Ben Lambert

Mr. Lessick

ENG 112

1 June 2015

Final Project- 759 Words

Over the course of a year, the class has extensively analyzed and interpreted many classic works of literature, ranging from the dreary *Dubliners* to the marvelous world of *Gulliver’s Travels*. Many of these works are thought-provoking, often giving insight into human nature. The three most prevalent examples of these themes are found in *The Stranger*, *Don Quixote*, and *Brave New World*. *The Stranger,* written in 1942 by Albert Camus, is a tragic story about a man who commits murder and is later charged due to his unusual emotions and cold behavior. Meursault fits the image of an average man on the outside, but his thoughts are socially unacceptable and different. Meursault can be regarded as emotionless, often putting his physical needs before his emotional needs. He expresses little to no sympathy for those around him, which is demonstrated at his mother’s vigil and funeral (Camus). Meursault also seems to have no care for emotional attachment, as he shows little interest in his girlfriend’s idea of marriage (Camus). Actions such as these are noticed, and often emphasized at the trial instead of the actual murder (Camus). The trial itself paints a perfect picture of absurdity, which dwells on the follies and stupidity of man. In this case, men are only concerned about Meursault’s character rather than the real crime (Camus). Camus also portrays the character of Meursault as absurd, as he is condemned due to the nature of his free choices. Meursault often expresses rash behavior; he acts before thinking of the consequences. Due to his naivety, he is ultimately punished. Another classic work that conveys deeper meaning is *Don Quixote*. Quixote is a rich and elderly gentleman who spends his days reading books on knights and the Middle Ages (Cervantes). Fueled by chivalry and honor, he dawns his suit of armor and sets out to right wrongdoings and find his “Dalcinea” (Cervantes). Due to his blind realization of reality, he is often conned and ridiculed by those he encounters. There are two themes of human nature within the book, and in a way two opposing viewpoints are offered. One of them encourages people to seek their own ambitions, regardless of those who may consider them crazy or hypocritical. Despite others’ feelings about him, the Don continues on his quests without hesitation; in the end he even finds the woman of his dreams and makes a name for himself throughout the country (Cervantes). The opposing side is more cynical; Cervantes tries to persuade humans as a whole to take a step back and analyze themselves. As previously stated, Don Quixote becomes the victim of harsh treatment, as he is verbally teased, publically humiliated, and physically assaulted. These instances in the book can be used as scare tactics to keep readers in check; are their personal ambitions reasonable, and if so, are they worth keeping no matter what life throws? The last and probably most thought-provoking novel of the three listed is *Brave New World*. The story is set in a futuristic London, where all humans are duplicated from labs and assigned social classes from birth (Huxley). The children are brainwashed into believing which classes are right or wrong, and they are taught to do their jobs without question or complaint (Huxley). When the protagonist, John the Savage, arrives in London, he is bewildered and confused. Unlike his society, the Brave New World society eliminates free thought and encourages everyone to conform as a whole (no thanks to Soma) (Huxley). Aldous Huxley used his novel as a wake-up call to warn his generation about political regimes, brainwashing, and conformity. But if he wrote this in 1931, imagine how rampant these themes are today. *Brave New World* shows readers that humans tend to conform to similar ideas rather than face ridicule or persecution for their own ideas. Governments use many tools at their disposal, such as the media, to sway the people to agree with what they do. In the end, John cannot face a society that doesn’t accept him for who he is; he dies rather than continue living in a hateful society. As one can see, these three novels reveal key components of human nature. *The Stranger* shows the absurdity of human nature, *Don Quixote* focuses on one’s own ambitions and how far an individual is willing to carry them, and *Brave New World* warns of a society that seeks to conform rather than to accept individuality. Themes such as these are prevalent in modern society, but the literary works give readers insight into recognizing them in their own lives.

Works Cited

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. Trans. Matthew Ward. New York: Vintage International, 1942. Print.

Cervantes, Miguelde Saavedra Miguel. *Don Quixote*. Trans. Samuel Putnam. New York: Modern Library, 1998. Print.

Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1939. Print.