Ender, suggests one voice, will requiring lying to him, or, in an emergency, possibly telling him the truth.

Ender's family breakfast is interrupted by a visit from Colonel Graff of the International Fleet. Graff needs to know why Ender was so brutal with the bully Stilson. Ender explains that he had to make an example of him, so the others would leave him alone. Hearing Ender's measured response, Graff invites Ender to join the Battle School at the Belt, the duty for which Ender was born. Ender, thinking he'd already washed out, is surprised. The officer explains that the removal of the monitor was Ender's final test and that, further, it wasn't what Ender did to the Stilson boy, but why he did it, that proves his worth. Graff reminds the family that they have already consented to Ender joining the International Fleet, granted at the time that Ender was conceived, or he, as a third child, could not have been born. Since Graff intends to train Ender as an officer, Ender must volunteer. Hearing this, the family falls silent, stunned. Ender weighs the decisions very carefully.

"Ender didn't like fighting. He didn't like Peter's kind, the strong against the weak, and he didn't like his kind either, the smart against the stupid" (21).

Graff speaks privately to Ender, stressing that, if he accepts, he won't see his family again for several years. He insists, however, that Ender and his family will not miss one another for very long. Ender cries. Graff explains that, though Ender's parents love him, they've already sacrificed too much to comply with the government's two-child limit. Ender's existence, Graff claims, interferes with his family's efforts to assimilate into a normal society. The Colonel describes the intensive training that awaits Ender, confessing that it won't be easy. The officer impresses upon Ender the threat posed by the buggers, reminding him that only the genius of Mazer Rackham saved the Earth in the war eighty years ago. Ender, recalling the required-viewing films of the heroic Rackham fighting the buggers, admits that he is afraid, but nevertheless agrees. Ender bids a tearful farewell to his family. Valentine is heartbroken.

Chapter 3 "Graff" Analysis

Ender's "final test" here is a foreshadow of Ender's final examination in Command School, both dependent as they are on a necessary deception. Ender's explanation for how he dealt with Stilson shows both reason and remorse, proving to Graff that Ender doesn't share the same flaws that made Peter unsuitable. Graff's argumentative strategy is twofold. First, by focusing on the burden that Ender represents to his family, Graff turns Ender's empathy against him. Second, by invoking the name of Mazer



Rackham, Colonel Graff reminds Ender of a genius's moral obligation to society, introducing the theme of Collective vs. The Individual. Both of these strategies serve to make staying home seem to Ender like a selfish option, lending themselves to the theme of Lost Childhood.



Chapter 4 "Launch"

Chapter 4 "Launch" Summary

Two voices discuss isolating Ender so that he remains creative, while somehow also cultivating his leadership abilities. One of the two voices, presumably one of Ender's future trainers, intends to break Ender of his sweetness, confessing that he/she enjoys breaking young geniuses and seeing them reassembled into something better.

Ender boards the ship with the other child recruits, feeling estranged by their ready laughter. The ship takes off violently and soon everyone is in zero gravity. Imagining Colonel Graff walking on the ceiling, Ender chuckles in spite of himself. Graff, in clipped drill-sergeant address, demands to know what Ender thinks is so funny. Ender explains. Graff asks if anyone else thinks it's funny. No one does. Graff dismisses all the other recruits as "scumheads," predicting that Ender, as the only one among them who understands non-directional space, will command them one day. No sooner is Graff gone, then the other children begin teasing Ender. Realizing that he's been set him up, Ender takes matters into his own hands, literally, when he suddenly grabs and yanks the arm of a child who has been hitting him on the back of the head. His belt unbuckled, the zero-gravity child flies from his seat and down the aisle, flailing and screaming. Graff appears, plucks the child from the air and tosses him to another man, announcing that the boy's left arm is likely broken. Ender feels awful. Graff rebukes the children for not heeding his warning about Ender. Ender wallows in guilt, trying to convince himself that he's not like his brother.

At the end of the flight, Ender calls Graff on his seeming betrayal, whimpering that he thought Graff was his friend. The officer replies that he isn't here to make friends, but soldiers. If Ender wants the others to love him, Graff explains, he had better make good on his potential. The buggers are waiting, Graff warns, and humanity's survival is more important than Ender's loneliness.

As Ender walks away, Graff and Anderson discuss Ender's potential and the immediacy of the bugged threat. Graff confides that he *is* Ender's friend and expresses dismay at what they're going to do to the boy. Anderson advises Graff to cheer up, suggesting that the buggers might kill them all before Ender graduates.

Chapter 4 "Launch" Analysis

Indeed, no one likes a know-it-all. By revealing Ender's genius to the other children, Colonel Graff marks Ender not only as different, but also as better, more worthy. This, as Graff surmises, invokes resentment in the other children. Ender cannot now decide to "dumb it down" just to fit in. His only recourse, as Graff points out, is to earn their trust and respect by making good on his potential. By placing Ender above, yet separate, from the collective, Colonel Graff hopes that Ender's genius will mature naturally,

without undue influence from lesser intellects. Graff's constant return to the bigger threat, meanwhile, reminds Ender that, while he is apart from the collective, he is still responsible for its safety. It is the fate of genius to bear the weight of the world, alone. This lends itself to the themes of Collective vs. The Individual and Lost Childhood.



Chapter 5 "Games"

Chapter 5 "Games" Summary

Voices discuss the incident on the ship. The broken arm was a mistake, making the injured child into hero and possibly screwing up training for some of the other kids. The two voices ponder their own fallibility in the face of so dire a crisis. It is decided that Ender must feel that he's on his own and that there's no easy way out. He can have friends, but he can't have parents.

Ender's group, or launch, is introduced to their "mom," the man who will oversee them for the next few months. Dap, an amiable man, gives them a rundown of procedures and protocols, telling them that fighting and deliberate injury will not be tolerated. If they're going to be troublemakers, warns Dap, they'd better be clever about it. Ender notes that the older students are organized into different competitive teams, with each team represented on a giant scoreboard. Ender battles with separation grief, as do all the kids, but thanks to his background of abuse at the hands of his brother, Ender is able to conceal his tears.

On the second day, the launch is introduced to the game room. Ender walks past the more remedial games to observe the games played by the older students. The boys give him a hard time, but Ender tenaciously remains, watching and learning. After two hours of careful observation, Ender realizes that the students have learned bad habits from competing against the computerized opponents. Ender challenges one of the boys, a recent winner, to two out of three. When the boy refuses to dignify the request, Ender questions the boy's courage, quickly adopting the slang and rhythm used by the older boys. The boy is shamed into compliance. Ender loses the first game, barely wins the second and, having finally mastered the controls, handily wins the third. The boys are stunned, offering no congratulations. Ender proudly watches from the wings as the next players try to utilize what Ender has shown them.

Seeing that Bernard, the boy from the spacecraft, has amassed a gang, Ender decides that he'd better start making friends. Ender sees a likely ally in another boy named Shen, who Bernard teases as having a shimmying posterior. Ender hacks into the desk network, circulating a message from "God" warning everyone to cover their butt, because Bernard is watching. Ender calls Shen's attention to the message, but won't confess to being the author. Later, Ender circulates a second message, apparently from Bernard himself, saying that Bernard loves your butt and to let him kiss it. Bernard, enraged that he's now a laughing stock, vehemently denies having written the message. Since the security was so easily broken, Ender reasons, it must have been intended to be broken. Shen joins Ender at breakfast, curious to know how he pulled it off. Ender still won't confess to being the author. Two more kids join Ender's table, finally breaking his isolation.



Chapter 5 "Games" Analysis

Ender's strength lies in his ability to empathize, his ability to think and feel from someone else's perspective. At the same time, Ender holds himself separate, observing rather than internalizing. Ender manipulates the older boys by using their own language and values against them. He learns their game without learning their bad habits, allowing Ender to explore and exploit those habits. Like a chameleon, Ender adopts the colors of those around him while he himself remains inscrutable. He knows how to hide his tears. He knows how to taunt from afar while still remaining anonymous. Ender is a catalytic influence, evoking change without being changed. These changes lend themselves to the theme of Innovation. This chapter foreshadows his siblings' later manipulations as Lock and Demosthenes and serves to demonstrate the role of genius in the themes of Empathy and Collective vs. The Individual.



Chapter 6 "The Giant's Drink"

Chapter 6 "The Giant's Drink" Summary

The two voices discuss Ender's obsession with a game called "Giant's Drink," concerned that he might wash out because of it or, like one prior student, kill himself. They also argue about how Ender has divided the launch group between himself and Bernard. The first voice insists that Ender stay with the launch group until the situation is resolved. The second voice, finally identified as Graff, would rather that Ender be removed. The other voice, apparently a superior officer, orders Graff to keep Ender in the group, insisting that the fleet desperately needs a battle commander.

The children practice in the null-gravity battle room using their flash suits. Ender is the first shove off, quickly getting his bearings. Bernard and Bernard's best friend Alai follow. Ender and Alai, both excelling at the exercise, soon bond. Ender, experimenting with his training laser gun, shares his discoveries with Alai. The two boys quickly discover that shooting their spacesuits causes the affected area to lock in place, as if frozen. Ender and Alai decide to shoot up the other boys who're helpless floating in the air, inviting Bernard and Shen to join them in this effort. Within twenty minutes all the other boys are floating around in frozen suits. Ender and Alai become friends, forming a bridge between the factions of Bernard and Ender. When it comes time to choose launch leader, Alai is the unanimous choice.

Ender is frustrated by a computer game in which a giant asks him to drink from one of two glasses. If Ender chooses the correct glass, the giant promises to take him to "fairyland." If Ender chooses wrongly, his game avatar will die. Ender has played this game and has "died" many, many times, and is frustrated by the fact that there doesn't seem to be a correct choice. Finally frustrated, Ender kicks over the shot glasses, climbs up the giant's face and burrows into the giant's eye. The giant falls over backward, dead, and suddenly, Ender finds himself in fairyland. Disappointed, Ender logs out. He didn't want to have to kill the giant. It was supposed to be just a game. As he lay down to sleep, Ender guiltily imagines that his brother would be proud of him.

Chapter 6 "The Giant's Drink" Analysis

Ender's decision to befriend Alai is very calculated. He recognizes that forming a bond with Bernard's friend will help build a bridge between the two factions. This indicates that Ender is accepting Colonel Graff's definition of Ender as leader and demonstrating that Ender is capable of serving not only as a warrior, but as a diplomat. It's interesting to note that Ender's motivations are neither selfish nor arbitrary, but are instead focused on the good of the whole.

The giant's drinking game is Ender's first encounter with an "unfair" game. To solve the puzzle Ender has to throw out the rules, his frustration lending itself to theme of



Innovation. He does this reluctantly and with some resentment, indicating that, despite his maturity, Ender has a child's sense of fair play. His guilt after killing the giant shows that Ender is aware that the ends do not justify the means. The idea of this being "just a game" serves as sinister foreshadow to Ender's later genociding of the buggers.



Chapter 7 "Salamander"

Chapter 7 "Salamander" Summary

Considering Ender's success in "Giant's Drink," and his ability to deal with Bernard, the two voices discuss moving Ender to an army. One of them ponders the lost childhoods of those whom they trained, comparing the small geniuses instead to the great leaders of yesterday. The other voice chastises the first for being too sympathetic. The first voice, now identified as General Levy, insists that Ender not be hurt anymore than necessary.

Ender is assigned to an army two years earlier than normal. Ender, who was just getting comfortable with his launch group, bids a tender farewell to Alai, his new best friend. Ender logs into his game to find the giant's corpse rotting where it fell. Wandering through a virtual fairyland, Ender finds a playground full of equipment which won't hold his weight, and which is populated with cruel children who transform into wolves. After exploring for a time, Ender's play is interrupted when his desk informs him that he is late in reporting to the commander of Salamander army.

Ender's new barracks, which houses a whole army, is much larger than his launch barracks. Due to his size, age and inexperience, he is met with relative disdain. Only Petra, the sole female and resident outcast, is willing to talk to Ender. Once commander Bonzo Madrid learns that Ender is entirely without experience, he is disgusted, bitterly lamenting that the boy will be a liability in the coming games. Bonzo tells Ender that he plans to trade him to another team at the soonest opportunity and instructs him to dress out, but never to actually participate in the games.

Petra offers to give Ender some pointers in the battle room, which Ender gratefully accepts. Waiting for a battle room to open, Petra and Ender discuss gravity-control technology, and how the adults won't discuss its workings with the kids. Ender begins to realize that adults don't tell the truth, and that it is they who are the enemy, not the other armies. In the battle room, Petra teaches Ender how to shoot. When the rest of the battle group is training, the commander, though required to bring Ender to the battle room, will not allow Ender to participate. Ender uses the time to watch the older boys train, observing the rigidity of Bonzo's maneuvers.

Realizing that he needs a team to train with, Ender returns to his launch group and gives them the opportunity to train under his instruction. Every day, during free play, Ender will teach them everything he's learned from the armies and they in turn will give Ender his much needed practice. Hearing of this, Bonzo publicly forbids Ender to fraternize with "launchies." Ender, taking the commander aside, explains to him that he has no authority to dictate how a student spends his free time and threatens to have Bonzo expelled if he tries to force Ender to comply. Realizing that Bonzo has painted himself into a corner, Ender offers to pretend like Bonzo won the argument so that Bonzo can publicly rescind the order later after apparent further consideration. Although



Bonzo resents it, the next morning he gives Ender leave to continue training with his launch group.

As ordered, Ender enters the battle room, but does not participate in the Salamander's match against the Condors. Instead, as always, Ender observes the way the game is played and notes the many tactical mistakes of Bonzo's army. Ender orients his body so that the enemy's gate is "down" thus making himself a smaller target to shots coming from that direction. When Ender finally is shot, Ender's prudent orientation ensures that only his legs are paralyzed. To keep from being shot at again, Ender pretends like he is completely disabled. Ender watches as the Salamanders are defeated, with the Condors having just the minimum number to open the enemy gate. With some bitterness, Ender realizes that, had he been allowed to shoot, he probably could have killed one of the remaining Condors and denied them the gate, forcing a draw. Ender gets some satisfaction, when the stats reveal that the Salamanders lost with a functional soldier still in the arena. Humorously, Since Ender never fired a shot, he has a perfect accuracy record, no misses at all, making him the leader on the efficiency list.

Ender turns seven with little fanfare, receiving only a new Salamander uniform and a new flash suit for the battle room. His thoughts turn to his sister, his reason for fighting.

In this, Ender's fourth game, The Salamanders play the Leopards. The Leopards, lead by a young and inexperienced Pol Slattery, use unorthodox tactics which serve to confound and confuse the tightly reigned Salamanders. Ender once again orients himself so that the enemy gate is "down," this time firing at his own legs to freeze them into the kneeling position, which offers him the most cover from fire "below" him. Once the Salamanders are all disabled, the Leopards move in to capture the gate. Disobeying orders, Ender quickly lasers three Condors. The enemy returns fire, hitting Ender's already frozen legs. Ender lasers two more enemies before they finally hit him in the arm. The Leopards are left with only four soldiers and thus cannot open the gate. The game is a draw.

Bonzo informs Ender that he is to be traded to team Rat. Ender thanks him with sincere gratitude. Suddenly furious, Bonzo lands a flurry of blows on the smaller boy. Ender considers how foolishly Bonzo is behaving, undermining his own authority by mistreating the player responsible for saving the match. Determined to avoid being beaten up again, Ender signs up for an earth-gravity, self-defense class.

Chapter 7 "Salamander" Analysis

The useless playground and its feral children symbolize all of Ender's hopes and fears. He wants to be a normal child and to play with other normal children, but he understands that he is fundamentally different. The other children understand this as well, ostracizing and attacking Ender. Ultimately, as with Stilson and the giant, Ender is forced to kill the children, cementing him in the role of warrior and contributing to the theme of Lost Childhood.



Bonzo's still thinks with a child's geocentricism and sees the Salamanders as an extension of himself. Ender's youth and inexperience are therefore embarrassing to Bonzo who, rather than take the time to train Ender, would rather not deal with him at all. Petra, meanwhile, demonstrates that education can occur between peers, encouraging Ender to go back and practice with his launch group. This sort of thinking through necessity lies at the heart of Ender within the theme of Innovation.

Ender's willingness to disobey orders against the Leopards shows, once again, that he is more concerned with results than with obedience. Ender's reaction to Bonzo's assault demonstrates that Ender is in command of his own emotions and already aware of what it takes to be a responsible leader.



Chapter 8 "Rat"

Chapter 8 "Rat" Summary

Colonel Graff and Major Anderson discuss compromising the fairness of the games. Graff wants to manipulate the games so that Ender receives an increasingly difficult series of challenges, thus accelerating his training. Anderson disagrees, concerned about compromising the pedagogy of the games. Graff argues that if Ender isn't ready by the time the fleet reaches the buggers home world, it won't matter whether or not their training methods are unethical. Anderson threatens to report Graff's actions to the Strategos and Hegemon. Graff convinces Anderson that the stakes are too high to call in the bureaucrats and politicians.

The Rat barracks is loud and cluttered. Rose the Nose, Ender's new commander, greets him with customary disdain and crudity of an older soldier speaking to a launchie. Rose orders Ender to quit training with his old launch group, explaining that he is to be real soldier now, assigned to Dink Meeker's toon. Rose also forbids Ender from using his desk, until he's frozen two enemy soldiers.

Ender introduces himself to Dink only to discover that Dink already knows a great deal about Ender and his recent exploits. Dink explains that it was he who asked Rose to trade for him, admitting that he sees promise in Ender. Ender states his refusal to quit his free time practice sessions. Dink doesn't want Ender to quit, pointing out that Rose can't order him to quit anymore than Rose can order Ender not to use his desk.

Ender soon discovers that Dink's toon trains autonomously from the rest of the Rat army and with considerably more discipline and vigor. Dink asks Ender to demonstrate his "feet first" attack position. The team complains about having to attack while lying on their backs, unable to think of the enemy gate as being "down." Ender notes with interest that not even Dink seems to understand the direction that the stance implies. The team hates the feet first attack, and by extension, Ender as well. However, Dink insists that they practice the position. After a few sessions, the team learns to appreciate the maneuver. Ender shows up for free time practice exhausted, but nevertheless teaches his former launch group everything he's learned, adding new touches of his own. Petra and Dink begin observing the sessions, making Ender uneasy.

Rose complains that Ender is dropping in the rankings. Ender admits that his rank was artificially inflated because of the stupid way that Bonzo was using him. Every time he fired his gun, Ender explains, it was against Bonzo's orders. Rose, enraged by his own ignorance, accuses Ender of being insubordinate and incompetent. Ender protests, pointing out that he turned a defeat into stalemate all by himself. Rose, now embittered, tells Ender that he can play all by himself next time.



Two days later, Rat faces off against Centipede Army. Rose orders Ender to rush the enemy gate by himself. Ender stews in silent fury, but nevertheless hurls himself at the enemy gate, feet first, his legs raised in a crouch. Ender is halfway across the battle room before Centipede is even done entering the arena. Firing from his crotch, Ender freezes many opponents as they emerge from the gate. They return fire, flashing his legs, but Ender has time to take several more shots before they finally freeze him. Rat eventually wins. Since Ender froze three, disabled two and damaged seven, he is still first in the rankings. Rose doesn't speak to Ender.

Dink Meeker, impressed with the results of Ender's early game rush, begins training his whole team to rush. Word gets around and soon no team is safe in the first few seconds of a match, thus changing the game forever. Ender plays more matches, makes mistakes and drops down to fourth in the rankings. As his comfort level rises, so does his rank, to third, to second and finally back to first.

Curious to learn where Dink Meeker disappears to before dinner, Ender follows him to the battle room. Dink, somewhat annoyed by Ender's voyeurism, strips off his clothes and floats casually in zero gravity. Ten minutes later, Dink and Ender talk in the empty barracks. Dink reveals that he has been promoted to commander twice. The second time they promoted him, Dink refused to come out of his cabin until they put him in someone else's army. The teachers, Dink explains, are the enemy - not the other teams. Dink hates the way the teachers are always watching, measuring and judging, but loves the game too much to ice out. Being a commander, Dink asserts, makes people crazy. Dink reveals that Rose is scared and clueless, that he has no idea why Rat wins or loses. That, argues Ender, doesn't make Rose crazy. Dink rebuts:

..you think these people are normal. Well, they're not. We're not. I look in the library, I call up books on my desk. Old ones, because they won't let us have anything new, but I've got a pretty good idea what children are, and we're not children. Children can lose sometimes, and nobody cares. Children aren't in armies, they aren't commanders, they don't rule over forty other kids, it's more than anybody can take and not get a little crazy..." (108).

Dink tells Ender about his past, before he was taken, deploring the fact that nobody ever talks about home and pointing out that everyone's unwillingness to talk about it shows its importance. Dink, citing Bonzo as an example, reaffirms his stance that commanders are crazy, insisting that he won't allow the "bastards" to run his life. Dink suggests to Ender that the teachers are manipulating him and that the bugger menace is just a lie to keep the I.F. in power. Ender's thinking turns to the big picture, the world outside the school, but he refuses to adopt Dink's opinions. Still, the seed of doubt is planted. Now Ender questions what people mean, rather than what they say.

Army commanders begin showing up to Ender's freetime practices, taking down names. Ender's trainees start to dwindle. Rumors persist of little torment by the older boys. Ender tries to cancel practice, concerned for the safety of the "little kids," but Alai convinces him to proceed. The older boys show up in force, hurling insults at the launchies. Ender instructs the launchies to learn from the older boys, explaining that



taunting is a great way to drive the other team crazy. Shen sets some of the launchies to the task of repeating and chanting the insults, singing them like nursery rhymes. Enraged by their ineffectualism, the tormentors charge in looking for a fight. Ender orders a retreat, shouting out a "nova" maneuver.

Ender's team forms three starburst formations against the wall, then, pushing off from one another, they all ricochet off the walls to the exit on the opposite side of the room. Since Ender pauses to assist a drifting launchie, he himself is stuck drifting and is assailed. Despite being outnumbered, Ender uses his superior understanding of zero gravity dynamics to utterly abuse his attackers with a series of vicious kicks. Ender feels guilty for being forced to resort to violence and, later that evening, is surprised to learn that all of the resulting injuries are listed as accidents. The next day, several older boys from different armies show up to lend protection to the launchie training group.

Ender returns to his fantasy computer game, where he is shocked to encounter a mirror which reflects his image as that of Peter. Ender is plagued by a gnawing guilt, afraid that he's an even better killer than his brother. He resents being a tool, an instrument of death and, most of all, loathes his own capabilities.

Chapter 8 "Rat" Analysis

Graff and Anderson discuss the possibility of compromising the school's curriculum, stacking games to accelerate Ender's training, effectively pushing Ender along at everyone else's expense. This underscores Ender's importance, as well as the I.F.'s desperation.

Rose, like Bonzo, fails to recognize Ender's potential. Were it the sole decision of such commanders, any number of geniuses might rot beneath them in the ranks. Fortunately, Dink Meeker, while perhaps not a genius himself, is smart enough to see Ender's worth and humble enough to learn from him. Still, Rose's unfair order for Ender to rush the enemy gate did spawn a new viable strategy, indicating that even abject stupidity, devoid as it is of common sense, can sometimes lead to uncommon discoveries. This shows the role of the unforeseen in the Innovation theme.

Dink's conversation with Ender demonstrates that, as gifted children, the students of the Battle School are aware, on some level, that they are neither children nor adults. They remember their families, and yet, their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters have no place here. The students are expected to perform like adults, while feeling with the hearts of children. It makes perfect sense that they, like all adolescents, resent their authority figures, but, considering all that they've lost, it might be justified in this case. This lends itself to the Lost Childhood theme.

By training launchies, Ender challenges the status quo, blurring the boundaries of the hierarchy. This naturally invites reprisals from those in power. As Graff predicted, Ender proves himself through excellence, successfully defending himself against his oppressors and earning the respect of his peers.

Once more driven to violence, Ender again worries that he is becoming like his brother. In truth, however, it is Ender's awareness of and concern for his own inherent Peter-ness that serves to keep his baser instincts in check.



Chapter 9 "Locke and Demosthenes"

Chapter 9 "Locke and Demosthenes" Summary

Colonel Graff and Major Imbu discuss the unexpected appearance of Peter's image in Ender's fantasy game. Graff is upset by the game's apparent improvisation. Imbu can offer little explanation beyond the fact that mind game is a consensual experience between Ender and the computer, explaining that the game is supposed to provide an environment where the kids can feel comfortable. Graff is disturbed by the fact that Ender has been frequenting a new area of the game, an area that Imbu had never heard of, called "The End of the World." Considering the present circumstances, Graff isn't comfortable with Ender getting comfortable with the world ending. Imbu explains that the name could be a metaphor rather than a literal ending of the world. Colonel Graff is baffled as to how the computer gained access to so recent a photo of Peter Wiggins. Imbu explains that the I.F. computer can requisition photos from just about anywhere, if the mind program feels that it's for the good of the child. The program is designed such that it won't explain itself and may not even know the reason.

Valentine celebrates Ender's eighth birthday, alone, with a small fire. Two years have passed and she has received no letters. The family has moved from the corridors to a rural area in North Carolina in the hopes that nature would calm Peter's spirit. Valentine knows, however, that Peter has been torturing and flaying squirrels, even as he pretends to be the model student and golden boy. Peter interrupts Valentine's remembrance to tell her that he's been monitoring troop movements in Russia. By his estimation, they are preparing for war. Peter suggests that, one way or the other, the bugger war will soon be over and, in the absence of the alien threat, old alliances will soon falter. He argues that history has shown that the right words at the right time can make a tremendous difference, and that, with her help, he can implement a plan that will bring peace and stability to the world. Valentine is cautious but interested. Peter proposes that they create false, anonymous identities on the nets, so they can influence the world with their genius rhetoric and sociopolitical punditry. Valentine is surprised by Peter's apparent sincerity. Still suspicious, she mentions the flayed squirrels. Peter bursts into tears, confessing his fear that he might be a monster. Valentine is dubious, but is moved despite herself. With Valentine's help, Peter explains, maybe he can avoid becoming a villain. Valentine agrees, fully expecting that Peter is up to something.

On the pretext that Peter's mental health requires more interaction with adults, Valentine convinces her father to file for adult net access on behalf of them both. They begin with throw-away identities, intentionally testing the water with inflammatory comments, learning from the many acid responses that they receive. Their style refined, they both go about creating their primary identities: Locke (Peter) and Demosthenes (Valentine). Peter advises Valentine to play Demosthenes as a reactionist, an idea to which she reluctantly agrees. Peter himself meanwhile plays Locke as a more moderate character. They begin by staging mock debates between their characters, putting on a show of point and counterpoint. At Peter's urging, Valentine accepts an offer by a respectable



newset for Demosthenes to write a weekly column. Valentine is disturbed when Demosthenes's column is syndicated into other newsnets and is profoundly disappointed when she hears her own father agreeing with Demosthenes's wrongheaded opinions. Locke is soon picked up by a New England newsnet as a counter argument for their popular Demosthenes column.

At the age of nine, still number one in the rankings, Ender leads his own toon in Phoenix Army under commander Petra Arkanian. He still hosts his daily training sessions, attended by elite soldiers nominated by their commanders, but still open to any launchie that wants to attend. Everyone treats Ender, now widely recognized as a living legend, with awe and respect. His reputation estranges him from his friends. Even Alai and Shen, his best friends, treat him with deferential respect that precludes laughter. Depressed, Ender again loads up his fantasy game, immediately traveling to the End of the World. Once again haunted by Peter's image, Ender can't solve the puzzle of the mirror room. Despite his many successes, Ender wallows in despair.

Afraid that Demosthenes's secret identity has been blown, Valentine is apprehensive to suddenly find IF soldiers standing outside her school. Valentine is further agitated when summoned to the principle's office, where Colonel Graff awaits. Realizing that Graff wants to speak about Ender, she is relieved. Graff explains that Ender is an unhappy little boy, describing Ender's problem in the game involving the mirror room and Peter's image. Valentine is uncooperative, unwilling to assist Graff in manipulating Ender. Graff threatens to sequester her entire family to get to the bottom of it. Valentine is torn with anger, regret and shame, but deigns to describe Peter and his many childhood crimes, insisting that Ender is nothing like Peter. Overcome with guilt for assisting Peter, she starts to cry. When Graff suggests that, since they're brothers, Peter and Ender might be more alike than she thinks, Valentine screams her denial. Graff asks Valentine to write a letter to Ender to remind him that he is nothing like Peter. If she doesn't comply, warns Graff, they'll just piece together a letter of their own using the language and patterns gleaned from all the previous letters they've intercepted from her. Valentine asks Graff what terrible things they are doing to Ender. Graff chuckles, replying that this is only the beginning

Ender receives an email from Valentine. He recognizes Valentine's creative spelling, pronunciations and word usage, but notes that they come pretty thick, almost as if she were trying too hard to seem like herself. Even if it is the real thing, Ender concludes, it can't be the real thing, because they made her write it. Ender cries, causing puzzlement throughout the barracks. He deletes the mail and loads up his fantasy game. Ender realizes that Dink was right, that the teachers are the enemy. They used Valentine like a tool. This time, at the End of the World, Ender doesn't kill the serpent. Instead, he kisses it. Surprisingly, the snake transforms into Valentine, who returns his kiss. The mirror now shows the image of a dragon and a unicorn. Ender and Valentine touch the mirror together, and the wall opens to reveal a long carpeted staircase, lined with cheering multitudes. Together, arm in arm, they descend the staircase. Ender's eyes are so blurred with tears of relief that he fails to notice that everyone in the crowd shares his face.



Back on Earth, Valentine receives a letter announcing that she has been awarded the Star of the Order of the League of Humanity, First Class, the highest military award that can be given to a civilian. Valentine is bitter, feeling as if she was just paid for betraying Ender. That night, Demosthenes publishes a scathing denunciation of the population limitation laws, declaring that the noblest title a child can have is "Third." Peter laughs in delight, seeing it as the very height of muckraking.

Chapter 9 "Locke and Demosthenes" Analysis

While Valentine doesn't trust Peter, she can see the truth in his words. Further, she can also see that Peter's empathy, so often used to exploit the weaknesses of individuals, might better be used to manipulate the masses. Valentine's willingness to accept that people are not capable of self-governance, that they require manipulation, shows that some of Peter's arrogance exists within Valentine. The question here is: Can Valentine temper Peter's ambition, or will Peter lure Valentine into a moral abyss?

Ender represents the opposite end of Collective vs. The Individual. Whereas Locke and Demosthenes demonstrate how genius might define a collective, Ender finds himself eclipsed by his own genius. Since becoming a legend, everyone defines Ender as a hero, not as a simple boy in need of love and friendship. Even Valentine's letter, intended as a prod, has an end in mind other than love. With Valentine compromised, Ender has no choice but to embrace the unconditional love he holds for his sister. He retreats into his own heart and mind, learning to love for the sake of love, rather than to be loved in return.



Chapter 10 "Dragon"

Chapter 10 "Dragon" Summary

Graff and Anderson discuss Ender's improvement. Anderson apologizes for not having more faith in Graff's pedagogy, admitting that Ender seems content and ready for command despite his youth. Graff ponders the ethics of healing a child of his hurt only to throw him back into battle. Both men are anxious to see how Ender handles the rigged games which Anderson has devised. The two men agree that, while Ender will soon reclaim his privacy, he will also again be isolated. Graff orders Anderson to call Ender in. Anderson departs. Graff, speaking to himself, hopes Ender has enjoyed his happiness, as it might be the last happiness he knows.

Ender is given command of Dragon, an army which was discontinued four years ago because of a superstition surrounding it. No Dragon Army in the history of Battle School has ever won more than a third of its games. Graff explains that since Ender has such a large following, Dragon will not be allowed to trade. Ender must work with the soldiers he is given.

Ender meets his army, a group largely comprised of little boys right out of launch. He spends the first day teaching them the basics of his own innovations. Most of the soldiers are exceedingly inexperienced. Noting that one boy, Bean, seems to be a particularly fast learner, Ender makes him into a teacher's pet, knowing that it will stir resentment against him.

Bean confronts Ender after training, warning him not to play games with him and insisting that he deserves a toon. Ender swallows his anger, explaining that merely knowing what to do with a toon is not the same thing as commanding a toon. Now that the other kids know Bean's name, Ender explains, they'll watch him, giving him the chance to shine. Until Bean proves himself, both as a leader and as a soldier, Ender will not grant him a toon. Bean is cheered by the exchange, convinced of Ender's fairness.

Alone in his room, Ender is plagued with doubt, concerned that he's turning into a bully like Bonzo. He wishes he could be more informal, the way he was with his freeplay training sessions, but realizes that demands are higher for an actual army a greater than those for a mere pickup group. It occurs to Ender that his treatment of Bean was something he learned from Graff, who isolated him to make Ender struggle and strive. Ender doesn't want to become Graff, whom he sees as sour and unfeeling. He decides that what's done is done, and resolves to watch Bean with more compassion than Bean realizes.

Ender skips class to write down his impression of each of the boys, planning to enlist Alai's assistance to bring them up to speed. On his way to the battle room, he is intercepted by Major Anderson, who announces that there has been a rule change. Soldiers from different armies may no longer play together during freetime. Ender



complains that he was given an entirely green army and that he needs Alai and Shen to assist him. Major Anderson snaps at Ender, essentially telling him to grow up.

Ender and Alai run into one another. The two jest with one another and talk trash, but now that Ender is a commander, things are different. Later, in bed, Ender remembers when he was transferred to Salamander Army, the way that Alai kissed him on cheek and uttered "salaam." Like Valentine, Ender realizes, Alai's friendship is a part of his memory, something which can't be taken from him. For now, there is a wall between Ender and Alai, but their bond is unbreakable. Nevertheless, Ender despairs that, while apart, Alai is a stranger. In his sorrow, he does not weep. Nothing compares to the hurt that Ender felt when the school used Valentine as a tool. Ender resolves to defeat his enemies, the teachers.

Chapter 10 "Dragon" Analysis

Ender's promotion causes a sort of role-reversal. As commander, he now finds himself manipulating others the same way that he himself has been manipulated. From this perspective Ender can see how such manipulations can be good for the whole as well as the individual, and yet, despite his talent for empathy, Ender still holds an adversarial view of Graff and the other teachers. There is a sense here that this disconnect is a necessary part of command. This lends itself to both the themes of Empathy and Collective vs. The Individual.

By stacking the odds against Ender and limiting his options, the teachers are inoculating Ender against the unfairness of real warfare. Were he an actual wartime commander, he wouldn't have the option of trading away his men. He'd have to use whatever he was given in the best way possible. By subjecting Ender to worst case scenarios, the teachers can better discern Ender's limits, as well as prepare him for whatever the buggers might throw at him.



Chapter 11 "Veni Vidi Vici"

Chapter 11 "Veni Vidi Vici" Summary

Colonel Graff and Major Anderson discuss the unfairness of Ender's upcoming schedule. Anderson insists that, according to the computer, Ender is up to the challenge. Graff offers mild protest. He points out that new commanders are usually given three months to train with their armies, and then assigned only one match every two weeks. He worries that Ender will burn out, but Anderson assures him that the computer model predicts that Ender will remain useful. Graff changes subject to inform Anderson that there are people on the nets pushing for America to turn the I.F. on the Warsaw Pact, just as soon as the bugged threat is removed. Graff ponders aloud whether destroying the buggers is wise. Anderson observes that Graff's words sound treasonous. Graff laughs it off as a humor.

Ender lies in bed, mentally reviewing his army. Ender's boys are excelling, with so many of them blossoming into capable leaders that Ender arranges them into five toons of eight instead of four toons of ten. Ender's training has stressed autonomy, with each toon capable of independent action as decided by its leader. Ender weighs whether these boys, comprised as they are of former launchies and other people's rejects, are secretly excellent or if maybe he's a better commander than he realized. Ender, convinced that his army is ready, itches to get in the battle room. After less than a month of training, Ender is granted his wish with a match against Rabbit Army. Dragon's commanders show innovation and precision, cutting up Rabbit's formations into meaningless chunks. Ender wins with virtually no losses.

Ender's first ever entrance into the commander's mess hall is met with silence. New commanders are usually greeted with cheers, but of course, new commanders usually lose. The ever-present scoreboard shows that Ender leads in every category. Only Dink and Rabbit commander Carn Carby will give Ender the time of day.

The next morning, Ender's Army is assigned an unprecedented second match in as many days, this time against Ender's old affiliates, Phoenix Army. Ender realizes that, due largely to his own influence; Phoenix is a flexible army capable of responding to a random attack. Ultimately, while Phoenix proves a more adaptable foe than Rat, they too are defeated. Petra Arkanian is not gracious in her loss, her eyes seething with humiliation at being defeated by her former student.

At the end of the week, Dragon has won seven battles in seven days, defeating top armies by unprecedented margins. No one still believes that Ender's success is a fluke. Many commanders flock to his table to learn his secrets, which Ender freely provides, confident that few will be able to duplicate his results. It soon becomes apparent that many people resent Ender, as they play childish pranks and prescribe little torments over the days that follow. Ender despises them, even fears them, but retains his composure.



Feeling the pressure for further innovation, Ender watches old propaganda footage from the bugger wars in hopes of seeing Mazer Rackham. To his disappointment, much of Razor's famous battle has been censored out. Ender watches the movements of the bugger ships, guiltily admiring their seemingly random decoy maneuvers. He notes that they exclusively use the strategy of gathering the greatest number of ships at the key point of conflict. On the seventh day, mere hours after Dragon's seventh victory, Colonel Graff summons Ender to his office.

Colonel Graff, after a quick review of Ender's accomplishments, questions Ender as to the secret of his success. Ender explains succinctly, adding that he doesn't expect to keep winning without further innovation. Graff inquires as to the condition of Ender's army. Ender explains that his army hasn't confessed to weariness. He admits that they need rest, but since Graff obviously doesn't care, why should their commander? Graff asks Ender why he is watching the propaganda films. Ender answers that he hopes to learn strategy from them. Graff observes that Ender doesn't play his fantasy game anymore. Ender claims to have won. Cutting Graff off mid-sentence, Ender directs the man's attention to the all-time standings, asking him when Graff plans to put him against a good army. Graff, laughing to himself, replies "now" and hands him a match assignment for the Salamanders, scheduled to start in ten minutes.

Ender gathers his army for its second game of the day, under strong protest. By the time everyone is suited up and ready to go, the match is already ten minutes underway. They arrive to find the battle room empty, devoid of floating shields, with no sign of Bonzo or Salamander Army. Realizing that the enemy is clinging to the wall around their entrance, Ender folds one of his smaller students into the embrace of a larger student. Then, he completely freezes the larger student to create cover for the now dual-pistol-wielding smaller student encased within. He breaks the army into groups of four: one shield, one shooter, and two throwers. On his command, the throwers hurl their homemade boy-turrets into the arena and leap in after them. Caught flat against the wall, Bonzo's boys are sitting ducks. Salamander tries to return fire at the turrets, but their shots hit the already frozen boy in front. Ender and the throwers, meanwhile, lend supporting crossfire. Dragon wins but with heavy self-afflicted losses.

Anderson enters the battle room to congratulate Ender and Dragon Army. Ender expresses his fury, incensed that the other team couldn't even cheat intelligently. Ender's wrath is intended for the teachers. However, only as he is leaving the battle room does it occur to Ender that Bonzo will interpret his words as a personal attack. Ender expects Bonzo's rage to be murderous, but is confident that the teachers will protect him.

Bean, sorely behind on his studies, is summoned to Ender's office just before lights out. Ender and Bean discuss the younger boy's performance, and why he was selected for combat training. Bean demonstrates that he understands that this is *combat* training, that they are training to fight and kill the buggers. Ender laments that most of the kids behave as if the training were the end in and of itself. They don't see the big picture. Ender, in a rare show of weakness, implies that he is overworked and quickly running out of ideas. He tells Bean that he needs him to think up ideas that other people would



dismiss as stupid. He orders him to select five soldiers from a list of twelve to train as a special squad. The special squad, Ender explains, will spend most of their time with the normal toons, only working together when called upon. The lights go out. Beans stays the night in Ender's cabin rather than stumbling back through the darkness.

Chapter 11 "Veni Vidi Vici" Analysis

Ender's strength as commander lies in his ability to access individual potential. Rather than prescribe rigid sweeping formations, Ender concentrates on smaller, squad level tactics, which delegate authority to individual toon leaders. Due to this composition, Dragon Army could survive the loss of its commander, or even one of its toons, and still function effectively. Compare this to the buggers, who are crippled by the loss of a queen. This element relates directly to the theme Collective vs. The Individual.

Ender's reception in the commander's mess hall parallels his situation during the launch. Before, Graff isolated Ender by proclaiming Ender's greatness. Now, it is Ender's own victory over Rabbit that speaks of his promise. In the logic of *Ender's Game*, it is the nature of most to reject genius until that genius has proven itself, with some continuing their resentment even after. Everyone else falls to imitation or worship rather than creating innovation of their own. This speaks to the role of genius in the theme of Collective vs. the Individual.

With the burden of innovation falling to Ender alone, it stands to reason that he'll eventually run out of ideas. This is why he turns to the buggers videos and eventually to Bean for inspiration. Ender's strategy, while effective, demands fluidity. The minute that Dragon Army becomes predictable, the enemy will adapt and defeat them. Since Ender understands what the games actually represent, defeat equates to nothing less than death.

Ender's strategy for defeating Salamander Army involves purposefully flashing some of his own men. Were this real war, this would equate to intentional sacrifice of human lives. Since this is a game, however, Ender prescribes the strategy without hesitation. This move, however, is a sinister foreshadowing of Ender's final exam, when Ender unknowingly sacrifices real lives to destroy the bugger home world. This lends itself to the theme of Sacrifice.



Chapter 12 "Bonzo"

Chapter 12 "Bonzo" Summary

General Pace and Colonel Graff discuss the threat that Bonzo poses to Ender. Word of Ender's prowess has filtered up to high command, where some believe that Ender is the I.F.'s only hope in the upcoming invasion. Pace has no authority to interfere with the workings of the battle school, but is alarmed by Graff's unwillingness to protect the future savior. Graff argues that Ender must learn that no adult will intervene on his behalf. Ender must be reliant only on himself and those under his command. Pace threatens to court martial Graff if he is wrong.

Ender oversees the battle room as Bean experiments with navigating the expanse with lengths of strong, nearly invisible rope. Returning from the arena, Ender notes several suspicious-looking older boys hanging about, each wearing the colors of armies most unfriendly to Ender. Petra warns Ender that he is in danger, but leaves in a huff when Ender implies that she might be an accomplice. The Dragon toon leaders escort Ender back to his cabin. On his desk is a note from Dink, warning him not to be alone. That night, Ender is plagued by nightmares. He awakes in darkness, suddenly afraid, but is finally comforted by the thought that the teachers will protect him.

The next day Dragon wins a grueling battle against Badger Army. Mysteriously, the Badger's suits will only stay frozen when completely immobilized; otherwise, they thaw in five minutes, as they do in practice. Afterward, Poly Slattery, the Badger commander, expresses his approval of the outcome, indicating that he'd rather beat Ender fairly. The Dragons are exhausted. Ender cancels practice and hits the showers.

Ender turns from his shower to find seven boys watching him, Bonzo among them. Realizing that Bonzo is the one with the real bone to pick, and remembering what Dink told him about Bonzo's Spanish pride, Ender calls attention to the fact that Bonzo is about to outnumber an opponent who is both three years younger and completely naked. Dink appears at the door, trying to intervene, but the others won't allow it. Bonzo slips off his clothes to equalize the playing field. Ender provokes Bonzo by pretending to beg for mercy. Bonzo leaps at Ender. The two boys tussle. Ender finally lands a devastating head butt right into Bonzo's face, followed by a series of kicks. Bonzo falls to the ground, senseless. The fight over, the adults finally appear. Ender concludes that no help will ever be forthcoming. He is alone. Ender decides that Peter was right: The power to cause pain is the only power that matters.

Back in Ender's cabin, Dink expresses amazement at Ender's defeat of Bonzo. All Ender can think of, however, is the empty, dead look in Bonzo's eyes, so like Stilson's that day after school. Suddenly, to Dink's surprise, Ender bursts into tears, sobbing that he didn't want to hurt him.



Later the same day, Ender wakes with eyes still puffy from crying, to read yet another battle assignment, the second of the day. Dragon Army is to face two armies at once, both Griffin Army and Tiger Army. At his wit's end, the note trembles in Ender's hand. He notifies Dragon Army and excuses himself to hit the shower, again. The Dragons are in disbelief. Ender, unwilling to endure such unfair treatment, decides he just isn't going to play anymore.

The battle room has four floating obstacles lashed together just three meters from the entrance, forcing Ender to deploy his forces blindly. The lighting is very dim. Bean reconns beyond the obstacle using his rope to swing a few quick circuits around the obstacle, finally reporting that the battle room is empty save for eight obstacles surrounding the enemy gate like a square. Ender and Bean decide that its time to throw out the rulebook. Moments later, Dragon Army emerges from behind the obstacles organized into a dense square formation and begins moving toward the enemy gate. A furious firefight ensues and then, suddenly, the lights come on. While the enemy was fighting the formation, Bean's squad, under the cover of darkness, captured the enemy gate. The game is over. Dragon Army wins.

Anderson enters the arena. Once thawed, Ender is immediately belligerent, proclaiming that he has beaten Anderson once again. Ender is disgusted and says as much. There is a loud murmur of agreement from both sides of battle. All the soldiers begin shouting Ender's name as he and Dragon Army depart from the battle room. In the hall, Ender shouts that he doesn't care about the game anymore, his voice echoing through the corridors for all to hear.

Bean visits Ender's cabin to tell him that he has orders to leave Dragon Army for Rabbit Army. Ender is incredulous, but concedes that Carn Carby is a good man. "No," says Bean, Carn Carby was graduated earlier that day - Bean is to take command of Rabbit Army. Both boys marvel at the chaos the teachers have made of the games. Bean informs Ender that half the commanders were graduated, and that all of Dragon's group leaders and assistants were promoted to fill the vacancies. Ender, disgusted, once more affirms that he's done with the game. Ender is more concerned with what he did to Bonzo. Bean tells Ender that Bonzo was graduated, though is assignment read Cartagena, Spain, which is, Bean explains, Bonzo's home. Anderson and Graff appear. Ender gets to his feet. Anderson hands Ender his graduation papers. Ender is to be shipped off immediately and will not be allowed to say goodbye to his army. Bean asks Ender which school he's being transferred to. Ender replies, surprisingly, command school. Bean is dumbfounded. No one goes to command school without three years of pre-command school. Bean contemplates the apparent breakup of the school systems and traditions. In bed later, Bean cries, already missing Ender.

Ender notes that Anderson has been promoted to Colonel. Graff explains that Anderson now runs the battle school and that he himself has been assigned to other duties. Ender and Graff are joined in the shuttle by General Pace. The shuttle returns to Earth, where Ender is to have a short landside leave before they board the spacecraft that will take him to the command school. Ender, unused to being in a natural environment, is uncomfortable and disoriented. He has come to think of battle school as his home.



Two voices discuss recent events. There was a death in the battle school. No one knows whether Colonel Graff is being promoted or court martialed, just that he's been transferred. Ender has graduated in good shape, but, on the other hand, the fourth passenger on the shuttle is in a body bag. They have the Bonzo incident on video, no one can accuse Ender of murder. At least, says one of the voices, they had the good sense not to tell Ender. It's the second time, replies the other. Yes, the first voice agrees, they didn't tell him about Stilson either. Both voices ponder Ender's lethality and worry about how short the time is growing.

Chapter 12 "Bonzo" Analysis

The fight with Bonzo is an escalation of his earlier battle with Stilson. As before, the teachers knew in advance that a fight would occur, once again choosing not to intervene, this time with full knowledge of Ender's capabilities. Once again, without meaning to, Ender responds with deadly force. The teachers had every reason to believe that one or both of the boys could have been seriously injured or killed, and yet they felt it more important to prove a point. Ender gets the message and has no delusions as to its source. The teachers' decision to place Bonzo in Ender's path lends itself to the Sacrifice theme.

Ender's defeats Bonzo with empathy. By invoking Bonzo's honor, Ender transforms a mob into a single opponent, and by pretending to be afraid, he triggers Bonzo's overconfidence. Ender's ability to see from Bonzo's perspective allows him to defeat, and ultimately kill, Bonzo. This one of the central concepts behind the Empathy theme.

Ender's disgust over the game's unfairness has an affect on his choice of strategies. Rather than face off against overwhelming odds, he decides to sacrifice most of the army in a spectacular distraction. This strategy, while it proves effective here, would take a human toll in a real war. This battle foreshadows the destruction of the bugger homeworld, where Ender unknowingly makes a similar choice with actual human lives. This is the core of the sacrifice theme.



Chapter 13 "Valentine"

Chapter 13 "Valentine" Summary

Two officers discuss Demosthenes and Locke. One tells the other that they are children and that, further, they are brother and sister to Ender. They discuss the possibility that the two children are being manipulated, but one finally assures the other that, according to Graff, there is nothing beyond their capability. Seeing that the two characters could be useful in the future, the officers decide to give them a clean review, for now.

Valentine is starting to enjoy playing Demosthenes, earning a lot of attention from high-powered people, though she is still humiliated whenever her father agrees with the character. Peter somewhat resents Demosthenes success and is concerned that Valentine will blow her cover. Valentines, meanwhile, finds herself becoming increasingly sympathetic and agreeable to her character, pondering that perhaps one can't take on a role without becoming the thing that you pretend to be.

Graff, considerably fatter now, confronts Valentine after school, inviting her to visit Ender, while he is landside. After some quibbling, she agrees. Graff reveals that he knows who Demosthenes is and assures her that he has nothing to fear from the I.F. Ender has been landside for two months, and Graff needs someone to convince him to continue his training. This time realizing the importance of the situation, Valentine agrees.

Ender, with Valentine as a passenger, paddles his handmade raft to the center of the lake, where they can speak privately. Ender, homesick for battle school, explains that he prefers swimming because it reminds him of being weightless. Valentine tells Ender what she and Peter are doing. Ender marvels at Peter's ambition, already trying to take over the world at fourteen. Valentine implies that geniuses should have great ambitions. Ender complains that his studies are little more than games in which the rules are never constant. He is a puppet. He goes on to explain that his ability to win has everything to do with his ability to empathize with the opponent. If he is to defeat the buggers, Ender explains, he must know how they think.

Valentine is suddenly afraid, ashamed at what Ender might see in her. Ender, noting her fear, dispels it with a caress on her cheek. Valentine predicts that Peter will succeed, suggesting that he might be a better alternative than being conquered by the Russian Empire. She tries to convince Ender to continue his studies, to win the fight against the buggers. Ender is indifferent, content to leave the task to someone else. Suddenly angry, Valentine points out that *she* is in danger along with the rest of Earth, reminding him that it was *she* who protected *him* against Peter's wrath.

Ender, his chest trembling, says that he can't beat them. Valentine argues that if Ender can't do it, then nobody can and that not trying therefore is the same thing as killing all of humanity. Either way, Ender despairs, he is a killer. Valentine asserts that killing is an



essential part of what it means to be human. The subject turns to Peter, Ender's only undefeated foe. Valentine asks if Ender wants to beat Peter. Ender replies that, no, he just wants Peter to love him. Valentine is at a loss, since she's fairly certain that Peter loves no one. She tells Ender that, no matter what he decides to do, she loves him more than ever.

On their way to the airport, Ender and Graff sit in the backseat of a car. Colonel Graff ponders aloud the wonder that is the planet Earth, noting how easy it is to forget that it is indeed worth fighting for. Ender realizes that he's been manipulated yet again, his landside leave being a ploy to get him reacquainted with the Earth. At the spaceport, Ender is surprised to learn that Colonel Graff will be going with him all the way to Command School. Ender thinks upon what it is that he's become and why, and all the things and people he would preserve. At one point Ender suspects Graff of having a genuine concern and affection for him, but immediately dismisses it as another ploy.

During the trip, Graff tells Ender what little is known of the buggers. They are an insectoid species capable of instantaneous communication over long distances, as if by telepathy. When Mazer defeated the buggers, the whole invasion fleet simultaneously ceased functioning. Graff goes on to explain that humanity now has faster-than-light communications. As soon as the first FTL radio was completed, Graff explains, the I.F. fitted them into their best starships and sent them to attack the bugger homeworld. Some of the ships have been en route for seventy years, others only twenty. Every ship that isn't currently under construction is headed to the bugger homeworld. Earth is defenseless. Due to ongoing improvements in space travel, all the ships should arrive at about the same time, Graff explains, arriving within five years. Humanity is the third invasion.

Graff explains that, assuming the buggers are telepathic, they probably didn't develop language or writing. They might have no basis for communication outside of their own species. Ender asks why they can't just be left alone. Graff replies that it's just too risky. They already attacked Earth twice.

Chapter 13 "Valentine" Analysis

It is Ender's empathy which makes him so deadly. Once Ender can think like his enemies, it becomes a simple matter to predict and counter their movements. The trouble is that Ender, in knowing his enemies, comes to sympathize with them, to love them. Love is Ender's impetus. Realizing this, Graff and Valentine both use Ender's affection to steer him back to his training. Graff takes Ender to a beautiful, secluded area where Ender can reacquaint himself with his love for his home, the Earth. Valentine, meanwhile, reminds Ender that she too is at risk along with the rest of humanity. It is Ender's love for his sister which motivates him to face the buggers. Even for Peter, whom Ender has every reason to hate, Ender has only love. As irony would have it, Graff and Valentine are effective at their manipulations because they too empathize with and love Ender. This relates directly to theme of Empathy.



As Ender speaks to Graff about the buggers, it becomes apparent that the war between humanity and the buggers may very well be based on a misunderstanding. The buggers, being exclusively telepathic, are completely lacking in symbology. They have no means of communicating outside of their own species. Without having the merest grasp of what a language is, the buggers wouldn't have any way of knowing that humanity was trying to communicate with them.



Chapter 14 "Ender's Teacher"

Chapter 14 "Ender's Teacher" Summary

Colonel Graff and Admiral Chamrajnagar discuss the inconvenience of Ender's lateness and the urgency of time. Graff relays to the Admiral everything that Ender has been told. He also inquires about the other children, reminding the Admiral that they were all once his students. Admiral Chamrajnagar, claiming that they are his students now, launches into a quick quasi-religious litany on the mysteries of the fleet, finally giving leave for Graff to set himself up in his quarters. Graff declares that he has nothing to establish beyond the clothes on his back.

Ender is uncomfortable on Eros, where the floors slope, the hallways constrict, and the ceilings hang low. The sheer number of people serves to isolate him, as he is shuffled from lecture to lecture, from tutor to tutor, never seeing the same face twice. Ender retreats into his studies and starts on the command simulator, beginning with just a few units. By year's end, Ender complains to Graff that the simulator is no longer challenging.

Ender wakes to find an old man sitting cross-legged on the floor of his room. Figuring this is just another "lesson" of the adults, Ender tries ignoring the man, showering and dressing himself as normal. Ender finds door to his cabin locked from the outside. Frustrated, he turns to ask the man why his door is locked. No answer. Refusing to get angry, Ender calms himself with some relaxing exercises. Suddenly, the man lashes out and pulls Ender off his feet. The two struggle for a moment, but Ender is pinned. The old man explains that he is the enemy, for only an enemy can teach. No sooner released, Ender is immediately on the offensive, only to be defeated once again. The old man explains that it is the tradition of the school that a younger student is chosen by an older student. As he turns to leave, Ender launches a flying kick into the old man's back. The man smiles, retaliating with blinding speed, leaving Ender splayed against the wall. Ender asks the old man his name. He replies: Mazer Rackham

Mazer shows Ender the full unedited videos from the invasions, giving insightful commentary. Mazer still lives because he's been near the speed of light for the last fifty years, preserved so he can teach the next commander. Ender asks why Mazer himself can't command. Mazer is vague, but assures Ender that there is a very good reason. The videos show that, after Mazer destroyed one ship, the entire bugger fleet simply ceased to function. Mazer presents the theory that individual buggers are not sentient, instead acting as the extremities of a queen intelligence. During the second invasion, which he posits was a colonization attempt, Mazer shut down the fleet by destroying their queen. Ender watches the footage again and is able to identify the queen vessel by observing the fleets movement relative to the queen. Mazer theorizes that the buggers might not have known they were killing sentient human individuals.



Mazer cites two advantages that humanity has over the buggers. The first is that each human being is capable of independent thought, and so there are more potential sources for good ideas. The second is a new weapon called Dr. Device, a molecular disruptor capable of creating a chain-reaction disintegration of matter, potentially destroying several close proximity ships at once.

Ender is introduced to a new simulator. This time, explains Mazer, Ender will be commanding other pilots who are in simulators of their own. Putting on the headset, he is greeted by the voices of Alai, Bean, Petra, Dink, Crazy Tom, Shen, Hot Soup, Fly Molo, Carn Carby; the best that Ender fought with or against in Battle School. Over three weeks training, the pilots learn to trust Ender's command and he their autonomy. Soon they are fighting like a bugger fleet, but with the daring innovation of cooperative individuals. Mazer impresses upon Ender the importance of his training, warning the boy that he will grind him to dust if he can. Ender is defiant, insisting that he is stronger than Mazer.

Ender is dreaming that buggers are dissecting his memories when Mazer wakes him to serve in the simulator. The pilots are already on-line and waiting for Ender's command. After a quick warm-up, a large bugger fleet, arranged in a globular formation, appears on the horizon. Alai punishes the close-proximity targets with Dr. Device, setting of a chain reaction that destroys most of the enemy. Mazer explains that the battle simulation assumed no prior knowledge of Dr. Device, warning Ender not to get too cocky in the future.

Several battles follow, two to three days apart, each more difficult than the last. The bugger foes have learned, no longer using tight formations and now resorting to devious tricks and traps. Mazer scolds Ender for absorbing losses. Ender counters that he mustn't fear taking necessary risks. Mazer concedes his point, but nevertheless calls attention to the occasional flaw while reviewing battle videos.

Ender intensely pushes both himself and his squad leaders, distancing himself from his friends. At night he has nightmares of buggers and of killing the wolf-children from his old fantasy game. The pace of the battles increases to two a day. Ender, examining the replays, begins to suspect that someone or something is cheating. The poor sleep and increasing battle difficulty begins to take its toll on Ender, causing him to lose ships. When Petra finally cracks under the pressure, nearly costing the battle, Ender realizes that he's been pushing his squad leaders too hard. From then on he rotates his squad leaders. Strange nightmares still tormenting his sleep, Ender's own condition continues to degrade until he finally collapses, falling ill for several days.

Ender slowly recovers, pushing through one battle after another, hardly noticing or caring when dreaming becomes waking. One morning he wakes to find the command room crowded with people. Graff explains that these people are observers, here to witness Ender's final examination. Graff continues, giving Ender instructions. A new element is introduced: a bugger planet. Thinking of all the war and training that still awaits him, Ender briefly considers throwing the test, just giving up. Ender despairs to see that the approaching enemy outnumbered him a thousand to one.



Remembering his last battle in Battle School, when they put two armies against him, Ender decides to again throw the rules out the window. If they won't even give him a fair chance of passing, Ender reasons, he'll win by cheating. Ender forms his squads into a cylinder, has them punch right through one of the enemy formations, and sends them on a course straight for the planet. Though not designed for reentry, the starships and fighter escorts come close enough to the planet to hit it with their Dr. Devices. The planet explodes in a chain reaction of molecular disruption. The observers cheer, laugh, hug and cry. Colonel Graff, tears running down his face, embraces Ender. Rackham explains to Ender that he has actually been the Fleet Commander of the third invasion and that he, without realizing it, has just destroyed the bugger homeworld. Ender is furious at being tricked. He never wanted to hurt anyone and now he has unknowingly committed genocide. Ender sleeps for several days, during which time a war rages on Earth. Ender wakes to learn that Peter's treaty, the Locke Proposal, has brought an end to the war.

Chapter 14 "Ender's Teacher" Analysis

Graff and Rackham both realize that Ender's empathy, the very thing which makes him so deadly, would also make him sympathetic to the buggers. This is why they chose to deceive Ender: He wouldn't knowingly participate in genocide. It's not even clear that Ender would have been capable of placing his friends in harm's way, let alone ordering them into the all-or-nothing sacrifice maneuver that destroyed the bugger homeworld.

Ender is a brilliant strategist and tactician, but all of his precepts during the third invasion are based on the idea that he is playing a game. During the final battle, Ender's despair, his frustration with the game's seeming unfairness, once again pushes Ender to throw out the rules. This has the effect of numbing Ender's empathy. It's a game after all, and games are without serious consequences. In this context, Ender's squadrons become less like people and more like extensions of his own will. In short, Ender becomes more like the buggers in that he isn't concerned about his various extremities. This relates to the themes of both Collective vs. The Individual and Empathy.



Chapter 15 "Speaker of the Dead"

Chapter 15 "Speaker of the Dead" Summary

Graff and Anderson discuss Graff's court martial acquittal, where the prosecution unsuccessfully attempted to prove Ender a deranged killer. Ender, now aware that he killed Bonzo and Stilson, can't understand why no one is concerned with the far worse crime of genocide. He does what he can on Eros, but no one takes him seriously as a peacetime leader. Valentine brings news that Peter now controls Earth and warns Ender that he can never return lest Peter gain control of him. Ender sees the wisdom in her warning, imagining Peter using him as a military threat. She invites Ender to join her on the first colonization ship, where, if Ender agrees, he will be the first colonial governor. Ender balks at the idea of making a home on the worlds of those whom he has killed. Sensing that Ender feels manipulated, Valentine reminds him that she loves him and suggests that if he's going to be manipulated by someone, it should at least be by someone who has his best interests in mind. Ender finally agrees, but tells her the only reason he's going is so he can learn more about the buggers.

The new colony is settled, living autonomously from Earth. Years pass. Preparing for more colony ships to arrive, Ender scouts for likely settlement locations. As if by chance, Ender stumbles on a familiar landscape: all of the locations from Ender's old fantasy game. The giant's corpse, the playground, the tower - it's all there. Ender realizes that this is a message. The buggers, who never knew symbolic language, are reaching out to him from beyond the grave. Ender looks behind the mirror, where he finds the pupa of a bugged queen. Suddenly, Ender's mind fills with images and emotions culled from the bugged's experience of the final battles. He feels their sadness and despair. Ender senses their realization that he was ignorant during the battles, unaware of the harm he was causing. Ender realizes that they were trying to communicate with him during the battles, succeeding only in haunting his dreams. They built this place as a message to Ender, and Ender alone. He finally understands that the buggers didn't initially comprehend that humans were sentient individuals. Once they figured it out, they left Earth alone and hoped that humanity would forgive the transgression.

Ender writes down the bugged's story, explaining their shame and sorrow, titling it *Speaker of the Dead*. The book spawns quasi-religious groups both on Earth and in the colonies, where people presume to speak honestly for those who have passed on. Having read the book, Peter, now well into his seventies due to the relativistic time difference between those on Earth and those who flew in the colony ship, contacts Ender through the ansible. Now suffering from a failing heart, Peter entrusts Ender with the story of his life. Ender writes a second book based on Peter's story, and the two books together then lay the foundation for a new religion. Ender and Valentine decide to fly to different worlds, looking for a new world for the buggers to populate. Their search lasts a very long time.



Chapter 15 "Speaker of the Dead" Analysis

Ender thought he was playing a game. He didn't know he was actually killing sentient beings. Similarly, the buggers weren't aware that human beings represent unique, sentient individuals. The war need not have happened. It was all, as Ender suspected, a big misunderstanding. The lesson here is that understanding breeds tolerance. When the other is unknown, they are more easily dismissed. Only by understanding someone can their actions be judged. Both Ender and the surviving bugger now realize this, and both are filled with regret. Ender's book serve to prime humanity for empathy, inviting all to share in the bugger's sorrow. This of course lends itself to the theme of Empathy.

There is much talk of Ender being used as a tool for the good of humanity, about his individual wants and desires being less important than the survival of the species. Ender's teachers have decided that, despite his genius, Ender's abilities have only a narrow application. Ender isn't allowed to think for himself, to come to his own conclusions, to make his own decisions. His teachers see him as a weapon, to be aimed and fired. In the final battle against the buggers, Ender is little better than a bugger himself, a mindless drone serving the will of the International Fleet. Self-governance requires choice, and Ender's choices were denied him. By the end of the story it is obvious that both Ender and Mazer were correct: the buggers were misunderstood. Had Ender been allowed to do things his own way, the story might have had a happier ending for everyone.

Ender's decisions to assist the queen pupa represents his first real choice of the novel, the first choice he makes free of manipulation. By saving the buggers, Ender accepts culpability for the role he played in their virtual extinction, even though he was deceived at the time. This demonstrates that Ender is no longer a drone, but a thinking individual willing to take responsibility for his own decisions. This relates to theme Individual vs. the Collective.



Characters

Alai

A member of Ender's Launchy group, Alai is originally Bernard's best friend. Alai comes to appreciate Ender's many talents and becomes leader of a group that includes both Bernard's in-group and Ender's outcasts. When Ender gets assigned to Salamander Army, Alai reveals his true friendship in a hug and a whispered "Salaam" "Whatever it meant to Alai, Ender knew that it was sacred; that he had uncovered himself for Ender, as Ender's mother had done, when he was very young." Alai's voice is the first Ender hears when he is finally allowed to work with others at Command School.

Major Anderson

Major Anderson assists Colonel Graff in commanding the Battle School. Anderson runs the "games," and is upset when Graff disturbs their rules in order to develop Ender's potential. After Ender's fight with Bonzo, Major Anderson is promoted to colonel and takes over command of the Battle School. After the war, it is implied he will become commissioner of a football league.

Petra Arkanian

The only girl and the best shooter in Salamander Army, Petra possesses enough courage to stand up to Bonzo. She befriends Ender and teaches him her sharp shooting skills. She later commands Phoenix Army while Ender is a member. She is a very good soldier, but cracks under the pressure of the Command School battles anyway. Her collapse reminds Ender he must remember the limitations of ill commanders: "As he eased the pressure on them, he increased the pressure on himself."

Bean

Bean, the smallest soldier in Ender's Dragon Army, gets Ender's attention immediately by demonstrating his quick adaptation to instructions in the Battle Room. Not only is Bean smart, he is cocky and rebellious. Recognizing Bean's leadership potential, Ender treats Bean the same way Graff treated Ender-to toughen Bean and force him to separate from the others Ender recognizes this, however, and thinks of Bean, "When the time is right you'll find that I'm your friend, and you are the soldier you want to be." Bean becomes one of Ender's best soldiers and leads one of his best platoons. Ender later reveals some of his worries to Bean and entrusts him with a special squad of Dragon Army. Bean joins Ender in the final game



Bernard

Ender first meets Bernard, a fellow Battle School candidate from France, on the shuttle transport. Bernard targets Ender for punishment because Graff has spoken so highly of him. Bernard attacks Ender on the shuttle, but Ender has adjusted more quickly to the null gravity conditions. As a result, Ender accidentally breaks Bernard's arm in reaction to Bernard's blows. Bernard and his sadistic friends quickly become Ender's enemies at Battle School. Ender fights back using the computer, and later Bernard becomes one of Alai's group. His resentment continues, however, and he is present during the confrontation with Bonzo in the showers.

Buggers

"Buggers" is the name humans have given to the insect-like organisms who have twice attacked the Earth. While they evolved on another planet, they could easily have developed on Earth, having a genetic makeup similar to that of Earth insects. They look like Earth insects but have internal skeletons. During the Second Invasion, Mazer Rackham discovered the key to defeating them was to destroy their queen. Their starships represent great technological know-how, but there is no evidence that they use any communication devices. They seem to be able to communicate with each other telepathically. Ender discovers this is true when he discovers the queen egg they left behind for him. He cannot reawaken her yet, however, for everyone fears their capabilities. Instead, he writes her story for all to understand.

Carn Carby

Carn Carby commands Rabbit Army, the first one Ender's Dragon Army faces in battle. Ender is impressed with how honorably Carn accepts his defeat at Ender's hands. Carn helps command in the final battle.

Dap

Dap is the "mom" assigned to Ender's Launch group. He introduces the Launchies to how things work at the Battle School, and comforts some of the boys on their first night. Ender makes sure not to show any sign of weakness before him.

Colonel Hyrum Graff

Colonel Graff directs primary training at the Battle School. Ender thinks of him as the principal of the Battle School and likes him right away. He believes that because Graff is honest with him, he will be Ender's friend. Colonel Graff, however, soon shows Ender that he should trust no one. Graff praises Ender so much on the shuttle to Battle School that he turns all the other boys against Ender. He also engineers Ender's isolation at the



school. Even though Colonel Graff does consider himself the students' friend and truly worries about their mental welfare, he has to keep his mission in mind. As a result, he is gruff with the students and demanding of them, trying to teach them to be tough. Colonel Graff faces a court-martial after Bonzo's death in Battle School, but is acquitted.

Hot Soup

See Han Tzu

Locke

See Peter Wiggin

Bonzo Madrid

Commander of the Salamander Army, Bonzo Madrid stands tall and slender, with black eyes and delicate lips. His beauty hides his cruel nature. He resents Ender's being assigned to him from the beginning and forbids him to participate in the group's battles. He rules Salamander by fear, not respect, and Ender observes that his desire for total control makes him a less effective leader. Bonzo particularly hates it when Ender rescues Salamander from total defeat during a battle; afterwards, he trades Ender to Rat Army. His resentment grows after Ender's Dragon Army humiliates him. He meets Ender again in a deadly battle in the showers.

Dink Meeker

Dink runs the platoon to which Rose the Nose assigns Ender in Rat Army. Dink respects Ender's abilities and has asked that Ender be assigned to him. Dink has turned down command of an army

twice before because he fears what it will do to him. Dink knows there is more to life than the Game; he has recognized that the School "doesn't create *anything*. It just destroys." He also tells Ender of his belief that the IF has blown the Bigger menace out of proportion in order to retain power. Nevertheless, Dink leads his platoon well, and he and Ender become friends. Not only does Dink support Ender when Bonzo attacks him in the shower, he assists him in the final battle.

Fly Molo

Fly Molo leads Dragon Army's A platoon. He reappears in the final battle to help Ender fight.



Mazer Rackham

Mazer Rackham commanded the Strike Force, which shattered and destroyed the buggers during the Second Invasion. A half-Maori New Zealander who seemed to come from nowhere, Rackham succeeded in saving the world from destruction. Ender watches the censored films of hero Rackham's battles, continually frustrated that the events of the final battle are kept secret. After the IF promotes Ender to commander and Ender masters all the simulator games, the IF assigns him a teacher: Mazer Rackham. Rackham shares the secret behind his defeat of the buggers that Ender has already inferred.

Rose the Nose

Rose the Nose is commander of the Rat Army when Ender joins it. Rose is proud of his Jewish heritage and lets everyone know it by mocking himself—partly to forestall anti-Semitic remarks and partly to remind people that all the former military leaders of the International Fleet have been Jewish. His army has little discipline, but it stands in second place when Ender joins it. Nevertheless, he too provides Ender with valuable lessons about how *not* to command. As Dink says, "He's winning, but that scares him worst of all, because he doesn't know *why* he's winning."

Shen

One of Ender's first real friends in Battle School, Shen gets tormented because he is "small, ambitious, and easily needled." Bernard and his group make fun of the way Shen walks, saying he wriggles like a worm. Ender helps Shen retaliate by using the computer, and later he and Ender join Alai's group and take away Bernard's followers. Shen also joins Ender in the final battle.

Stilson

The first school bully Ender faces, Stilson teases Ender because he is a Third. After Ender's monitor is removed, Stilson leads a group of boys against Ender. Ender fights him, and beats him severely in order to forestall future retaliation. He does not learn until much later that Stilson died from the assault.

Crazy Tom

Crazy Tom leads Dragon Army's C platoon. Ender is pleased to have his assistance once again in the final battle



Han Tzu

Hot Soup leads Dragon Army's D platoon. Hot Soup fights along with Ender in the final battle.

Andrew Wiggin

Even from an early age, Andrew "Ender" Wiggin knows he is different from all the children around him. He is the third child in his family, something rarely permitted in his overpopulated country. At six years old, he still wears the monitor the government has implanted to assess whether he is a good candidate for the International Fleet's Battle School. Only children whom the Fleet considers geniuses are so monitored. Because Ender is not just different but also smarter than his peers, he inspires their Jealousy and harassment. To survive, he must learn to deal with a series of bullies, beginning with his older brother Peter and continuing with his schoolmate Stilson, his fellow Launchy Bernard, and finally the Battle School commander Bonzo. While he can outwit them one-on-one, when faced with a group he has to resort to physical force. To not just win but to prevent future attacks, Ender ruthlessly assaults and defeats these enemies. It is a lesson the military wants him to learn. As Ender thinks after fighting Bonzo: "Peter might be scum, but Peter had been right, always right; the power to cause pain is the only power that matters, the power to kill and destroy, because if you can't kill then you are always subject to those who can, and nothing and no one will ever save you."

Ender is not like Peter, however, although this is his constant fear. Peter had been too merciless and cruel to enter Battle School, while his sister Valentine had been too sensitive. Ender is like a combination of the two: ruthless enough to earn total victory, but compassionate enough to hate the methods needed to gain it. He is also different from Peter in that he does not always feel the need to win. He only fights when forced to, and takes little pleasure in his victories. When Valentine explains to him how he can defeat his oldest nemesis, Ender replies: "You don't understand. I don't want to beat Peter I want him to love me." Ender continually experiences emotional conflict between his need to protect himself by winning and his fear of becoming a killer. This conflict often manifests itself in Ender's fantasy computer game, an intelligent program that responds to the player's feelings.

Ironically, it is Ender's ability to understand and empathize with other people which makes him such a brilliant strategist. From his first days in Battle School, he observes the other children. He studies the commanders, learns their strengths and weaknesses, and uses this knowledge to defeat them. This ability does not comfort him, however. As he tells Valentine: "In the moment when I truly understand my enemy, understand my enemy well enough to defeat him, then in that very moment I also love him And then, in that very moment when I *love* them... I *destroy* them." After he discovers his final "game" was actually the battle that exterminated the buggers, Ender is not sure how to live with himself. It is his empathy which shows him a way: he will join Valentine on a colony ship to a bugged planet "Maybe if I go there I can understand them better,"



he tells Valentine. "I stole their future from them; I can only begin to repay by seeing what I can learn from their past." He does so by finding the Hive Queen egg and telling her story. His dual nature allows him to relate "all the good and all the evil" he finds in her story and the stories of those he will understand as a Speaker for the Dead.

Ender Wiggin

See Andrew Wiggin

Peter Wiggin

Ender's older brother, Peter, scares him to death. He is sneaky and manipulative and delights in threatening his younger siblings. Peter is particularly hostile towards Ender, jealous that the I.F considers Ender superior after his own intelligence was unrecognized. (The Fleet eliminated Peter from their roster of Battle School candidates because of his sadistic nature.) At school, Peter torments other children by finding "what they most feared and [making] sure they faced it often." Peter's cruelty is disguised by his dark and handsome appearance and his ability to hide his actions. After Ender leaves home, Peter learns to act like adults expect him to. Valentine knows he has not really changed, however, for she sees evidence he has been torturing small animals. As he matures, however, Peter learns to be in total control of himself; he only acts out of self-interest, not anger or passion.

Peter understands how to use people's fears to get them to do what he wants. At first he uses this power to bully others, but then he learns to use it to influence people. Although manipulative, Peter is highly intelligent and ambitious. He tells Valentine that having control is "the most important thing to me, it's my greatest gift, I can see where the weak points are, I can see how to get in and use them." At twelve years old he knows that he wants to have control of "something worth ruling," and envisions himself as the person who can save mankind from self-destruction. He forms a plan where he and his sister will influence political opinion through their writings. Ironically, the Identity Peter adopts, the pseudonym "Locke," is more understanding than he really is. The subterfuge eventually mellows Peter, and later in life he does become ruler of Earth.

Worm

See Shen



Themes

Alienation and Loneliness

From the beginning of the story, Ender feels alienated from almost everyone around him. First, he is a "Third"-an extra child that under ordinary circumstances would not be allowed in school. In addition, the International Fleet has branded him as different by implanting a device that monitors his every move. Other children, including Ender's brother Peter, understand that the gifted Ender is being considered for selection to the Battle School. This creates jealousy, making him a target for bullies. They delight in tormenting Ender, especially when the monitor is removed and they think that Ender is a failure. Not only does Ender have to endure ridicule at school, he also faces it at home from Peter. Although his sister Valentine comforts him and commiserates with him, she does not receive the same treatment from their brother as Ender does.

Ender's solitude is crucial to his development as a military leader. "His isolation can't be broken," one of the school supervisors says. "He can never come to believe that anybody will ever help him out, ever. If he once thinks there's an easy way out, he's wrecked." As a result, the International Fleet deliberately isolates Ender at the Battle School. Even before Ender's arrival, Colonel Graff deliberately praises him so that the other boys on the transport will resent him. As soon as Ender begins to make friends within one group, he is transferred to another. All the other students recognize that Ender has a genius that they do not possess; even when they do not resent him for it, they still hold him in awe. When Ender is given command of an army, he is further isolated by his inability to share the burdens of command. Even Ender's success against the buggers alienates him; the celebrity and guilt it bestows on him ensures he will always be different from everyone else around him.

Good and Evil

Throughout *Ender's Game*, the line between good and evil acts is continually blurred. Is it acceptable to commit an evil act in order to protect oneself? To find a military commander who will save humanity from the buggers, the International Fleet separates children from their families, while their "teachers" manipulate the emotions of children. These despicable acts seem acceptable, however, because they occur to bring about an eventual good for all mankind. Ender himself embodies these contradictory impulses. In order to protect himself from harm, he kills two other children. He also ends up destroying an entire species of beings. Ender remains a sympathetic character, however, because he both recognizes and fears his own potential for evil. After his first confrontation with older boys ends in violence, he sees Peter's face in his computer game. He tells himself that he is not like Peter, that he does not enjoy the power of Violence as Peter does, but he still doubts: "Then a worse fear, that he was a killer, only better at it than Peter ever was; that it was this very trait that pleased the teachers."



Punishment

The blurred lines between good and evil also make judgments of guilt and innocence very difficult to make. As a result, punishment is often withheld for acts that might otherwise require some penalty. In *Ender's Game*, adults do not hold Ender responsible for his actions, hoping to create the perfect military leader. While they do not protect Ender from his enemies, they do protect him from the negative consequences of his battles against them. When Ender fights Stilson, and unknowingly kills him, the adults in charge do nothing—in fact, they keep the knowledge of his crime from him. This happens to Ender on three other occasions: during the flight to the Battle School when he breaks Bernard's arm; when a group of older boys attempt to break up his Launchy training sessions; and finally when he kills Bonzo. Graff feels he is justified in suspending punishment, for a military leader cannot think about the human cost of his victories. (The public seems to agree, for Graff is acquitted when he is prosecuted for criminal negligence for his role in the deaths.) Nevertheless, Ender himself feels guilty for what he has done: "I'm your tool, and what difference does it make if I hate the part of me that you most need? What difference does it make that when the little serpents killed me in the game, I agreed with them, and was glad."

Intelligence

The value of intelligence is thoroughly examined in *Ender's Game*. The children whom the International Fleet selects to attend Battle School have high IQs and rank the highest in their classes and schools. Yet, intellectual ability does not always ensure a child's success in Battle School. Children must also possess an ability to adapt quickly to new situations; empathy, or the ability to understand and care for others, is also a valuable character trait. Peter, for example, has the intellect the I.F. requires, and understands people well enough to control them by exploiting their fears. But he condemns those who think differently from him, and his lack of compassion for others prevents him from being selected for the prestigious Battle School. The children who succeed in Battle School, who become the commanders, possess the knowledge, flexibility, and people skills necessary to lead. Ender not only conquers all of the games he plays, he also quickly adjusts to changes in battle schedules and appreciates other students' skills and abilities. By understanding how others think and interact, he becomes a better strategist and a better motivator.

Ethics

Besides the obvious questions related to murder without punishment, moral and ethical questions related to the manipulation of children and the significance of compassion arise throughout *Ender's Game*. Even though Ender commits murder and receives no punishment, he does feel remorse. It is Ender's ability to empathize, however, that targets him for the role of a mass murderer. The Battle School leaders know that if Ender can feel compassion for the buggers, he will better understand how they exist and operate. Thus, he will be better able to take advantage of their weaknesses and



thus destroy them. As a child, Ender does not fully understand how the adults are using him for their own purposes. As Graff tells him, "We might both do despicable things, Ender, but if humankind survives, then we were good tools" Ender senses this is a half-truth, but Graff adds that "you can worry about the other half after we win this war." The adults' seemingly cold manipulation of Ender and his feelings and their apparent lack of concern for its effects on him comprise controversial themes. Card's attention to these themes separates the novel from many other science fiction offerings.

Heritage and Ancestry

While Ender and his schoolmates are members of an "International Fleet," the heritage of individual characters is still an important factor for many of them. Cooperation between people of different backgrounds is essential for Earth to fight the buggers, and racial strife seems to be a thing of the past, as Alai and Ender exchange slurs as a joke. Ironically, however, in this age of cooperation people still make a point to separate themselves by ancestry. Bernard, for instance, is from a French separatist group who "insisted that the teaching of Standard not begin until the age of four, when the French language patterns were already set. His accent made him exotic and interesting." Rose the Nose makes sure that everyone knows of his Jewish ancestry in an attempt to place himself within a long tradition of successful generals. Similarly, Bonzo Madrid insists on exaggerating his Spanish heritage by following a "macho" code that isolates his one female soldier and permits no shows of weakness. Ender turns this against him when Bonzo brings a gang to confront him in the shower, using Bonzo's pride to make him face him alone.

While others are not so public about their backgrounds, they still play an important role in their lives. Dink Meeker, for instance, is from the Netherlands, a country which has been under Russian control for several generations. As a result, he worries over a potential civil war involving the I.F., which is largely run by American allies. When Ender is promoted from the Launchies, his friend Alai shares a kiss and a whispered "Salaam" Ender senses these are part of a "suppressed religion," and thus the gesture becomes "a gift so sacred that even Ender could not be allowed to understand what it meant." Even Ender's own background plays a factor in the novel, as Graff uses it to convince him to come to Battle School. Ender's father was a Polish Catholic and his mother was a Mormon; they both had to renounce their religion in order to comply with the Population laws. They are secretly proud of having a Third, but are still ashamed of not being able to follow their beliefs more openly. All these details form an ironic commentary on race, religion, and other differences in background, suggesting that no matter how great the need to cooperate together, humanity will still find differences to separate themselves from each other.

Style

Narration/Point of View

Card believes that a breakthrough occurred for him when he discovered that fiction allows the writer to reveal a character's thoughts, whereas play writing does not. Card tells *Ender's Game* primarily from a third-person ("he/she") point of view, where the narrator can describe scenes involving different characters. Nevertheless, the story most often uses a "limited" point of view, focusing solely on Ender's character. Tills is useful in creating a greater identification with his character. At times, the narrative very easily slips into a first-person viewpoint by dropping into Ender's thoughts. For example, when Ender first arrives at the Battle School, there is a scene where he is eating with an older boy. The scene begins in the third-person narrative, then switches to reveal Ender's thoughts. "Ender shut up and ate. He didn't like Mick. And he knew there was no chance he would end up like that. Maybe that was what the teachers were planning, but Ender didn't intend to fit in with their plans. I will not be the bugger of my group, Ender thought. I didn't leave Valentine and Mother and Father to come here just to be iced."

Setting

Setting is vitally important in the genre of science fiction-not just because it might involve the future or another galaxy, but because it usually involves great social changes. *Ender's Game* begins on Earth sometime in the future. There are several social changes that are important to Ender's story: the Population laws that restrict the number of children in a family; the technological developments that permit space travel; and, of course, the existence of an alien civilization which has attempted to conquer Earth. These changes form the Social setting for Ender's story.

The physical settings spring from these changes as well. Although the story starts on Earth, it continues on space stations both inside and out of Earth's solar system. When the International Fleet comes for Ender, they take him via space shuttle to the Battle School, located in the Asteroid Belt. Next, Ender attends Command School on the planetoid Eros. Eros is a spindle-shaped planet with a smooth surface that absorbs sunlight and converts it to energy; the gravity is one-half that of Earth's. The planetoid was originally developed into a space station by the Buggers during one of their invasions. The final physical setting that has significance is on the bugger planet that Ender and Valentine have helped to colonize. There, Ender finds a landscape that resembles the dead giant from his computer fantasy game. This resemblance leads him to discover the queen egg that will communicate the history of her people to humanity.



Structure

The structure of *Ender's Game* is fairly straightforward, relating events in a fairly linear fashion. Although told in third person, most of these events are portrayed from Ender's perspective so that the reader does not know more than he does. An interesting complement to Ender's story is the conversations between Colonel Graff and his associates that preface each chapter. These conversations provide additional perspective, providing more information to the reader than can be found from Ender's limited point of view. The chapters on Valentine and Peter's efforts bring additional background to the eventual conclusion, involving the adult Ender's new career as a Speaker for the Dead. Some critics, however, have faulted the structure of the novel, in particular the rapid finale. Michael Lassell even goes so far as to say in his *Los Angeles Times Book Review* that Card "has not mastered structure. His tale is too expansive and detailed throughout-too fascinated by his own hardware-but foreshortened in its conclusion."

Climax

The climax of a novel is the point at which the major conflict is resolved. *Ender's Game* has a particularly dramatic turning point, as Ender not only wins his final "battle" in Command School, but learns that it is actually the victorious conclusion of the Third Invasion. Up until this point Ender, like the reader, believes that he has been playing yet another battle game. While some critics have faulted this climax as a "trick," others find it a logical resolution to the ethical dilemma of the novel. All throughout, Ender has questioned whether his nature is good or evil; his empathy most likely would not have permitted him to annihilate an entire species. Only by remaining ignorant can he perform the task that has been set before him. In revealing the truth at the moment of victory, *Ender's Game* addresses both the physical and moral conflicts of the story at the same time.

Dialogue

Card feels that his ability to write believable dialogue, developed during his years as a playwright, is another skill that strengthens his writing. Not only does the dialogue allow Card to take different points of view, but it creates tension in scenes and provides the reader with a strong sense of character. For example, in the scene where Ender first meets Bonzo, Bonzo's vicious nature emerges through his speech. The dialogue between Ender and Bonzo sets the stage for their impending battle. Petra's contributions to the conversation establish her character and also add to the tension between Ender and Bonzo.



Historical Context

The Cold War in the 1980s

Ender's Game takes place in Earth's future, one in which all countries are cooperating together to save the planet from alien invasion. Nevertheless, the novel does suggest that the international conflicts of the twentieth century will not be forgotten, as an American hegemony (a group of nations dominated by one) will be pitted against a Second Warsaw Pact, led by the Russians. In this world, Russia rules Eurasia from the Netherlands to Pakistan. Peter believes that Russia is preparing for a "fundamental shift in world order." Once the bugger wars are over, the North American alliances will dissolve, and Russia will take over. This conflict may have seemed inevitable in the early and mid-1980s, when the novel was written. Since the end of World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union had engaged in a "cold war" which involved military buildups but no direct military confrontations. Almost forty years later, this conflict showed few signs of being resolved peacefully.

The two sides of the cold war were led by the democratic United States and the communist Soviet Union. The Warsaw Pact, signed in 1955, established an alliance among the Soviet Union, Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. It served to defend the group against any potential military or economic threats from the West. It also strengthened the Soviet Union's hold over its Eastern European satellites and prevented them from making close ties with the West. On the other side was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which bound Western Europe and the United States together in defense against the communists. From the end of World War II, both the Americans and the Soviets increased their nuclear arsenals, each trying to prevent the other from gaining a military advantage.

The tension of the 1950s and 1960s had given way in the 1970s to a limited "detente," or lessening of friction between the two sides. By the 1980s, however, the Cold War began heating up once again. The Soviet Union had invaded neighboring Afghanistan in 1979, leading to increased U.S. fears of spreading communism. Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980 on a platform that included promises of a tougher stance against the Soviets. Reagan referred to the Soviet Union as an "evil empire," and his administration planned for 1.2 trillion dollars in new military spending. The government also proposed a "Strategic Defense Initiative," commonly called "Star Wars," a space based defensive system that would intercept incoming nuclear missiles. These actions were in contrast to public reassurances from the Americans that they wanted to proceed with arms reduction treaties, so the Soviets remained nervous of American intentions. It was not until after Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985 that tensions eased between the two nations. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved, along with the Soviet Union itself, in 1991.



Science and Technology in the 1980s

One of the most startling technological revolutions of the 1980s was the growth of the personal computer. While large mainframe computers had been in use for many years, they were mainly limited to large research facilities. Advances in design made computers smaller and more affordable, and computers became available to a broad spectrum of businesses and individuals. Apple Computer introduced the Apple II, a system designed for home use, in 1977, while IBM countered with the PC (personal computer) in 1981. "Computer literacy"-a familiarity with how computers worked-became a coveted skill among workers, and schools began offering classes in programming. In 1980 there were only 100,000 computers in schools throughout the United States; by 1987, that number had increased to more than two million. In addition, the internet of the 1980s was just a loosely organized system that helped academics and researchers send messages to each other; it was only in the mid-1990s that it became a powerful media available to any home with a computer and a modem. The use of computer games, simulations, school programs, and "nets" in *Ender's Game* reflects the growing influence that computers were coming to have in the 1980s.

A technological revolution was also happening on the biological frontier during the 1980s. Technical advances in the 1970s had led researchers to better understand how an organism's DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) influences its development. In the 1980s, scientists began applying that knowledge to manipulate the genetic makeup of organisms to create new and improved strains of plants and animals. While this "genetic engineering" led to more productive, disease-resistant crops, people worried about its possible application to humans. The world's first "test-tube baby"-a baby conceived outside its mother's womb-had been born in 1978, and the first U.S. clinic opened two years later. If people could now use science to aid conception, critics wondered, might they not also use it to create babies with "designer genes"? Moral issues surrounding the birth of children also figure in *Ender's Game*, as Ender's character seems to be a deliberate combination of his two older siblings, ordered by the government to produce the military genius they need.

Religion in the 1980s

The 1980s saw people searching for ways to re-establish traditions in their homes and lives. The 1960s and 1970s had been a time of experimentation and free-style living, and church attendance declined as people began exploring spirituality outside the bounds of organized religion. In the 1980s, however, many individuals wanted a return to a simpler existence, one in which there were fewer surprises. They wanted to be able to believe in something that was never-changing, something dependable around which to structure their lives. Religious conservatives, who became prominent in the 1980s, offered one route toward accomplishing that goal. Increase in fundamentalist faiths increased in the 1980s: a Gallup poll in 1986 showed thirty-one percent of respondents classified themselves as evangelical or "born-again" Christians. This increase was reflected in a growing conservative Christian political movement, which sought to bring



moral issues more into the political mainstream. For many people, however, religion became more of a personal expression, and this was reflected in the growth of the "New Age" movement. Interestingly enough, the world of *Ender's Game* is a world where one's religion has become a matter for embarrassment or even persecution. Both of Ender's parents have had to renounce their faith in order to conform; Alai's whispered "Salaam" similarly seems something outlawed. Ironically, however, tiffs persecution seems to have made their faith even more precious to the characters.

The background of Card's own faith, Mormonism, includes its own bouts of persecution. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was founded in New York in 1830 by Joseph Smith, who published the divine revelations he claimed to have received in *The Book of Mormon*. The most controversial of Smith's precepts was the practice of polygamy, and Smith and his followers were driven out of communities in New York, Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri. A large Mormon settlement was established in Utah in 1847 by Smith's successor, Brigham Young, but they continued to be feared and mistrusted by outsiders, including the federal government. The Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887 dissolved the Mormon Church as a corporate entity, and their leaders had to renounce polygamy before Utah could gain its statehood in 1896. Since then, the Mormon Church has increased ties with more mainstream faiths and has grown considerably; by the end of the 1980s, membership within the church had risen to over seven million members. Nevertheless, Mormons still sometimes suffer prejudice from outsiders who stereotype them or misunderstand their beliefs. Understanding this background can provide an interesting insight into the way religion is portrayed in *Ender's Game*.



Critical Overview

Ender's Game presents the age-old science fiction conflict of human against alien. While the plot is time-worn, many critics have observed that Card's storytelling ability, as well as the story's details and characterization, are vivid enough to maintain the reader's interest. Reviewer Roland Green, for example, stated in *Booklist* that *Ender's Game* is "a seamless story of compelling power." Card's peers and fans concurred, as the novel won both the Nebula (given by science fiction writers) and Hugo (given by science fiction readers) Awards.

Card originally wrote *Ender's Game* as a short story that he submitted to the leading science fiction magazine, *Analog*, after having had one story rejected by the publication. Not only did the editor like *Ender's Game* enough to publish it, others took notice. The short-story version won for Card the World Science Fiction Convention's John W. Campbell Award for best new writer in 1977. Encouraged by his success, Card continued to write and to further develop his skills. He began working on the novel *Speaker for the Dead* and realized that the main character should be Ender Wiggin from *Ender's Game*. This inspiration led to Card's writing the full version of the short story *Ender's Game*. When Tor Books published *Ender's Game* as a full-length novel in 1985, reviewers especially applauded Card's compelling portrayal of Ender as an innocent child being manipulated by controlling adults. A *Kirkus Reviews* critic noted that "long passages focusing on Ender are nearly always enthralling-the details are handled with flair and assurance."

Card depicts Ender as an "abused" child in the sense that adults use him for their own purpose-to save the world for the good of mankind. This manipulation, and the resulting sympathy readers feel for Ender, underlie the "compelling power" about which reviewer Green spoke. Readers can identify with Ender throughout the story, even though he eventually annihilates an entire species of beings. Ender is very much the typical kid loving and hating his siblings, playing video games, and missing his family when he is separated from them. Yet he possesses a genius and mature assuredness that makes him a target for abuse by peer group bullies and adults who are in control. Readers feel compelled to side with Ender because he is a child, and because they understand and relate to the problems Ender encounters as a child who is different. In the *New York Times Book Review*, Gerald Jonas noted the complexity of Ender's character, stating that "alternately likable and insufferable, he is a convincing little Napoleon in short pants." Tom Easton, in a review in *Analog Science Fiction*, agreed that Ender is believable if readers withhold their skepticism and remember that "the kid's a genius."

Other critics, however, offer more negative viewpoints. While admirers praised Card's characterization skills and his storytelling ability, his most severe critics denounced his use of violence and standard science-fiction elements. In a segment of *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, Michael Lassell stated bluntly, "Orson Scott Card is not a great writer, nor does *Ender's Game* break any new ground." In particular, the critic faulted the climax of *Ender's Game* as "a trick (on the reader as well as on Ender) for which there is no adequate preparation." Other reviewers have criticized Card's use of violence. Elaine



Radford, for instance, views Ender as another brute of history; in her *Fantasy Review* article, she likened his character to that of Adolf Hitler. She asserted that Ender "goes Hitler one better" because he not only kills an entire race, he also robs them of their heritage. Other reviewers, however, have recognized that *Ender's Game* does not advocate or apologize for violence, but rather explores the moral issues surrounding its use. *Analog's* Easton observed that by stressing Ender's empathy, Card saves the novel from becoming a story about a truly ruthless villain. The violence is seen as "evil for the sake of good [Card] goes to great pains to shield Ender's childish innocence from truth, to keep us from calling him one more brute of history."

Other reviewers have taken issue with the believability of Ender's character. Some critics felt that although he is gifted, young Ender is still not credible as a child. Lassell noted that while "likeable," the novel's protagonist "is utterly unbelievable as a child his age, genius or no." In contrast, many young readers who have written to Card have applauded him for his realism. Card says in the Introduction to *Ender's Game*: "They didn't love Ender, or pity Ender (a frequent adult response); they *were* Ender, all of them. Ender's experience was not foreign or strange to them; in their minds, Ender's life echoed their own lives. The truth of the story was not truth in general, but *their* truth." Calling the work "the best novel I've read in a long time," Dan K. Moran echoed this assessment in the *West Coast Review of Books*: "Ender Wiggin is a unique creation. Orson Scott Card has created a character who deserves to be remembered with the likes of Huckleberry Finn *Ender's Game* is *that* good."

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3



Critical Essay #1

David J. Kelly is an English instructor at several colleges in Illinois, as well as a novelist and playwright. In the following essay, he examines why referring to characters as "children" does not necessarily make them well-rendered child characters.

There can be no question that Orson Scott Card's novel *Ender's Game* is a graceful and useful piece of fiction, with a convincing sense of time and place that only comes from a writer in complete control of his or her material. To certain fans, *Ender's Game* is one novel brave enough to really look at children without making them childish. They are relieved that somebody finally got it right, and they praise Card for his unflinching honesty about the cunning and cruelty, the wisdom and humanity, of children. But is it really about children? They are called kids, but they don't act or talk like kids. Card seems to take pride in this, considering it an innovation, as if the only alternative would be having the cadets in the Battle School play marbles and talk baby talk. I suspect that the children in *Ender's Game* are written as adults and then called kids-like stunt doubles in the movies, fresh-faced, diminutive adults playing the parts of kids, snubbing out their cigars to go out and lick lollipops before the cameras.

Let there be no mistake: I don't object to his characters because I foolishly think they are not any more vicious than kids are in real life, or could be. I can tell the difference between childhood innocence and sweetness, and the first does not necessarily lead to the second. In the book, the nastiness that Peter, Stilson, and Bonzo show toward Ender is unprovoked, but it still makes sense as their characters are drawn. It makes sense that children become defensive and cliquish when their place in the world is uncertain. Insecurity is unavoidable in new situations, and in childhood everything is a new situation-maturity is just a matter of recognizing repeating patterns, and without comforting recognition, all these kids have to protect themselves with violence. Stilson and Bonzo, in particular, lash out for reasons that they themselves would probably not recognize, in response to their insecurity. I accept this as a depiction of children and their behavior, as much as I don't like it.

Ender's response to the other boys' bullying is more intelligent and calculating, as everything Ender does is, and Card uses it to show another aspect of childhood, the struggle between intellect and fear. Ender kills Stilson and Bonzo without realizing that he has done it-in all other things, his behavior is precise and he gets the results he intends, but in physical struggles he lashes out with a fear-driven response that is beyond his control, a cyclone so violent that he does not even see the results and only suspects them. Fear pushing Intellect into the back seat is a reasonable characterization of childhood.

Peter's continual sadism is more serious than the other hostilities in the novel because it is intentional, not spontaneous. He may feel threatened by the success of his younger brother, as is implied in the early chapters, but then why is he torturing animals years after Ender has left the Earth? And what does that have to do with the statesman he becomes? The message is either that Peter somehow outgrew the sadist he was, only



to later fake it so that Valentine would aid him, or that he was faking all along. Or else we are to believe that Peter is psychotic from start to finish. As much as sadistic children remind us of power-mad adults, it is almost impossible that a child, even one with the intellect Peter is supposed to have, would have the emotional control to fake, correct, or mask his psychosis this thoroughly. The character seems patterned on such evil geniuses as Hitler and Ted Bundy, but never does he show a hint of a child's mental formation. He is fully grown from the start-an adult.

All of the children in Ender's family are more intelligent than children commonly are. That is the premise of the novel, and it is as much Card's right to explore it, as it is the right of any sci-fi writer to stretch the bounds of the known world, free of the bystanders who would complain, "But that's not the way things are."

Ender comes from a long-standing tradition of inquiry about what would happen if intellect could somehow exist separately from the psychological baggage that comes from growing up in society. From the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whose novel *Emile* first gave serious consideration to child psychology, to Barry Rudd, the child genius who a corporation bids on in John Hersey's 1960 novel *The Child Buyer* (which makes a splendid companion piece to *Ender's Game*), writers have watched the struggle between genius and personality. The military system Ender is placed in encourages only his intellect, and he has to fight the system for room to develop his personality.

In the embarrassing Demosthenes/Locke plot line, on the other hand, everything comes easily to the genius children: Peter sets his mind on world domination, Valentine agrees to aid him, and, by golly, a few years later the world is in his control. Again, no distinction is made between a child's insatiable ego and the evil genius's power-hunger, crossed this time with a dated speculation that the anonymity of the internet would allow propaganda from any illegitimate source to dominate. The only thing separating Peter and Valentine from adulthood here is the fact that the world can see that they are children and therefore discriminates against them for it. Card plasters over the holes in his character development by designating these particular children as super-geniuses.

In the book's Definitive Introduction, added for the 1991 edition, Card defends his treatment of child characters. He describes a letter from a guidance counselor who worked with gifted children, a label definitely appropriate for Ender and his kin. According to Card, she "loathed" the book (probably his word, not hers: later in the Introduction his critics are said to have "really hated" his book and to consider it "despicable"). He writes, "It was important to her, and to others, to believe that children don't actually think or speak the way the children in *Ender's Game* think and speak." To him, the guidance counselor's training and experience count as nothing: he seems to believe that her judgment is based on some hidden motive, a defense of tradition or a fear that her career will be unmasked as hollow. His response to her, he says, would be this: "The only reason you don't think gifted children talk this way is because they know better than to talk this way in front of *you*." It is not clear why children "know better," what punishment he fears a guidance counselor might bring down on the head of a particularly sophisticated child. It is unlikely that Card thinks *all* gifted children have



plans for world domination, although that would give them good reason to hide their talents. Using this defense of his characters, Card brings the paranoia from his science fiction novel into the real world.

At its root, Card's problem with handling children as characters is not an inability to see how they think and behave differently than adults, but, worse, a refusal to admit that they do. He holds to a self-sufficient posture, trusting only his own observations and the conclusions that he reached from them. "[N]ever in my entire childhood did I feel like a child," he says in an extended defense against the skeptical guidance counselor. "I never felt that I spoke childishly. I never felt that my emotions and desires were somehow less real than adult emotions and desires." He seems to have taken his defense against writing in baby talk a few yards too far. Card's refusal to compromise his principles is admirable, but what kind of compromise is he actually resisting? Does he really believe that there is an outcry to see children's experiences as "less real" than adults'? If this actually were the case if guidance counselors and psychologists and writers were all part of a vast conspiracy to belittle the young people they spend their lives studying-then Card would be as heroic as the posture he takes. More likely, it just looks like a conspiracy to him because he doesn't see his memories of childhood reflected in print. Could it be that his memory is lacking? I myself do not remember thinking childish thoughts while developing an adult personality, but if the people who study such things can give me a good explanation for it, I'm willing to listen. I have never seen my colon or liver, either, but that doesn't mean I would scoff at anyone who tries to tell me how they work.

"If everybody came to agree that stories should be told this clearly," Card says of his own work in the Introduction, "the professors of literature would be out of a job, and the writers of obscure, encoded fiction would be, not honored, but pitied for their impenetrability." Is he saying that obscurity itself is bad? Who is the judge? Am I allowed to dismiss his writing as pitiable and obscure if I don't know the word "impenetrability"? His problem with other writers mirrors his problem with the entire field of child psychology. In both cases, Card seems to feel that people who see things that he doesn't are fools, conspirators, or con artists. A good healthy dose of skepticism about established beliefs is necessary it's what pushes human thought ahead-but Card shouldn't let the popularity of his book blind him to the fact that its characterizations may be flawed. It's true, there are a lot of bad writers who have the idea that the way to create children in fiction is to just write stupid adults, but one does not correct this simply by portraying children as smart adults. James Joyce, J. D Salinger, and Roald Dahl are among the hundreds who have written about children, giving them the specific concerns of children without making them talk or behave like idiots. But maybe Card would judge these artists "too obscure." Maybe there is something to be said for complexity when trying to understand a complex world.

Source: David J. Kelly, in an essay for *Novels for Students*, Gale, 1999.



Critical Essay #2

In the following excerpt, Blackmore discusses the military paradigm in which Ender must operate to survive.

Ender lives in a military paradigm which assumes humans are malleable, controllable objects.

Control resides in large institutions, not individuals or parochial units. The military paradigm abides by a strict utilitarian philosophy in which ends overcome any and all means; human costs are unimportant. Within the paradigm is an accepted paradox that the individual must be sacrificed in order to maintain the rights of other individuals. Because it accepts its own built-in flaws, the military paradigm is extremely robust. Graff lectures Ender: "The Earth is deep, and right to the heart it's alive, Ender. We people only live on the top, like the bugs that live on the scum of the still water near the shore." Graff's aerial view distances him from the unpleasant decisions he must make if the war is to be won. There is no room for doubt that all wars, or contests, must be won--especially when these "bugs" cling so tenaciously to life (the word "bugs" is loaded with meaning; Card uses it to refer both to humans and "buggers"). Graff is proud of, rather than ashamed of, the power that allows the military to "requisition" Ender. At the core of the military paradigm is a mechanistic view of humans, who are to be shaped to the purposes of the machine. Anderson expresses the utilitarian military code tersely: "All right. We're saving the world, after all. Take him"; he picks up Ender as one might choose a tool from a tool kit.

Much of the paradigm's invulnerability comes from the fact that the characters are aware of their roles in the machine. The reader feels sympathy for them because they have thought through their beliefs; they don't blindly follow a creed. Yet their humane qualities--emotion and heart--never interfere with their decision to sacrifice anything necessary to keep the mechanism functioning. Graff directs us to practicalities--"We're trying to save the world, not heal the wounded heart"--and provokes a further exchange:

"General Levy has no pity for anyone. All the videos say so. But don't hurt this boy."

"Are you joking?"

"I mean, don't hurt him more than you have to."

In a utilitarian world a plea to leave Ender untouched is not only irrelevant, it is potentially treasonous. Physical and psychological pain are necessary if Ender is to be deformed for the machine's uses. The amount of pain indicates the degree of injustice the individual meets at the hands of the system; and in Ender's case, both the pain and injustice are severe. The military is purposefully structured to be unjust, breaking those who cannot rise above injustice fast enough. Those who survive the injustices will become commanders--they will be given the power to inflict pain. The children in the Battle Room raise "a tumult of complaint that it wasn't fair how Bernard and Alai had



shot them all when they weren't ready." The military world has no patience for those who demand fairness; Graff notes bluntly, "Fairness is a wonderful attribute, Major Anderson. It has nothing to do with war."

Card prevents the reader from making quick judgements about Graff and Anderson. At first the two men seem dangerously smug about their roles ("We promise gingerbread, but we eat the little bastards alive.") The utilitarian *seems* to forget he is dealing with humans, cold-bloodedly informing Ender that "maybe you're not going to work out for us, and maybe you are. Maybe you'll break down under pressure, maybe it'll ruin your life, maybe you'll hate me for coming here to your house today." Graff's ability to speak such truths impresses Ender, who otherwise would not be lured away. Graff's honesty is not a sham; in private he notes ominously that "this time if we lose there won't be any criticism of us at all". Accustomed to serving the machine, Graff and Anderson slide unhesitatingly into the worst Machiavellian tactics to achieve their goals. Petra warns Ender to "remember this.. .. They never tell you any more truth than they have to,"_ a fact all the children promptly forget. Graff and Anderson, the two Machiavels, prepare to trap Ender:

"So what are you going to do?"

"Persuade him that he wants to come with us more than he wants to stay with her."

"How will you do that?"

"I'll lie to him"

"And if that doesn't work?"

"Then I'll tell him the truth We're allowed to do that in emergencies We can't plan for everything, you know."

There is gleeful madness in this speech; the two most "practical" characters are quick to accept the interchangeability of lies and truth. It is impossible, apparently, to detect Graff's and Anderson's true feelings. The latter notes grimly, "Sometimes I think you enjoy breaking these little geniuses," recognizing that Graff, like Anderson, has a favorite game. Anderson's concern-"what kind of man would heal a broken child... just so he could throw him back into battle again"-maintains our faith in the two commanders. Card forces the reader to move between two viewpoints: that of the suspicious, manipulated child and that of the paranoid, utilitarian machine worker.

The phrase "the good of the whole" sanctions military atrocities. Ender's relationship with Valentine is like one of "billions of ... connections between human beings. That's what [he's] fighting to keep alive." The reader is one such unit, for the audience may be forced to approve of -even as it dislikes-Graff. Each individual must surrender the self completely. The post of officer, or supreme commander, does not make Ender an individual; it simply gives him a higher function in the machine. Graff has made peace with the possibility that "we might both do despicable things, Ender," because "if humankind survives, then we were good tools." Ender begins to realize the magnitude



of his sacrifice, asking, "Is that all? Just tools?" And he elicits the utilitarian answer from Graff, "Individual human beings are all tools, that the others use to help us all survive." Here is the paradox of one stripped of his individuality in order to protect the ideal of individuality.

Games, game theory, and simulation are an integral part of the mechanistic Machiavellian world; surprises or spontaneity are dangerous because they are organic. Graff notes brusquely, "as for toys, there's only one game." The supremacy of the game and the Battle Room is total; those who believe in endless rehearsal refuse to draw the line between simulation and reality for the child warriors. The principal danger of game theory is that reality becomes blurred, making human costs appear inconsequential. Anderson is angry that Graff has played one of his games "betting [Anderson's] life on it." It comes as an unwelcome and ironic-shock for a gamer to discover that he too is on the playing board.

The military paradigm consisting of a utilitarian stance, belief in the good of the whole, subordination of the individual, and simulation of reality takes great pleasure in its rituals and makes a religion out of war. It is extremely dangerous that "status, identity, purpose, name; all that makes these children who they are comes out of this game." The children have become ciphers. It follows that if the ritual of the game is not upheld, the identities of whole groups may be erased. Particularly striking is Card's revision of Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. Bonzo accepts Ender into his army and begins a ritual war chant:

"We are still-"

"Salamander!" cried the soldiers in one voice.

"We are the fire that will consume them, belly and bowel, head and heart, many flames of us, but one fire."

"Salamander!" they cried again "Even this One will not weaken us "

The ritual call-and-response nature of this chorus is an example of the unity Anderson strives to instill in all his recruits: alone they are flames, but together they are a fire that overwhelms others. The philosophy may be rooted in the past, but the military is firmly webbed to the future-specifically technology. The military sees technology as a mystical force allowing basic laws of nature to be revoked, such as gravity and time. It also relies on machines to explore human minds. Ender charges the two commanders, "You're the ones with the computer games that play with people's minds. You tell *me*." Dink is simultaneously correct and incorrect when he claims that "the Battle Room doesn't create *anything*. It just destroys." The Battle Room destroys individuality while it creates a unitary killing machine.

Of the tools the military paradigm uses to manipulate individuals, Isolation is the most powerful. Ender must be prevented from being "at home" or able to "adopt the system we have here," because as soon as Ender finds a surrogate family the military will lose their leverage on him. Isolation makes dependence on others impossible; Ender is forced to fall back on and develop his own resources. Graff argues defensively that



"isolation is-the optimum environment for creativity. It was *his* ideas we wanted, not the-never mind." Graff cuts off the admission that isolation may well bring madness and alienation, not creativity. Ender sees the machine at work and knows instinctively that "this wasn't the way the show was supposed to go. Graff was supposed to pick on him, not set him up.. .. They were supposed to be against each other at first, so they could become friends later." Neither Ender nor Graff realizes that isolation will, simultaneously, ostracize Ender from the human race and create an unbreakable bond with an alien one. Graff panics when Ender's Isolation excludes the commanders and the military. Upset with Major Imbu, Graff notes that there is nothing in the manuals "about the End of the World. We don't have any experience with it." Card's irony underlines just how much the military is fixated on simulation. Here is one scenario they cannot countenance, nor can they go to Ender and display their ignorance. Panic turns to anger as Graff barks, "I don't want Ender being comfortable with the end of the world." Graff's comment indicates how much he has underestimated Ender.

Truth and trust are also useful tools. Graff uses Machiavellian means to further utilitarian ends. Ender consistently swallows Graff's lies regarding Stilson and Bonzo. Doubt nags at Ender because he has equated trust and friendship with the fact that the Colonel "didn't lie." Graff answers, "I won't lie to you now, either. My job isn't to be friends. My job is to produce the best soldiers in the world." What Graff never fully explains are the enormous personal costs Ender faces. Graff understands the risk of being able "to decide the fate of Ender Wiggin," but the utilitarian in him triumphs as he lashes out at Major Anderson: "Of course I mind [the interference], you meddling ass. This is something to be decided by people who know what they're doing, not these frightened politicians." Military belief in specialization and expertise overrides Anderson's concerns. The military organizes the pieces of events it needs to provide useful truths. Ender has internalized the commander's law: no soldier can rise above the others because "It spoils the symmetry. You must get him in line, break him down, isolate him, beat him until he gets in line with everyone else."

In the service of manipulation of the individual, the military abolishes parents. Friends can only provide part of the reassurance a parent offers the child. Dink sees pieces of truth: "The game is everything. Win win win. It amounts to nothing." The military has declared what is and is not to be important in these children's lives. Dink notes caustically, "They decided I was right for the program, but nobody ever asked if the program was right for me." Parental authority is replaced by dependence on the self; Ender "must believe that no matter what happens, no adult will ever, ever step in to help him in any way. He must believe, to the core of his soul, that he can only do what he and the other children work out for themselves."

Manipulation of truth continues when the military takes charge of the media. Free speech is an acceptable concept, as long as the true bastions of power are not attacked. Ender cannot figure out why, if "students in the Battle School had much to learn from Mazer Rackham ... [everything] was concealed from view." Due to military caginess (or vanity), the truth-that nobody understands Rackham's victory, except perhaps Rackham himself does not come out until it is almost too late. Ender feels the full impact of media handling when he receives Valentine's letter but must force himself



to discount it: "Even if she wrote it in her own blood, it isn't the real thing because they made her write it. She'd written before, and they didn't let any of those letters through. Those might have been real, but this was asked for, this was part of their manipulation." The manipulation of Valentine by the military teaches Ender more than Dink can ever tell him about their "skills" with communication. Ender notes succinctly, "So the whole war is because we can't talk to each other." This exchange between Ender and Graff recalls one of the most striking scenes in Joe Haldeman's *The Forever War*: "The 1143-year-long war had begun on false pretenses and only continued because the two races were unable to communicate. Once they could talk, the first question was 'Why did you start this thing?' and the answer was 'Me?'" Both Card and Haldeman stress that energy would be better spent on communication than on war games. The military *appears* to be using force out of desperation, just as Ender does when fighting Stilson and Bonzo, but it may simply prefer the role of aggressor. Even if the latter is the correct motive, it is cloaked by the former.

The military regularly pawns off horrible responsibilities to generals in the front line. For example, when Ender asks whether the Molecular Detachment Device (M.D. Device, a.k.a. the Little Doctor) works on a planet and "Mazer's face [goes] rigid. 'Ender, the buggers never attacked a civilian population in either invasion. You decide whether it would be wise to adopt a strategy that would invite reprisals.'" Like those who flew the *Enola Gay*, Ender becomes much more than an accomplice to the military's most unconscionable acts. There is no hypocrisy from the military; Graff and Rackham believe Ender had saved them all. Typically, Mazer Rackham pushes both victory and genocide on Ender: "You made the hard choice, boy. All or nothing". In Haldeman's *The Forever War*, Potter and Mandella sum up the feeling of being abandoned by the military:

"It's so dirty."

I shrugged. "It's so army."

The military paradigm withstands severe attacks without fracturing. The pressure forces Graff to comment sourly that his "eagerness to sacrifice little children in order to save mankind is wearing thin." The incredible speed with which Ender becomes a commander leads Bean to guess that "the system is breaking up. No doubt about it. Either somebody at the top is going crazy, or something's gone wrong with the war, the real war, the bugger war." None of these pressures divert Graff, Anderson, or Rackham from their course. With victory, the paradigm snaps back into shape. Graff recounts that after Ender's "rights" had been explained "it was simple. The exigencies of war" explain everything. If anything, there is increased faith in game theory—the system *has* worked. Anderson notes wistfully, "Now that the wars are over, it's time to play games again." The military would rather not handle shades of gray. The Major notes, "It's too deep for me, Graff. Give me the game. Nice neat rules. Referees. Beginnings and ending. Winners and losers and then everybody goes home to their wives." During the lifetime of Ender's tyrant brother Peter, the military paradigm continues to exist. Only later, when Ender has grown in power, does he provide an answer in the form of a religious paradigm which is constructed around the concept of the Speaker for the Dead. The



Speaker is a figure who gives an account of an individual's ethical role in life and society. Before he can achieve that stage, Ender's own paradigm must be tested and purified. It is ironic that the military's most successful creation will also bring the eventual downfall of the paradigm.

Source: Tim Blackmore, "Ender's Beginning' Battling the Military in Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*," in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 32, No 2, Summer, 1991, pp. 125-140.



Critical Essay #3

This excerpt explores Ender's role as a reluctant warrior who "fights in order to prevent further battles."

Card endows each of the three Wiggin children with a particular strength: Peter is a conqueror, another Alexander; Valentine is an empath; and Ender is a warrior who hates fighting but must win.

Given this trinity it is not hard to separate the three and then join them into one. Ender functions as a cross between the head and the heart, with Peter as the head and Valentine as the heart. As Ender absorbs each of these he eventually becomes the wise old man. Even further afield is the possibility that the three form a religious Trinity. Rather than push any of these readings on the characters, attempting to make them into one, the author accepts the fact that Card saw fit to write three separate characters, where each listens to, and learns from, the others. It seems wiser and more useful, in terms of opening the text, to consider them as three discrete individuals, each representing a separate paradigm.

Ender's pacifism separates him from the other soldiers, the military, and his society. His apparently fatalistic attitude toward beating others is remarkably similar to what Eastern philosophy would call *Bushido*, or the Way of the Warrior (Samurai). Ender represents an elite, powerful warrior class which is at heart pacific but often fights in order to prevent further battles. Ender is a triple outcast. On Earth he is an "outcaste," wanting "to scream at [his father], I know I'm a Third I know it." Ender is a *persona non grata* who "has no rights"; and at the Battle School his excellence and isolation ensure his outcast status. For a long time even Ender rejects himself: "[Ender] didn't like Peter's kind, the strong against the weak, and he didn't like his own kind either, the smart against the stupid." Balancing his alien status is Ender's possession of something unique for a soldier, a name. After a victory he thinks, "[I] may be short, but they know [my] name." Mick, a fellow student, notices the implications right away: "Not a bad name. Ender. Finisher. Hey." Finishing things is Ender's way of attempting to gain peace. "Knocking him down won't be the first fight. I wanted to win all the next ones, too, right then, so they'd leave me alone." He wins not for the sake of winning, but so he needn't "fight every day [until] it gets worse and worse" Anderson comes to the realization that "Ender Wiggin isn't a killer. He just wins-thoroughly." Ender admits ashamedly, "I didn't fight with honor...I fought to win." For Ender finishing *is* winning. Learning to rely only on "his own head and hands," Ender embodies the archetype of the individual who maintains his identity in the face of a hostile society and environment.

Card uses the Battle Room as a metaphor for life. Winning does not mean peace; it simply means one is allowed to play again. Ender catches on late that what he plays are no longer games; "it stopped being a game when they threw away the rules". The events in and outside the Battle Room are "sometimes games, sometimes-not games." Ender has been aged by the constant threat of annihilation: he must be able to end each game, otherwise his life is worthless. He notes desperately that losing is "the



worst that could happen. I can't lose *any*... Because if I lose *any*' -He didn't explain himself." Ender is more strategist than aggressor. While the children are "all wondering if [Stilson] was dead.... [Ender] was trying to figure out a way to forestall vengeance." Discussing similar strategy, Yamamoto comments, "In the 'Notes on Martial Laws' it is written that: The phrase, 'Win first, fight later,' can be summed up in the two words 'Win beforehand.' "

Ender's perpetual attempts to co-opt the system, to "use the system, and even excel," are symptomatic of his lifelong obsession with preparedness. In order to work free of the commanders' power, Ender must prepare more than he ever has. Obedience is not a Manichean issue, as Dink suggests it is. Ender is vulnerable, as the military knows, to pressure exerted on Valentine. In his Earth school he's left alone because "he always knew the answer, even when [the teacher] thought he wasn't paying attention." Preparation and risk taking give Ender an ability to adapt to and master any given situation. The result is that he never makes the same mistake twice. Faced by the challenging Battle Room, he plunges in: "Better get started." But even here he is prepared. During the shuttle flight to Battle School, Ender has observed that "Gravity could go any which way. However [he] want[s] it to go." All things are a prelude to battle: "If one makes a distinction between public places and one's sleeping quarters, or between being on the battlefield and on the *tatami*, when the moment comes there will not be time for making amends. There is only the matter of constant awareness. If it were not for men who demonstrate valor on the *tatami*, one could not find them on the battlefield either" [observes Tsunetomo Yamamoto in *Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*]. Ender scrutinizes his environment, noticing on the shuttle "how Graff and the other officers were watching them. Analyzing. Everything we do means something, Ender realized. Them laughing. Me not laughing." Ender's mind automatically produces strategic analyses. Traded from Salamander, "Ender listed things in his mind as he undressed... The enemy's gate is down. Use my legs as a shield. And soldiers can sometimes make decisions that are smarter than the orders they've been given." Such dispassionate analysis gives Ender the necessary information he needs to win his coming battles. The more he understands how he works, the more he sees that emotions, particularly anger, interfere with decision making. Ender instructs his class, "If you ever want to make your enemy crazy, shout that kind of stuff at them. It makes them do dumb things. But we don't get mad." Ender's ability to calculate probabilities makes him appear as canny as the adults around him. They treat him so well he wonders, "How important am I... And like a whisper of Peter's voice inside his mind, he heard the question, How can I use this?"

Part of the warrior's way is to *use*, not *be* used. Valentine's letter makes him lose hope because "he had no control over his own life. They ran everything. They made all the choices." Despite his wish to deny his human fragility, Ender eventually incorporates his flaws, reassuring himself that "although he had never sought power, he had always had it. But he decided that it was power born of excellence, not manipulation." He accepts that he has power over others, just as others have power over him; however, he can control a great deal of power. Ender "could see Bonzo's anger growing hot. Ender's anger was cold, and he could use it. Bonzo's anger was hot, and so it used him." Ender cannot afford to lose control once. He uses a meditation trick to distract himself, and



when he returns to his thoughts "the pain was gone. The tears were gone. He would not cry." Things that affect him after this make "him sorrowful, but Ender did not weep. He was done with that," and using his anger "he decided he was strong enough to defeat them [all]." Ender relinquishes his trust in adults, learning to show them "the lying face he presented to Mother and Father." Ender's isolation goes beyond anything Graff could have dreamed of. Confronted by Petra's plea for forgiveness ("Sometimes we make mistakes"), it is the warrior in Ender who answers coldly, "And sometimes we don't." Meditation, cold anger, hidden emotion, lack of forgiveness, and utter solitude are superb defenses against a deadly world as well as trademarks of a blind form of Puritanism. The Puritan vein in Ender explains why and how he manages to live without love, loyalty, and companionship. Through the bars of his cell, Ender sees that "they knew about everything and to them Val was just one more tool to use to control him, Just one more trick to play." The biggest mistake he can make is to show emotion and reveal a desire. As a commander, Ender does not fool himself that his soldiers are loyal to him; they are in awe of him, revere him, but he won't (perhaps with the exception of Bean) allow them to be loyal to him. Love and loyalty are vulnerabilities that neither the Samurai nor the Puritan warrior can afford.

Nor can the Warrior conceive of spontaneous acts of affection. When Graff touches Ender's hand, Ender decides "Graff was creating a commander out of a little boy. No doubt Unit 17 in the course of studies included an affectionate gesture from the teacher." Similarly, he cannot trust Valentine's childish affection any longer. Loyalty is replaced by obedience; Ender notes calmly in the face of his peers' disbelief, "I obey orders." When his army "attempt[s] to start a chant of Dragon, Dragon," Ender puts a stop to it. Tribal rituals suggest tribal loyalty, and Ender knows that he may face any member of his army in the Battle Room one day. Loyalty, like all emotion, clouds strategy and preparedness; but obedience does not.

It is also necessary that the warrior cultivate empathy, particularly the ability to empathize with the enemy. Peter notes prophetically, "They meant you to be human, little Third, but you're really a bugger." [Michael R.] Collings notes [in his article "The Rational and Revelatory in the Science Fiction of Orson Scott Card," *Sunstone*, May, 1987] that "Ender cannot become fully human" because "he is constantly manipulated by others." Ender points out to Valentine, the empath, that "every time, I've won because I could understand the way my enemy thought. From what they *did* I'm very good at that. Understanding how other people think." Empathy allows Ender to exchange his worldview for the enemy's, see the internal vulnerabilities, and attack in precisely the right spot

The final and most important part of the warrior's paradigm is the complete acceptance of death. Learning to fight each battle as if it were the last, the warrior must face "lots of deaths . That was OK, games were like that, you died a lot until you got the hang of it." And in getting "the hang of it," the individual becomes accustomed to dying (not an unfamiliar theme for Card). Death means a release from the battles of life and is, therefore, much desired by Ender. The combination of readiness and relaxation prepares Ender's troops to "win beforehand." They are relaxed because they are ready to die. As Yamamoto states: "There is something to be learned from a rainstorm. When



meeting with a sudden shower, you try not to get wet and run quickly along the road. But doing such things as passing under the eaves of houses, you still get wet. When you are resolved from the beginning, you will not be perplexed, though you still get the same soaking. This understanding extends to everything." Stoicism and resolution of this nature are crucial to the Puritan warrior who is self-sufficient; he is not a fighter, but he wins battles when and where he must, he is not a Joiner, but he is ready to lead; he is not anxious, but he is always prepared; most of all, he hates power, but he is supremely capable of handling it. Such self-reliance gives the warrior the strength to deny love and loyalty, understand the enemy, and accept death unhesitatingly. The rugged individualist who lives his own life and relies on his neighbors to do the same is caught in a terrible vice when his community demands his help.

Source: Tim Blackmore, "Ender's Beginning: Battling the Military in Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game*," in *Extrapolation*, Vol. 32, No 2, Summer, 1991, pp. 125-140.

Adaptations

Mark Rolston narrates *Ender's Game* in an abridged three-hour audiotaped version adapted by Audio Renaissance Tapes, Inc., in 1991.

Card has authored a screenplay based on *Ender's Game*; as of 1998 he was working with Chartoff Productions and Fresco Pictures to produce the film.



Topics for Further Study

In her review of *Ender's Game* in *Fantasy Review*, Elaine Radford criticizes Card, claiming that he fashioned Ender's character after Adolf Hitler's persona. Card refutes Radford's analysis in a response published in the same issue of the magazine. Read both articles. Then write an essay agreeing with either Radford or Card. Your defense should provide solid evidence from the reviews and from the novel itself.

Research project: Read the book, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler*, by Robert G. L. Waite, to which Elaine Radford refers in her review of *Ender's Game* in *Fantasy Review*. Locate information related to the psychology of mass murderers. How does Ender Wiggin compare to Hitler and other mass murderers identified in history? Include a chart or other Visual presentation describing the results of your research.

You are a news broadcaster living in the time after Ender's victorious battle (assuming that news broadcasters would exist), choose a partner to play Ender. You will role play an interview with him. Prior to the interview, prepare your questions and let your partner know the kinds of questions you will ask without giving him the specific details. Your partner should also prepare for the interview so that he can play a credible Ender. Videotape your interview and share it with the class.

Ender's Game creates an image of gifted children as being social outcasts. Research the term "gifted" and write a paper that answers the following questions. Who are gifted children? What are their characteristics? Are gifted children outcasts? Why or why not? What are gifted children like as adults? Does the Ender character give a true picture of a gifted child? Why or why not? Give examples from your novel and from your research.

What does a "bugger" look like? Consider the description in the novel, as well as research on insect anatomy. Draw or create a model of your vision of a bugger.

Are you familiar with a video game that seems to compare to the "game" Ender was playing when he destroyed the buggers? Do one of the following' (1) write a comparison of Ender's game and the game with which you are familiar, or (2) demonstrate the game and draw the comparison through your demonstration.

What Do I Read Next?

Card's *Speaker for the Dead*, published by Tor Books in 1986, follows *Ender's Game* as its sequel. Ender, still dealing with evil and empathy, tries to find a suitable home for the surviving eggs from the queen of the species he destroyed while trying to prevent the extermination of another intelligent race. This novel also won the Nebula and Hugo Awards.

Tor Books published *Xenocide*, the third novel in Card's Ender series, in 1991. Ender works to save his adopted world from a deadly virus.

The final novel in Card's Ender series, *Children of the Mind*, finds Ender taking a minor role. Published by Tor Books in 1996, the story revolves around a mission to stop a deadly virus from destroying Earth. Two beings built from Ender's consciousness and memory, named after his brother and sister, play the lead characters.

Card demonstrates his use of symbolism and allegory in his "Tales of Alvin Maker" series, a fantasy series set in a magical America. The first novel in the series, *Seventh Son* (1987), tells the story of the seventh son of a seventh son, who possesses the potential to be the defender of evil through his magical powers. This first novel of the series deals with the issue of religion in America.

Further volumes in Card's "Tales of Alvin Maker" series include: *Red Prophet* (1988), which novel focuses on the treatment of Indians; *Prentice Alvin* (1989), which deals with issues of black slavery; *Alvin Journeyman* (1995), in which Alvin returns to his birthplace to face a girl's accusations of improprieties; and *Heartfire* (1998), which again delves into the issues of ignorance and racism.

Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* (1951) is the first novel in the first Foundation trilogy-which includes *Foundation and Empire* and *Second Foundation*. This story takes place in a Galactic Empire where Earth is all but forgotten. The administrative planet is on the verge of a complete breakdown. Only one person sees the problem and is willing to confront it.

One of Card's inspirations, Bruce Catton's *Mr. Lincoln's Army* (1962; "Anny of the Potomac Trilogy," Vol. 1) chronicles the early years of the Civil War and the struggle between the Armies of Virginia and the Potomac. The Anny of the Potomac undergoes a hard-earned transformation from a group of novices to an army of pros.

Frank Herbert's complex science-fiction classic *Dune* (1965) deals with a young man who becomes the leader of a desert people because they believe he fulfills their prophecy of a messiah.

The Child Buyer (1960), by Pulitzer Prizewinner John Hersey, concerns a stranger from a corporation who comes to a small American town and proposes to buy a child genius from his family, so that he can be cultivated for intellectual work.



Further Study

Orson Scott Card, "Rebuttal," *Fantasy Review*, Volume 10, No 5, June, 1987, pp 13-14,49-52.

In this response to Radford's negative assessment of *Ender's Game*, Card takes Issue With the Critic's comparison of Ender with Hitler. He suggests the critic has misinterpreted the novel by overlooking the complex way in which It addresses Issues of empathy and violence.

Orson Scott Card, *Characters and Viewpoint*, Writers Digest Books, 1988

Tiling a general approach to writing instruction, Card details the creation, introduction, and development of characters in long and short fiction, and explains the various points of View available to the fiction Writer.

Orson Scott Card, *How to Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Writers Digest Books, 1990.

Card provides the aspiring science-fiction writer with tips on creatively devising other worlds, peoples, and magical occurrences

Orson Scott Card, "Hatrack River. The Official Website of Orson Scott Card," [http //www hatrack.com](http://www.hatrack.com).

This website contains a wealth of material on Card and his work It includes an area for student research as well as a question-and-answer section on Writing With the author himself.

Contemporary Literary Criticism, Vol. 44, Gale, 1987. This entry collects criticism focusing on *Ender's Game*.

Grace Anne A and Keith R A. Decandrdo, "PW Interviews' Orson Scott Card," *Publishers Weekly*, November 30, 1990, pp. 54-55.

An interview With the author in which he discusses the belief system behind his work, his explorations of moral Issues, and his use of violence.

Janrae Frank, "War of the Worlds," *Washington Post Book World*, February 23, 1986, p. 10.

This author questions the religious imagery at the climax of *Ender's Game* and its sequel, *Speaker For the Dead*, and she wonders whether this recurring motif might be a sign of some personal conflict.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, Dutton, 1974.



Originally published in 1762, this work is credited With being one of the first to explore how a child's mind differs from that of an adult The author is one of the world's great social philosophers, whose Ideas directly influenced the Declaration of Independence.



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Roland Green, review of *Ender's Game*, in *Booklist*, Vol. 81, No 7, December 1, 1984, p. 458.

Gerald Jonas, review of *Ender's Game*, in *New York Times Book Review*, June 16, 1985, p. 18.

Dan K. Moran, review of *Ender's Game*, in *West Coast Review of Books*, Vol 12, No.2, July/August, 1986, p 20. Michael Lassell, "A Youngster Saves the Planet," in *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, February 3, 1985, p. 11 Elaine Radford, "Ender and Hitler Sympathy for the Superman," in *Fantasy Review*, Vol. 10, No 5, June, 1987, pp 11-12,48-9.



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Project Editor

David Galens

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Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

Research

Michelle Campbell, Nicodemus Ford, Sarah Genik, Tamara C. Nott, Tracie Richardson

Data Capture

Beverly Jendrowski

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Imaging and Multimedia

Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design

Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing

Stacy Melson

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The Gale Group, Inc

27500 Drake Rd.

Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of *Novels for Students (NfS)* is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's *For Students* Literature line, NfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on *classic* novels



frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of NfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of NfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel; and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of "classic" novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members—educational professionals—helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized



Each entry, or chapter, in NfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- **Introduction:** a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- **Author Biography:** this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- **Plot Summary:** a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- **Characters:** an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed—for instance, the narrator in *Invisible Man*—the character is listed as "The Narrator" and alphabetized as "Narrator." If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name "Jean Louise Finch" would head the listing for the narrator of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname "Scout Finch."
- **Themes:** a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- **Style:** this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- **Historical Context:** This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- **Critical Overview:** this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- **Criticism:** an essay commissioned by NfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).



- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an "at-a-glance" comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

NfS includes "The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature," a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Novels for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the NfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.



Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Novels for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Novels for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from NfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from NfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Novels for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of NfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

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Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Novels for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Novels for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535