

Brave New World

Quotes & Notes

The following are a list of questions that relate to themes found in the novel. For each chapter, choose one or two of the questions and write analysis or reflective notes on the plot and theme found in it. Or choose a theme you find in the chapter to springboard into your notes. Be sure to provide at least 2 quotes & examples as you write.

Essential Questions

1. What qualities make us human?
2. How does one define “civilized”? What makes a culture “civilized”?
3. Does a culture have to be advanced in order to be considered civilized?
4. How do family, school, workplace, and community influence an individual’s character, personality, and values?
5. When is it ethically and morally wrong to pursue what you want?
6. How does a person achieve personal fulfillment?
7. What happens to individuals when different cultures come in contact with one another?
8. What makes human relationships unique and meaningful?
9. What role does technology play in sustaining human life?
10. What ethical issues are involved in creating, lengthening, and improving life?
11. How do advancements in science and technology hold promises and dangers for the future?
12. What are the trade-offs for technological advances?
13. What is technology’s role in society?
14. What role will I play in future technology? Question it, consume it, or help to create it?

** You may also create your own question.

Themes

Below are the themes we discussed last semester. Remember, a theme is a statement about the topic or a universal statement the author is making about life. You may write an original theme based on what you observe in the chapter, or you may use the theme examples on the reverse side of this paper if applicable.

- The individual in nature
- The individual in society
- The individual’s relationship to God/or the gods
- Human relations
- Growth and initiation
- Time
- Death

Themes

These are a just a few of the many possible literary subjects and themes. The point to remember is that a subject is not a theme: a subject is some dimension of the human condition examined by the work; a theme is a statement, direct or implied, about the subject. The themes about the subjects on the list are still fairly general. As a critical writer discussing a particular literary work, you'll need to bring your observations about theme closer to the work.

Common Themes in Literature

1. The Individual in Nature

- a. Nature is at war with each of us and proves our vulnerability.
- b. People are out of place in Nature and need technology to survive.
- c. People are destroying nature and themselves with uncontrolled technology.

2. The Individual in Society

- a. Society and a person's inner nature are always at war.
- b. Social influences determine a person's final destiny.
- c. Social influences can only complete inclinations formed by Nature.
- d. A person's identity is determined by place in society.
- e. In spite of the pressure to be among people, and individual is essentially alone and frightened.

3. An individual's Relation to the gods.

- a. The god(s) are benevolent and will reward human beings for overcoming evil and temptation.
- b. The gods mock the individual and torture him or her for presuming to be great.
- c. The gods are jealous of and constantly thwarts human aspiration to power and knowledge.
- d. The gods are indifferent toward human beings and let them run their undetermined course.
- e. There are no gods in whom people can place their faith or yearning for meaning in the universe.

4. Human Relations

- a. Marriage is a perpetual comedy bound to fail.
- b. Marriage is a relationship in which each partner is supported and enabled to grow.
- c. An old man marrying a young woman is destined to be a cuckold.
- d. Parents should not sacrifice all for a better life for their children.
- e. There are few friends who will make extreme sacrifices.

5. Growth and Initiation

- a. A boy and a girl must go through a special trial or series of trials before maturing.
- b. Manhood or womanhood is often established by an abrupt, random crisis, sometimes at an unusually early age.
- c. Aspects of childhood are retained in all of us, sometimes hindering growth, sometimes
- d. A person grows only in so far as he or she must face a crisis of confidence or identity.

6. Time

- a. Enjoy life now, for the present moment, because we all die too soon.
- b. By the time we understand life, there is too little left to live.

7. Death

- a. Death is part of living, giving life its final meaning.
- b. Death is the ultimate absurd joke on life.
- c. There is no death, only a different plane or mode of life without physical decay.
- d. Without love, death often appears to be the only alternative to life.