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Similarities between Dune and Starship Troopers

*Introduction*

***Dune*** is the novel that has been written by Frank Herbert and was published in two separate serials. This novel won many awards and according to the records, in 2003 it secured a place in world’s best science fiction novels. Basically this novel is based on the story of young Paul Atreides whose family showed consent stewardship of the new planet. This fact was realized that new planet was like a deserted and barren land one of the important things about this planet was that it was much advanced than earth. Another most important thing about this planet was its life-extending drugs that were famous for increasing the mental abilities of humans. In this novel, power struggle could be witnessed as one of the main themes. There have been seen many similarities between ***Dune and Starship Troopers***. There are numbers of themes that could be found in both these pieces of literature. Both of these novels are the most celebrated novels in the history of English literature. Presence of future life and ways of living, are the most appealing factors that grasp the attention of the readers. Starship Troopers, is considered as one of the novels that introduced futuristic fiction in English literature.

***Themes***

*Science fiction*

One of the main similarities in the themes of these novels is that both are based on science fiction. Both novels, being based on science fiction focuses more on unusual themes. Both the writers deviated from the normal way of writing and addressed the most unique themes in their novels. For example in Dune, Frank Herbert is not concerned with usual themes of daily life, rather it could be seen that he is pointing towards future in which people would be living on other planets that are not been discovered yet. This novel is all about the future as the population of the world is increasing at a fast rate so the writer has created those characters that would not be living on earth like humans of present age rather these humans would be living on various planets. Similarity, same kind of thing could be observed in Heinlein’s novel “Starship Troopers” in which, the writer has highlighted a totally different topic but still scientific fiction is most common factor in both these novels. Heinlein has also talked about the future in his novel. It has been seen that he has also pointed towards the future where war takes place between humans and bugs.

*War*

War is another common theme that could be found in both these novels. Though this fact cannot be denied that war is not with the same opponents as in both novels rivals are different. Taking into account Dune, it could be seen that there is a Holy War. It could be seen that Paul seizes control of the spice mélange trade. In this novel, though Herbert is talking about war, but in this war, there could be seen a spiritual touch as Fremen and Gesserit, both considered that Paul is the messiah who has some divine power. On the other hand, in the second novel, also the theme of war could be witnessed and in that war Juan Rico, a youngster joins the army and takes part in the war. It could be seen that Juan, rises through the enlisted ranks and is being invited by Officer Training School where he first survives and then becomes a platoon commander.

*Human nature*

Another common theme that could be witnessed in both these novels is the human nature that is almost same in both the novels. In Dune, it has been seen that people being humans were having selfish thoughts in their minds. Keeping an eye on the increasing population humans thought to discover some new planets where they are going to live. This novel is talking about human nature. It has been witnessed that at some places in both these novels human nature is being praised while at many places human nature is being criticized by the writers as well as the critics. In Dune, softer side of humanity could be seen when freshmen trains Paul so that they could make him ready for dealing all the hardships but in the same novel, harsh side of human nature could be seen when Paul proceeds to get the throne (Palumbo,et,al,2018). In Starship Troopers, human nature could be seen shifting from one extreme to other. It could be seen that in this novel too, both sides of human nature are being depicted by Heinlein. The softer side of Rico for saving his human fellows could be observed when he gets himself prepared for combating against the inhumane bugs, who hates humanity. He was being assigned the task by the authorities to protect humanity from the bugs. In the same novel, the harsh side of human nature could be witnessed. Passion for becoming a nuclear power is the main thing that indicates harsh nature of human. One party wants to rule the world; this also shows selfishness of human nature. Other major things that are promoted in this novel are warfare, nuclear weapons, and violence that show the corruptness of human nature.

*Politics*

Next major common theme that has been observed in both these novels is the theme of politics. Taking a look at Starship Troopers it could be said that it is a political essay along being a novel. Politics is one of the dominating themes in these novels. For example, it could be seen that most of the debate that took place in a classroom between Juan and the rest of class was about history and moral philosophy (Conlon,et,al,2018). In this novel, there has been seen limited democracy with meritocracy that is being based on the self-sacrifice of common interest. On the other hand, in Dune the same theme of politics could be seen. There is clear evidence that both religion and politics are the main things that are used for controlling people. There is no doubt that politics is the thing that allows leaders to rise in their ranks and this is the way by which authority of leaders increases. In Dune, it has been seen that Bene Gesserit along with having other goals, wanted to take control that ends up having the emperor’s throne.

*Cultural influence*

There has been seen that in both the novels cultural influence is another common theme. In Starship Troopers, it was all about the cultural influence as the writer wrote it after the Second World War. In this era, there have been seen struggle and war. It could be seen that in both the novels people undergo a cultural shift as it’s all about the future so being in future all their norms and cultural values were somehow changed. In Starship Troopers, it could be seen that there was the atmosphere of warfare all around and being a part of the future Rico was more concerned about self-protection and has proved himself as a courageous man so that he could save humanity. From many studies, it has been seen that time is the main thing that defines cultural values for a person and there comes a change in cultural values with the change of time, so being novel that is set in future violence and warfare could be seen at its peak.

*Liberty*

There is another theme called liberty that could be seen as a common theme in both the novels. Liberty could be said as one of the things that all humans want in their lives. At present, liberty is being promoted in this world, but as both the novel are about the future, so without any doubt, it could be found there that people who would be living in future would be having more desire to have more liberty. In Dune, it has been seen that people because of over-population moved to other planets. They started getting control over other planets as well. Being in the advanced world they were claiming more liberty so that they could do whatever they were unable to do on earth. Similarly, the same theme could be observed in Starships Troopers, in which characters wants to dominant others so they were doing more things for having more experience so that they could be the nuclear power. The underline purpose of getting the nuclear power was that they wanted to have more liberty so that they don’t have to look towards others and they could exercise all the authority that they would acquire after being the superpower. They would be stronger than the rest of the countries after becoming nuclear power.

*Self-protection*

Though there are many similar themes that one keen observer could found in both the given novels. There is one theme that everyone could easily look upon and that theme is self-protection. This theme in the novel becomes more prominent as the readers see that Paul is taught much about fighting skills and he is being taught all the skills that help him protect himself from all his enemies. All the men along with his mother and father help him in preparing how to cope with various hardships and drastic situations (Herbert,et,al,2018). Fremen were the people who were more concerned about his learning about self-protection. Likewise, this theme could be observed in Starship Troopers, as it could be seen that Juan is being trained in the military how to save one's own life from all the hardships. In this novel, the passion of becoming the nuclear power clearly depicts this theme that self-protection is the main thing that makes one realize that if he/she is able to cope with hazardous situations only then one would be able to survive in this world. In this novel, the war was promoted and by taking a look at the adventures of Johnny Rico as he joined military troops for his protection and learns to use all the advanced weaponry. The enemies in this novel are the bugs who are the intelligent spiders who wanted to destroy humanity. So it won’t be wrong to say that for saving the world from the attack of the “bugs” self-protection becomes primary things that main characters were taught.

*Violence*

Many themes are quite obvious in both these novels and one of these evident themes is violence. In both the novels, there has been seen a power struggle whether the fight is for saving humanity or for getting the throne. The main thing in these novels is violence. In Dune, Paul is being trained so that he could fight against the violence and fremen that is a group of men who trained him along with his parents wanted to see him ending all the violence. This fact cannot be denied that war and violence are there as a major element in Dune. On the other hand, in Starship Troopers, violence is being presented as one of the most important themes. Most of the critics and experts claim that the writer of this novel promotes the theme “make war, not love”. In this novel, violence is being promoted first by the enemies who are the spiders, called the "bugs". Bugs wanted to destroy humanity and Rico went to save humanity (Brown,et,al,2016). Also, the element of violence could be best seen when people become over ambitious for becoming a nuclear power. The only purpose for becoming a superpower is for getting control over others.

*Masculinity*

One of the most prominent themes in both novels is masculinity. By critically evaluating these novels it becomes quite evident that though both the novels are being set in far future but still the mentality of both the writers could be read. In both these novels masculinity is being promoted. In Dune, Paul the main character is a male whereas the main character could be a female character but as it could be seen that in this novel main character has to save people so, it could be said that intentionally writer choose a masculine main character. The same theme could be easily observed in Starship Troops, as the main character Rico is also a male who has been sent for a mission to save humanity from the bugs that were against humanity. Many critics claim that the selection of male main character by Heinlein was an intentional approach. Many critics claimed that Rico was supposed to be selected in the military so that he could be sent on his first assignment to fight with the spiders for saving humans from their attack.

*Over-ambitiousness*

Over-ambitiousness is another theme that would be seen in both these novels. It is a feeling of being superior to rest of the people by hooks and crooks. Over-ambitiousness has always been considered as something negative because when a person becomes over-ambitious about a thing he/she forgets all the ethics and moral teachings and the same thing has been observed in both these novels. It could be seen that in Dune, Paul is being trained for fighting and getting the throne. This fact could not be denied that at most of the places he became so over-ambitious, being part of future that he did not realized, where he crossed the lines of ethics for getting the absolute power. While on the other hand, it won’t be wrong to say that in Starship Troopers, over-ambitiousness could be seen clearly as the military wanted to make missiles and new weaponry so that they could rule the world. Military wanted to be at the top position so they accelerate all the efforts that would make them a nuclear power so that no other rival could oppress them. They wanted to grasp absolute power so they could rule all.

*Conclusion*

Taking a look at both the novels that has been given, it could be said that both the novels are revealing the conditions and lives of humans in the far future. It has been seen that in Dune, people are believed to be living ten thousand years ahead than the present time. While on the other hand, is the novel Starship Troopers, in which there could be seen a war between humans and bugs who are against humanity. In this novel Rico after being trained in the army is being sent on his first assignment so that he could save humans from the bugs. In both the novels there are obvious commonalities that have been mentioned in depth. One of the most interesting factors of these two novels is that both are dealing with human future and it won’t be wrong to say that Starship Troopers is among one of the very few novels in which futuristic theme was introduced for the first time.

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