

Guided Reading: *Brave New World*
Critical Thinking in Science Fiction

Name: _____

Instructions: These questions and reflections are designed to guide the reader through the novel by addressing the book's plot, style, and themes. Effective comprehension requires a thorough reading of the book, insightful annotating, and using our lecture notes as reference. Consider this your study guide for future assessments.

The World State: Chapters 1-3

Chapter 1

1. What is the World State's motto?

2. Explain the fertilization process with the Hatcher and Conditioning Centre.

3. What is Bokonovsky's Process? Which classes/castes undergo the process? Which do not?

4. The Director claims that "Bokonovsky's Process is one of the major instruments of social stability." Explain.

5. What is a "Freemartin"?

6. What is the purpose of depriving some embryos of adequate oxygen?

7. According to the Director, what is the "secret of happiness and virtue"? How does they achieve this?

8. Explain the processes that the Centre uses to prepare embryos for their “inescapable social destiny.”

Chapter 2

9. Explain the conditioning exercise that the Delta infants at the Centre experience. What is the purpose of the “lesson”? How does it reflect Pavlov’s theory? Explain the rationale for conditioning lower-caste children to hate flowers and books.

10. What is odd about the words “mother,” “father,” and “parent”?

11. What is “hypnopaedia”? Why is it important to the World State?

12. Explain how Henry Ford is viewed and used by this society?

Chapter 3

13. How does the Director respond to the children he catches engaged in “erotic play”? In this society, which sort of play is considered “normal” and “abnormal”?

14. Beginning on page 34, Huxley juxtaposes scenes between the Director and his students with scenes between Bernard Marx and Henry Foster and scenes of a discussion between Lenina Crowne and Fannie. What does the juxtaposition of these scenes help us understand about the social and cultural environment of the World State?

15. Explain the saying “History is bunk.” Consider the list of things (found on page 35) that the Controller dismisses and suggest a reason for his inclusion of these particular examples of “bunk.” Are there any common themes among them?

16. How does the Director describe what a home was? What effect does his description have on the students?

17. Explain the meaning of the proverb: “every one belongs to every one else.” What does Huxley suggest about the reason the students accept this proverb as truth?

18. Why does Fannie disapprove of Lenina's relationship with Henry Foster?

19. Explain the allegory that the Director makes using water under pressure in a pipe. How does it illustrate the danger of monogamy or other exclusive relationships? According to the Director, why does promiscuity lead to stability?

20. What is Ectogenesis? According to the Director, why did world governments initially reject this scientific advancement? For what reason did they initially reject the caste system? What other technological and social advances/reforms did they reject, and for what reason? What changed their minds?

21. Explain the "constriction of consumption" (49). How are citizens conditioned to become consumers? Why would appreciating culture or nature be at odds with consumption? And how does all this apply to the Director's statement that an effective government rules with "the brains and the buttocks, never with the fists"?

22. What is a Malthusian belt?

23. What is the meaning behind the saying "ending is better than mending"?

24. What is soma? What purpose does it serve in this society?

The People: Chapters 4-6

Chapter 4

25. Describe transportation in the World State.

26. Why does Bernard find it difficult to interact with others?

27. Who is Helmholtz Watson? Explain how his character acts as a foil for Bernard Marx. What do the two men have in common? What is the basis for their friendship? Does this change any of our initial conceptions?

Chapter 5

28. How does hypnopædia help condition people to be happy? What details suggest that it is not completely effective?

29. What do people in the World State believe about life after death?

30. After Henry and Lenina leave the cabaret, Huxley comments that they remain in “happy ignorance of the night” and describes the stars as “depressing.” What social commentary does he make by using with his description of nature?

31. Describe the required solidarity service. What is the purpose of the service?

Chapter 6

32. Why does Bernard dislike Soma?

33. Contrast Bernard's response to nature with Lenina's response.

34. What does Bernard believe about the effects of conditioning? Does Lenina agree with him?

35. Why is Bernard disappointed that he slept with Lenina on their first date? How does Lenina respond to his suggestion that it would have been better to have waited?

36. Near the end of their conversation, Lenina says, "When the individual feels the community reels. What does this suggest about the way in which the World State views the individual within the community? How does conditioning serve their purpose?"

37. Why doesn't the Director approve of Bernard traveling to the Savage Reservation? What happened to him when he visited the reservation in his youth?

38. How does the Director threaten Bernard? What effect does the threat have on him? Why do you think Bernard responds this way to being threatened? How does his response help develop his character?

39. What upsets Bernard when he is at the Reservation? What does this suggest about his values and the effectiveness of his conditioning? Is he really that different from Lenina?

40. Explain the meaning of Lenina's adage: "Was and will make me ill, I take a gramme and only am" (104). How does Huxley's comment that after taking soma "roots and fruits were abolished" relate to Lenina's adage?

Outside the World State: Chapters 7-9

Chapter 7

41. How does Lenina respond to the things she sees on the Reservation? What aspects of the life of the savages are particularly distressing to her? How does Bernard respond to her criticisms?

42. Summarize the religious ceremony that Lenina and Bernard witness. What do you think the purpose of the ceremony is? Which religions does it seem to be based on?

43. What does Bernard realize when he meets the young blonde savage named John?

44. How does John's mother respond when she sees Bernard and Lenina? What has life on the Reservation been like for her?

Chapter 8

45. Summarize John's memories of childhood.

46. What did Linda tell John about the Other Place? How does she describe it?

47. What ceremony is John excluded from participating in? How does he respond to his exclusion? Why does his experience help him discover "Time and Death and God" (136)?

48. What do Bernard and John have in common?

49. What does Bernard offer to do for John and Linda? How does John respond?

Chapter 9

50. Who does Bernard appeal to for permission to bring Linda and John back into civilization? Why is he granted permission?

51. What is John tempted to do when he finds Lenina sound asleep? Why does he stop? Do you think John is noble or just naïve?

Worlds Collide: Chapters 10-12

Chapter 10

52. To what natural ecosystem is the Bloomsbury Centre compared? Explain.

53. According to the Director, what is the worst offence a person can commit? Explain why.

54. Why has the Director called Bernard Marx in for a public meeting? Why does he want to accuse Bernard in front of upper-caste workers? What charges does he make against Bernard? How does Bernard answer the Director's accusations?

Chapter 11

55. Why is there enormous public interest in seeing John, but not in seeing his mother, Linda?

56. How does Linda adjust to reentering civilization? Why does John protest his mother's doctor's decision to allow her to take all the *soma* she wants? Why does he give in and agree to let his mother stay on a permanent *soma*-vacation?

57. After being made John's guardian, how does Bernard respond to his newfound popularity and importance? Why does his response sadden his friend Helmholtz?

58. How does John respond to seeing the Bokanovsky Groups in the Electrical Equipment Corporation? Why do you think he is affected this way?

59. Why aren't upper-caste children Bokanovskified?

60. What is a Malthusian Drill?

61. Explain how death conditioning works. Do you think it's a good idea to condition children to not be afraid of death? Explain.

62. What are the Feelies? What is the movie that they see about? How does John react to the experience?

63. What play does John turn to in an attempt to make sense of his experience with Lenina at the Feelies? How does Lenina comfort herself after being rejected by John? Who do you think has the better source of comfort? Explain.

Chapter 12

64. Has Bernard's newfound popularity changed him in any way? What does the way that the people that Bernard invited to his party treat him reveal about their attitude towards Bernard?

65. Describe Lenina's response to the news that John won't attend the party. How has meeting John changed her?

66. Why does Mustapha Mond decide that "A New Theory of Biology" can't be published?

67. Contrast John's admiration of Lenina with the Arch-Community-Songster's attitude towards her (178). What detail suggests that Lenina is beginning to mind being treated like a "piece of meat?"

68. Why has Helmholtz been in trouble with the authorities? What is the theme of the poem that he wrote? What is unusual about the structure of the poem in the context of the other rhymes composed for conditioning? What was Helmholtz's purpose for writing it? Who reported him?

69. Explain the reason for the immediate connection between Helmholtz and the Savage. How does Bernard respond to their friendship? What does Bernard's response reveal about the type of friend he is?

Things Fall Apart: Chapters 13-15

Chapter 13

70. Why is Fanny disgusted by Lenina's feeling for John? What advice does she give Lenina?

71. Analyze John's confession of love to Lenina. What does it reveal about the way he views her? How does she respond to him?

72. Why is John unable to return Lenina's sexual advances? How has his experience of sexuality been influenced by what he has read and seen? What things have shaped Lenina's view of sexuality?

Chapter 14

73. Describe the steps that have been taken to create a warm and positive atmosphere at Park Lane Hospital.

74. Why does John's grief upset the nurse? What is she worried might happen as a result of his public display of emotion? How does she attempt to remedy the situation?

Chapter 15

75. Why does John feel as if the words from *The Tempest* are mocking him (210)?

76. How does John attempt to "save" the Delta workers? How do they respond to him?

77. How do the police manage to subdue the angry mob? Why do you think they don't use fear or violence as a method of control?

78. What does this chapter reveal about Bernard's character? How is he different from Helmholtz and John?

Everybody Happy Now?: Chapters 16-18

Chapter 16

79. How does John respond to Mustapha Mond's observation that he doesn't "much like civilization" (218)? What does John realize about Mustapha Mond?

80. According to Mond, why is beauty dangerous? What is the "price that must be paid" for social stability?

81. Explain what the Cyprus experiment was. How did this experiment impact social engineering in the World State?

82. What does Mond plan to do with Helmholtz and Marx? How does each man respond to his punishment? What do their responses reveal about their characters? Why does Mond say that their punishment is actually a reward?

83. According to Mond, what is dangerous about science? What limits are imposed on scientific inquiry?

Chapter 17

84. Once John and Mond are alone, what three things does Mond make clear must be sacrificed in exchange for “happiness”?

85. What books does Mond refer to as “pornographic?”

86. According to Mond, what three things are incompatible with God? Explain.

87. Summarize both sides of the debate that Mond and John have regarding God.

88. What is V.P.S and why are V.P.S. treatments compulsory?

89. What does John say that he wants instead of comfort? What right does Mond suggest that he is claiming?

90. Why do you think Mond ends his conversation with John with the words “You’re welcome” (240)?

Chapter 18

91. Why does Mustapha Mond deny John's request to go to the islands with Helmholtz?

92. Where does John choose to live after leaving civilization? What is symbolic about his choice?

93. Why does John feel guilty? How does he seek to purify himself? Initially, what is life like for him?

94. What attracts reporters to the lighthouse? How does John respond to their intrusion?

95. Who is Darwin Bonaparte? What does he manage to capture on film? How does the public receive his latest film?

96. How does John respond to Lenina's presence? What do his actions incite the crowd to begin doing? Why is their response ironic and what does this say about how we define ideas like "civilized" and "savage"?

97. What does John realize when he wakes up? What does he do as a result of this realization?
