

Reading Guide: Ishmael

Answer these questions to help guide yourself and relate Ishmael to concepts learned in class

CHAPTER ONE

1. What does the news paper ad, which is the basis for the whole book, read?
2. What does the sign in the office read? What is the meaning of this sign?
3. Who is Ishmael?
4. What does Ishmael explain that humans are captive to?

CHAPTER TWO

1. Explain Ishmael's comparison of modern society to people living in Germany under Hitler.
- 2 Who or what is "Mother Culture?"
3. Who are the "takers" and who are the "leavers?"
4. Define, as Ishmael does, "story" "to enact" and "culture."
5. What is the story being enacted by modern humans about, what does it explain?

CHAPTER THREE

1. What is the modern man creation myth? How does it end?
2. What does Ishmael say is wrong with this story?
3. What is the premise of the story? And how does this contribute to the way modern humans live?

CHAPTER FOUR

1. What is the middle of man's "story?" How does this relate to the story we began class with?
2. When/how did the story take an abrupt change?
3. What is the meaning of the world according to man?
4. What does this story lead to; what does it tell us man's destiny is?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. According to man's story what does he need to do to fulfill his destiny and turn the world into a human paradise?
2. Are we able to do this, why or why not?
3. Who are the ones, in modern culture, telling us how to live?
4. Why is there no certain knowledge about how we are supposed to live?

CHAPTER SIX

1. Ishmael is searching for a law governing how to live, what happens to those that follow this law/those that do not follow this law?
2. Explain how/why Ishmael compares our modern civilization experiment to flight. (Think of Rostow's development model).
3. Explain the population growth paradox Ishmael refers to.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What 3 guides does Ishmael point to help us discover this law about how to live that he speaks of?
2. What is happening as a result of living in defiance of this natural law governing all of life?

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. According to the narrator, what are the three things that Takers do that nothing else in the community does?
2. What is this law that has been worked out? (129)
3. What does diversity have to do with the law?
4. What is the relationship between this law we've discovered, food production and population growth?
5. How was population growth limited in past societies?
6. How does Ishmael now compare modern Taker society to flight?
7. What *will* the law outlined tell us?

CHAPTER NINE

1. When did the Leavers and Takers shared history diverge? What specific event?
2. What story did the Takers appropriate as their own that originated among the Leavers?
3. How does this story read to the Leavers with whom it originated?

CHAPTER TEN

1. AHHHH! What happened to Ishmael?
2. How is culture defined?
3. What types of knowledge do Takers/Leavers accumulate and pass on?

CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Why is a new story needed before the Takers leave the old? Who can provide this new story?
2. How do we imagine the Hunter-Gatherer lifestyle? Is it actually the way we are taught to imagine it?
3. Why do we believe we are helping Leaver peoples by forcing them to live the Taker story?
4. How can you take the power out of the hands of the Gods? When can we truly feel safe, according to Taker culture?

CHAPTER TWELVE

1. What are the different premises of the Taker and Leaver stories?
2. Instead of the normal doomsday scenario that is used to motivate people to change the way they live, what is the most optimistic way to motivate people that Ishmael suggests?
3. What is mans new role in the world?
4. Do we have to leave behind everything we've learned to change how we live? Or is there simply some law we have to be smart enough to live in accordance with in order to survive?
5. What is it that is keeping us occupied, unable to search for a different way to live?

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. AHHH! What happened to Ishmael?
2. What did the sign say on the back side? Is there?
- 3. What lesson(s) does this book try to point to? What does the book mean to you?**

HOW DOES THIS BOOK RELATE TO THE CONCEPTS THAT WE HAVE DISCUSSED IN CLASS?