

Introduction

When I first began struggling with the material in *Beyond Civilization*, I tried to organize it in what might be called the usual way--as one long, continuous argument, beginning at A and ending at Z. The result was like a very dense weaving of ideas, facts, theories, assertions, and explanations (so dense as to be nearly opaque)--nothing I would want to read or to write.

Finally I came up with an entirely new approach, which consisted of providing the materials in small, discrete chunks and letting the *reader* do the weaving. Remarkably enough, the result was a text that early readers consider amazingly lucid and "easy to read."

As a side benefit, this approach also produced a text I believe to be ideally suited to the classroom. I'm no classroom teacher--I wouldn't have a clue how to go about teaching my novel *Ishmael*, for example--but I feel sure that even I could teach this book.

Some teachers will want to deal with *Beyond Civilization* in conceptual units consisting of several pages (as presented here), but it doesn't have to be dealt with that way. A page can be squeezed in anywhere, anytime, and make sense as a separate unit. There's not even any necessity to "finish" the book (unlike a novel, which must be "finished" at all costs). Three minutes of reading or listening and you're ready to start a discussion that will be valuable whether it lasts ten minutes or two hours.

One thing I've learned in visiting classrooms is that 12-year-olds ask the exact same questions and express the exact same anxieties and concerns as 20-year-olds. Grade-leveling is all but meaningless when it comes to the subjects and issues explored in my books, including this one. For this reason, I've made no effort to grade-level the activities and discussion questions offered here. Some may be too easy for older students--but few, I think, will be too hard for younger ones.

Daniel Quinn

Questions for discussion are marked by arrow-shaped bullets. Class activities, projects, and writing assignments are marked by square-shaped bullets.

UNIT 1 Defining the task and the terms

A fable to start with · A Manual of Change · Who are the people of "our culture"? · What does "saving the world" mean?

- What terrestrial animals live in packs, pods, flocks, troops, herds, and so on?
- How closely does the fabled hierarchical society match our own? How would our leaders respond to the challenge posed by "the masses" in this fable?
- Do you agree "there's nothing the people of our culture want more than change"?
- In 1999, not long after the Columbine Massacre, a law was passed in Louisiana requiring public-school students to address teachers and other school employees as "ma'am" or "sir" and to use the appropriate title of Mr., Miss, Ms., or Mrs. with their names. What "problem" did this legislative change address?
- If you own a fishing boat, the fish you catch are free for the taking. What are the stages by which the fish you catch are turned into food under lock and key?
- The text says that some 200 species a day are becoming extinct, thanks to us. Have students start three lists, one of species they think might one day disappear entirely (except for zoo specimens), one of species that are very unlikely to disappear in the near future, and one of species that will probably survive even if we don't. As the lists grow, see what generalizations students can make about them. (For example, the first list is going to include large-bodied creatures that are not deemed essential to human survival--gorillas, rhinos, whales, and so on; the second is going to include creatures we like and need--domesticated cats, dogs, rice, cows, and chickens, and so on.)

UNIT 2 "Old Minds," "New Minds," and Programs

Old minds with new programs · New minds with no programs · No programs at all? · If not programs, then what?

- Do you care whether there are still people around here in a thousand years? In a hundred years? Fifty years?
- Quinn says programs never achieve the things they're created to achieve. Can you think of any exceptions?
- The Manhattan Project and the Apollo Project both reached their goals. What's the difference between a project and a program? [Projects have clearly defined goals.]
- Following the 1999 Columbine massacre, Attorney General Janet Reno said, "Let us take that tragedy and do everything we can to prevent it in the future." Does her statement reflect an old mind at work or a new mind?
- Have students collect and discuss examples of "Old" and "New" thinking clipped from newspapers or magazines.
- Quinn gives several examples of people following the principle "If it didn't work last year, let's do MORE of it this year." Drawing on your own experience, think of some other examples.
- Have students list programs at work in your school or community and then define what unwanted behavior or activity they're designed to stop or control. Then have them assess their effectiveness.
- Pick a topic of concern (say, school security) and appoint two teams to discuss it. Have Team A discuss it as a matter of "stopping bad things," then have Team B discuss it as a matter of "making things the way we want them to be." Then have the teams switch roles and continue the discussion.

UNIT 3 Vision and "The Invisibility of Success"

The invisibility of success · The invisibility of tribal success · Conspicuous success, invisible source · Vision is like gravity · The spread of vision · Vision: success without programs

- Bring some bubble wrap to class, start popping bubbles, and ask the class what they're seeing. Someone will probably suggest that they're seeing a law (more advanced students might recognize it as Boyle's Law). Lead them to realize that what they're seeing is a phenomenon, not a law. This can be demonstrated pretty conclusively by writing Boyle's Law on the board.
- Have students find other examples of laws that demonstrate "the invisibility of success."
 - As each bird in a flock of geese flaps its wings, it creates an "uplift" for the bird following. It's estimated that, by flying in a V formation, the whole flock has 70 percent more flying range than if each bird flew alone. Discuss this as an example of "success" and have students look for other examples.
 - What are the invisible sources of the conspicuous success of the internet? Of extreme sports?
- The Women's Suffrage movement is an example of "vision at work." What vision and spreading mechanism were at work there? Have students find and analyze other examples. [Such as the hippie movement of the 1960s.]
 - How do advertising campaigns operate like spreading mechanisms? What vision was propagated by Joe the Camel or the Budweiser lizards (or current equivalents)?
 - Discuss clothing fads as an instance of "success without programs." What's the spreading mechanism? Do different fads express different visions?

UNIT 4 Vision and "The Invisibility of Success"

When the vision turns ugly · Programs aren't wicked, just inadequate · But how could we get along without programs? · But how will we live then? · How can we achieve a vision we can't imagine?

- "No unwanted behavior has ever been eliminated by passing a law against it" is a pretty sweeping statement. Can you think of any exceptions?
- Quinn thinks we can't "win" just by defending the environment. Why does he believe this? Do you agree?
- As the basis for a paper or research project, have students find examples of products that have come to be the way we know them because a series of individuals have "improved on something, then put it out there for others to improve on."
- According to Quinn, people imagine that our distant descendants will have different gadgets and wear different clothes but will think just the way we do. Review the Star Trek films with this question in mind: Aside from gadgetry and imaginary science, do the captain and crew of the Enterprise think differently from the way we do?
- Aside from the "Star Trek" future, what other possible futures does Hollywood see for humanity?
- Quinn says each of you contains a complete set of the memes that are the conceptual building plans for our culture. Suppose the whole human race disappeared except for you and your classmates. Would you know how to go about rebuilding society? How would you begin? Compare this to what happens in post-apocalyptic movies like *The Stand*, *Waterworld*, and *The Postman*.

UNIT 5 Genes and Memes

The leaping of genes and memes · Small percentages, big differences · Which memes do we need to change? · Lethal memes

- What do people mean when they describe someone's reaction as "sour grapes"? [This meme entered our consciousness through the Aesop fable about a fox who, unable to reach a bunch of grapes, walked away muttering that they were probably sour anyway.]
- Advertising copywriters often make good use of memes to sell products. A men's hair-coloring product has had success with the motto "Looks so natural, no one can tell!" What's so important about looking "natural"? Why does it matter that "no one can tell"?
- The 1974 film *Death Wish* was about an armed vigilante who reduced the crime rate in New York City by terrorizing muggers. Among others, it communicated the meme *Ordinary citizens need guns to protect themselves from urban crime*. What are some other ways this meme is communicated in our society?
- Most popular movies lend themselves to analysis in terms of memes. *The Blair Witch Project* convincingly conveys the meme *You may not be as much in control of things as you think*. Discuss current hits in terms of the memes they convey.
- What are some of the "new ideas" that made the Renaissance what it was?
- As a writing assignment, have students explain in their own words why lethal genes survive.
- As a research project, have students discover the meme that made suicide "irresistibly attractive" to Heaven's Gate cultists. [Searching on "Heaven's Gate" on the internet will lead to many different sites devoted to the cult.]

UNIT 6 Survival Machines

Survival machines for genes · Survival machines for memes · The fidelity of copying · Genetic and memetic replication

- The honeybee drone "gives its all" when it mates, leaving behind its entire genital apparatus in its mate's abdomen, after which it promptly dies. Which of the ideas presented here does this illustrate?
- The German physicist Max Planck remarked that "An important scientific innovation rarely makes its way by gradually winning over and converting its opponents. . . . What does happen is that its opponents gradually die out and that the growing generation is familiarized with the idea from the beginning." How does this exemplify the idea that "we're the disposable vehicles in which our memes are riding to immortality"?
- What makes *analog* an appropriate designation for analog devices? Where does the "analogy" come in?
- "Just say no" was a popular meme of the 1980s. It was thought that if everyone would "just say no," the drug problem would disappear. Has anyone every offered you this meme to hold onto as a guiding principle? Why do you think it failed?
- Can you think of any memes your parents have passed on to you that you'll pass on to your children? Can you think of any that you *won't* pass on?
- Write a paper giving some examples of memes that are "newborn in one generation, swaggering with power in the next, doddering in the next, and laughably old-fashioned in the next." [*My country right or wrong* comes to mind.]
- Ask your parents what "My country right or wrong" means to them. Then write a paper comparing the way they feel about this meme to the way you feel about it.

UNIT 7 The Best Way To Live

The best way to live · Maybe they just sort of fell into it? · Maybe they were just hungry? · New world adopters of the meme

- The author says many young people tell him they'd like to disappear into some wilderness and forage for their food or that they'd like to live with a hunting-gathering people. What about you? Do you have any doubt that growing all your own food is the best way to live?
- Figure out all the steps it takes "to put three ounces of corn in a can of water on your supermarket shelf."
- Let's say you walk ten minutes to buy a bunch of bananas at a store. Let's also say a forager walks ten minutes to pick a bunch of bananas off a tree. The difference between the two of you is that you have to have some money in your pocket to buy the bananas. How much money would you need for, say, four bananas? How long would you have to work to get that money?
- See if you can estimate how many calories the forager spends and gains in the example above. Then see if you can estimate how many calories you'd spend and gain. Are the results similar to those the author gives here?
- On a map of the Americas, locate the homelands of the New World peoples mentioned here.

UNIT 8 The Meme in the New World

The Maya · The Olmec and Teotihuacán · The Hohokam and the Anasazi · Looking for the actors

- Have students compare Quinn's presentation of the Maya to one found in a standard reference work.
- What is the function of ballast in a ship?
- Have students compare Quinn's presentation of the Olmec and Teotihuacán to presentations found in a standard reference work.
- Who would be the likely inhabitants of a ruined city and how they might live?
- Have students compare Quinn's presentation of the Hohokam and the Anasazi to presentations found in a standard reference work.
- From what you've learned about these New World civilizations, which would you find most and least attractive to live in if you were a worker? If you were a ruler?
- In the section titled "Vision: success without programs," Quinn used Occam's Razor to "cut away" the angel in the story of the dissolving salt. What does he "cut away" in this section using the same razor? [The notion that the Maya, the Olmec, and so on might have been "whisked away in flying saucers."] On the basis of these two examples, what do you think the function of Occam's Razor is?
- In the television series "The X-Files," which of the two investigators is constantly trying to force the other to employ Occam's Razor?

UNIT 9 Vanished Peoples

"Those who vanished" · Why none will ever be satisfactory · What a difference a ____ makes! ·
For want of a meme, a civilization was lost · When the underclass becomes restless

- According to the author, those who vanished just "took up less conspicuous ways of making a living, either by foraging or by some mixture of foraging and farming." What do you suppose happened to the ruling and noble classes when this happened? [No one knows or is likely to know, so this is purely conjectural.]
- After millennia of overgrazing and poor agricultural practices, much of the Fertile Crescent became the desert it remains today. What do you suppose happened to the farming peoples of the area?
- Two guys are working at computers when the power fails. One keeps on working, the other sits there idle till power is restored. What did the first have that the second didn't? [An uninterruptible backup power supply.] Come up with other (perhaps less easy) riddles of this sort.
- Quinn says you can't talk people into accepting an absurd idea on the spur of the moment, they have to hear it from birth. Can you think of any "absurd" ideas that people accept because they've heard them from birth?
- As a writing assignment, have students survey our history of "underclass insurrections, revolts, rebellions, riots, and revolutions." You might consider dividing the class into three groups, one to investigate the classical period, one to investigate the period following the fall of Rome, and one to investigate the period from the Renaissance to the present, then compare their results.

UNIT 10 Lost Civilizations and Missing Memes

What about all the others? · The cultural fallacy · The other mystery of "lost civilizations" · The missing meme · Holy work

- It took European settlers only two centuries to make this whole country their own. It should be noted that they did this without weapons of mass destruction, without air travel or superhighways to carry troops. The Maya, by contrast, lived for thousands of years in an area the size of Arizona. How would most people account for this difference? For example, would they think the Maya were just not very ambitious? Not very bright? Has your way of thinking about this changed as a result of studying this book?
- What does Quinn mean by saying that European soldiers came to the New World "dragging their national borders behind them"? [They were staking out territories for Spain, Portugal, France, and England.]
- America has been called "the great Melting-Pot where all the races of Europe are melting and reforming." Relate this to Quinn's statement that the settlers of the New World "came dragging a common *cultural* border behind them."
- For the most part, Native Americans have never gone into "the great Melting-Pot." Does what is said here help to explain why this is so?
- What Native Americans had to be "cleared off" the land where you live?

UNIT 11 Pyramid Builders

Pyramid builders · Pharaohs · The Mayan solution · Beyond the pyramid

- What is a ziggurat? A bastille? A Maginot Line? How are these things similar to pyramids? [Among other things, they're massive, government-sponsored projects.]
- Do you feel it's true that everybody wants you to think you're the luckiest kids on earth? How do people react when you express doubts about the future (if you do)?
- Under communism as Marx envisioned it, what would happen to Bill Gates's "pyramid," Microsoft? [Presumably it would belong to the workers who built it, rather than to Bill Gates.] How does this square with Quinn's description of Marx's "idea of breaking chains"?
- Why wasn't the meme *civilization must continue at any cost and not be abandoned under any circumstance* lethal to pharaonic Egypt or to Han China or to medieval Europe? [See earlier sections on lethal genes and memes.] Do you agree that it has become lethal to us?
- Quinn says "We must destroy in ourselves and in the people around us the meme proclaiming civilization to be an unsurpassable invention." How do you "destroy" a meme? Has this meme been "destroyed" in you?
- Can you think of any memes that seem to have been destroyed or are in the process of being destroyed in our society? [Thirty years ago, it was considered the citizen's greatest privilege and highest duty to vote in elections. Some meme seems to be at risk here.]
- Do you know any of those "rare" individuals who just "love" dragging stones?

UNIT 12 Lifestyle, Social Organization, and Culture

Social organization and natural selection · Definitions and examples · The mysterious persistence · Some do want more than adequacy

- What are some social organizations that have been eliminated by "natural selection"? Was the Roman Empire a victim of "natural selection"? What about the feudal system of Europe?
- Are there any absolute monarchs left or has that species become extinct?
- Words often have many shades of meaning. How would you define the word *lifestyle* as it's used in "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous"?
- Elsewhere [in *My Ishmael*] Quinn has written that "the word *culture* is like a chameleon. It has no color of its own but rather takes color from its setting. It means one thing when you talk about the culture of chimpanzees, another when you talk about the culture of General Motors." Is his definition of *culture* eccentric or is it close to definitions from other sources?
- If it's true that the worldview of our historians is "fundamentally Aristotelian" rather than "fundamentally Darwinian," how would you account for this?
- People who are opposed to protecting endangered species often argue in a way that implies that any species that isn't invulnerable deserves to disappear. Discuss this in terms of Quinn's statement that nothing evolution brings forth is perfect. Would invulnerability be a trait of perfection?

UNIT 13 Tribalism the Workable

Tribalism the workable · What would you expect? · If you like it so much . . . · What people like about tribal societies

- Have students conduct an informal survey of parents or other adult acquaintances to get an answer to this question: "How do people like living in tribal societies? Compared to us, are the Bushmen of Africa or the Gebusi of New Guinea more satisfied with the way they live, less satisfied, or about the same?" Discuss the results in relation to what Quinn says in the first half of "Tribalism the workable."
- Quinn mentions five New World trials of "other social organizations." As a research project, see if students can unearth examples of trials conducted elsewhere in the world.
- Quinn mentions four kinds of tribal groups that are not hunter-gatherers. What do they have in common? [Among other things, they make their living by traveling from place to place; their income comes from the "settled" folks they visit; to a greater or lesser extent, they're viewed with suspicion or hostility by the locals.]
- Quinn says there's a difference between painting in order to make money and making money in order to paint. Name some other people who make money doing their thing so they can go on doing their thing, rather than doing their thing so they can make money. Name some things people ONLY do to make money. What do you think?-- Does Quinn make money writing books so he can go on writing books, or does he just write books to make money? Is there any way to tell?

UNIT 14 A Modern Tribal Form

Is there really such a thing as "the circus"? · Circus people are tribal people · "I beg to differ!" · Tribal tales · "Here you're part of something."

- In your family or circle of acquaintances, do you know of any businesses that started "in a very tribal way, with a few partners pouring in all their resources and taking out only what's needed to survive"? How did they develop as time went on?
- Until recent centuries, it was fairly common to find trades handed down from generation to generation, producing families of hat-makers or tailors or blacksmiths. Why did this phenomenon disappear? [Mass production techniques of the Industrial Revolution have made these "cottage industries" non-competitive.]
- The children of medical doctors fairly often become doctors themselves. Is this like the tradition of the Wallendas? [Not really, since they don't learn medicine from their parents.]
- People who make their living in the circus refer to themselves as "circus people," but people who make their living in a hospital don't refer to themselves as "hospital people." Why not?
- Kids of this generation may not know who Toby Tyler is, but Red Johnson's mother certainly did. Red says she got him a souvenir circus book but wrote on the inside cover: "Don't get any ideas." What does this tell you about "the Toby Tyler tradition"?
- David LeBlanc says that people in the circus "are willing to do anything. In the real world, people demand a ten-minute break after working three hours, but here people are just devoted to what they do." Obviously he doesn't mean that circus workers never take breaks. What is he getting at here then?

UNIT 15 From Tribalism to Hierarchalism

The turn away from tribalism · From tribalism to hierarchalism · What folks dislike about hierarchies · But aren't tribes actually hierarchal?

- The author says that, to build a village, you must grow some crops--and this is what most aboriginal villagers grow: some crops. Have students research aboriginal villagers still extant in Africa, South America, New Guinea, and elsewhere to find out what crops they grow and what food they hunt or collect by foraging.
- The author says that every civilization that enters history ex nihilo (that is, from no previous civilization) enters with the same basic hierarchal social organization firmly in place. Have students report on what is known about the social organizations of civilizations that emerged in one of the places he mentions outside the New World (Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, or China).
 - Quinn says he doubts that anyone really needs him to explain what "the rulers" like about hierarchalism. What *do* they like about it?
 - See how many students have visited Disney World or any place like it. What was their impression of the workers they saw? What kind of work were they doing? Do you agree that "No one runs off to join Disney World"?
 - Among the circus boss's jobs, Quinn says, are to decide who's going to be hired and fired and to settle disputes. If people sometimes have to be fired and sometimes have disputes, doesn't this mean that circus life is something less than perfect? How does this relate to other statements the author has made about the "perfection" of tribal life?

UNIT 16 Dealing with the Hierarchy

Dreaming away the hierarchy · The first rationale: justifying it · The second rationale: transcending it · The third rationale: overthrowing it · Opium is the opium of the people

- What is a rationale? [The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language defines it as "an exposition of principles or reasons."]
- Steven M Parish, doing research for his book *Hierarchy and Its Discontents: Culture and the Politics of Consciousness in Caste Society* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), interviewed an untouchable by the name of Kancha in the largely Hindu city of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. He asked him, "Do you think the matter of caste is unjust?" According to Parish, Kancha responded by saying that the caste system is simply a reality, adding "It was made long ago." As the subject of a discussion or writing assignment, explore this question: Why does the fact that the caste system was made "long ago" validate it for Kancha?
- Which of the three rationales presented here works for you?--or once worked for you?--or no longer works for you?
- Quinn says that "As things get worse and worse for us, we're going to need more and more of all the things that give us relief and oblivion and all the things that get us revved up and excited." In addition to the ones he cites, what examples of this trend do you see at work in the world around you?

UNIT 17 Civilization: Who Likes It?

My own life at the pyramid · Am I building my own pyramid? · What does "civilization" mean? · Putting the pieces together

- Does the public have different expectations of a religious leader than a star quarterback? And if so, why? Would your opinion of Quinn's ideas change if, like a rap star, he was arrested while driving drunk, with a suspended driver's license, with an unlicensed gun and a stash of cocaine in the glove compartment? How does this relate to what the author is saying about himself here?
- Why did the president who told Quinn his work was "too good for kids" care that it was too good? [It will take some digging to get the answer. You may have to ask questions about related industries. For example, what would it mean if a theatrical producer told the costume maker that s/he was making the costumes "too good"? Clearly, "making something too good" is code for "spending too much money on it."]
- Where does Quinn's allegiance lie?--with the ten percent who "love their work" or with the rest who need to find fulfillment beyond civilization? Or is he sympathetic to both?
- In pointing us toward a new territory beyond civilization, does Quinn seem to be saying, "You go ahead. I'm staying here"? [This is a question that will invite reassessment in later sections.]
- To get a sense of how well the author is doing, have students rate each of the twelve statements in "Pulling the pieces together" with a zero, 1, or 2, scoring zero for "unconvinced," 1 for "somewhat convinced," and 2 for "completely convinced."

UNIT 18 Experiments and Alternatives

Another experiment in hierarchalism · A systemic problem · Beyond hierarchalism · A wrong direction: "giving up" things

- Take this as a premise. You are a member of the Honored class of the Natchez. Two of your grandparents are Suns and two are Stinkards. Your father is a Stinkard and your mother is a Noble. You yourself will marry a Stinkard. Write a paper explaining how you feel about this system as it applies to you. Does it seem fair, unfair, tolerable, intolerable?
- It seems like the "systemic problem" of the Natchez could have been solved or alleviated by combining the Honored class and the Stinkard class into one. Why might the Natchez have resisted such a solution?
- Quinn says "the rest of us just want something else [besides hierarchalism]." Why does he "want something else" if (as he said a few pages back) he likes his present life? Is he saying that this is not an all-or-nothing proposition?
- Do "things like security, hope, light-heartedness, and freedom from anxiety, fear, and guilt" seem "precious" to you? More precious than air conditioning? More precious than television?
- Even though kids who run away to join the circus aren't doing so to give up things, they do in fact give up some things. What do they give up and what do they get in return?

UNIT 19 Standards of Living

Standards of living · Standards of living: Chicago-Madrid · Standards of living: Madrid-Houston
· A lover of civilization · Searching for an alternative

- In a paper, rate your standard of living on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest, 5 the highest. Assess how much of your feeling of happiness or unhappiness depends on your standard of living.
- Would you be happier or unhappier living in a world in which everyone shared your standard of living--no one had more, no one had less?
- By moving from Chicago to New Mexico, Quinn says he and his wife got more of what they needed at that time by adopting a lower standard of living. Can you imagine getting more of what *you* need by adopting a lower standard of living?
- By moving from Madrid to Houston, the Quinns upped their standard of living tenfold, but the author says that if they're happier in Houston than in Madrid, it has nothing to do with their higher standard of living. He doesn't definitely say that they *are* happier, but it could certainly be read this way. Assuming that they *are* happier, name some things (having "nothing to do with a higher standard of living") that might account for it.
- What is a Luddite? A Unabomber?
- What are the accomplishments that entitle Mikhail Gorbachev to be considered a "wise and thoughtful statesman"?

UNIT 20 A Different Sort of Revolution

Revolution without upheaval · Revolution without overthrow · No one right way · No heavenly choir · Those who would wait

- The French Revolution is a classic example of a "heaving up from below" to effect "global change across the board with a single sweeping blow." In what sense was the American Revolution a "heaving up from below"? In what sense was it designed to effect "global change across the board with a single sweeping blow"? Why were the two revolutions so different in the way they came about and were conducted?
- What are some of the "formidable defenses" hierarchy maintains against attack from "the lower orders"?
- Young runaways who take up life on the street can be said to have "abandoned" civilization. Does the hierarchy "defend itself" against this abandonment?
- Do you think it would "be wonderful if all six billion started living a new way tomorrow"?
- Why is it that their habitats would fail if all birds lived the way macaws live, if all mammals lived the way giraffes live, if all rodents live the way beavers live?
- Why "No heavenly choir"? What is expected of members of "heavenly choirs"? [That they sing in perfect harmony.]
- Who are likely to be "those who would wait"? Young people or old people? People heavily invested in other movements? Politicians? Government employees? The rich? The poor? Have students explain their answers in a paper.

UNIT 21 Not Just the Same Old Battles

Fighters of the good fight · Goliath with a new mind · The incremental revolution · Ethnic tribalism won't work for us

- Discuss the concept of the "good" fight. What attracts people to "good" fights? Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) began as a very popular "good" fight, but in recent years has had a hard time keeping members. Speculate on the reasons for this.
- Recreate an image of the figure of Goliath Quinn describes. Discuss the metaphorical aptness of each element of his armor.
- Why didn't government regulations stop Ray C. Anderson's business from being "a highly pollutive one"? Why don't government regulations stop *all* businesses from being pollutive?
- The author says that, after reading *The Ecology of Commerce* and *Ishmael*, Anderson saw that being in compliance is "not nearly enough." Not nearly enough for what?
- Why "incremental" revolution? What makes it "incremental"? The word *incremental* opposes this kind of revolution to what other kind(s)?
- Discuss examples of incremental and revolutionary changes in the automotive industry and in the computer industry. [A typical pattern in the automotive industry is to bring out an all-new model, make incremental changes in the model for the next few years, then bring out another all-new model.]
- A clan is a family group. How close is your own clan to being a tribe in the sense defined here--a group of people working together to make a living?

UNIT 22 The Open Tribe

Jeffrey · The open tribe · The limits of openness · Nontribal businesses

- Jeffrey's friends were always urging him to "find a direction, get some ambition, and care about something," but Quinn says none of these things can be done "at will." Do you agree?
- With whom do you identify more strongly--Jeffrey or the friends who thought he should "get with the program"?
- The author says no one was able to give Jeffrey "as little as he wanted." What does this mean? [The things his friends wanted for him--a good job, a career--would have given him *more* than he wanted.]
- Would you like to live in "a world of tribes"?
- What is altruism?
- Imagine two school football leagues, one devoted to altruistic play, the other strictly to winning.. On teams in the altruistic league, everyone who joins gets to play in every game. On teams in the other league, only the best players get to play. Which league would you rather play in? Which league's games would you rather watch? Which league do you think would have more fun?
- Discuss office rage as an expression of the fact that workers perceive themselves as having "no way out."

UNIT 23 Becoming Less Harmful

But how does it render us harmless? · "The culture of maximum harm" · But how can we contain their expansion? · Something better to hope for · An intermediate goal: less harmful

- The author says we live in a culture "where all ethical and religious systems commend self-denial." Why do you think self-denial has become such a value in our culture?
- Why is it true that in the most materialistic society the world has ever known, our textbooks never extol the virtues of materialistic success?
- Quinn defines the culture of maximum harm as "a culture in which all members are dedicated to attaining the high point of maximum affluence (and to forever raising the high point of maximum affluence)." Suggest examples of our raising the high point of maximum affluence.
- Quinn says that the last pharaohs of the Taker world can't turn their nuclear arsenal on tribal peoples living their midst, but maybe they could try passing laws against people making their living in a tribal way. How would you frame such a law? (Remember that many ordinary businesses start in a very tribal way.)
- What are you honestly inclined to right now--breaking out of the prison or inhabiting a "sable-lined cell"?
- Becoming "less harmful" isn't a very exciting or glamorous goal. Do you think this will diminish its chance of catching on with the public?

UNIT 24 The Food Race and Beyond

But is "less harmful" enough? · Ending the food race · 100 years beyond civilization · 200 years beyond civilization · But where exactly is "beyond"?

No issue is capable of generating more passionate conflict than the relation between food production and population growth. You may want to refer students to (or consider for possible use) a more detailed analysis of the food race that can be viewed or downloaded at <http://www.ishmael.org/Education/Writings/kentstate.shtml>. A three-hour video exploration of the relation between food production and population growth can be ordered at <http://www.newtribalventures.com/market>.

- Quinn says that people will still be living here in one hundred years--if we start living a new way, soon--"otherwise, not." At our current rate of growth, our population is doubling every forty years or so. Although some maintain that this pattern will soon end, this is by no means guaranteed. Assuming the trend continues, what will be the human population by the year 2080?
- Quinn asserts, in effect, that if we continue to grow at this rate, our species will make this planet uninhabitable for us during the next century. Even assuming he's wrong about this, how would you like living in a world with four times as many people in it?
- How credible do you find the author's speculative projections about the future?
- Quinn describes a future in which a widening gulf opens between two human spheres--one ruled by pharaohs still engaged in pyramid-building and the other a world of open tribes engaged in activities that "may or may not be recognizably 'civilized.'" Which sphere would you rather inhabit?

UNIT 25 Reluctant Pioneers

Reluctant pioneers · Making the homeless disappear · If it didn't work last year . . . · A new rule for new minds · Listening to the homeless

- Many jobs that a generation ago would have been waiting for you when you enter the job market have been "exported to countries where labor is cheaper or made superfluous by downsizing or automation." Under ordinary circumstances, how would you expect this to impact your future?
- What do you think of the distinction between "deserving" and "undeserving" poor? How do the poor try to identify themselves to the public as "deserving"?
- We all want the homeless to disappear--to resume life as normal, housed, working people. What prevents this from happening?
- Invite community officials to explain to your class what efforts are being made to "shoehorn" the homeless back into the middle-class in your area. Specific questions: What was done last year, and how did it work? What will be done this year that is different?
- Quinn says that "As soon as someone is brave enough to deal with homelessness this way, by acknowledging it and drawing it in instead of fighting it, remarkable things will begin to happen in that place--and not just for the homeless." How and why would this affect anyone but the homeless?
- See if you can track down a homeless person who will be willing to "consult" with your class as needed during their study of homelessness.

UNIT 26 Acceding to Homelessness

Is homelessness an earthquake? · What would acceding look like? · Letting them house themselves · Letting them feed themselves · Letting them make a living · Let my people go!

- The first page of this study of homelessness is entitled "Reluctant pioneers." Having studied the page titled "Is homelessness an earthquake?" can you explain why "reluctant pioneers" is an apt description of the homeless?
- Have students investigate local ordinances that make life difficult for the homeless. If you've managed to find a homeless "consultant," he or she will undoubtedly be able to help with this.
- If possible, arrange a field trip to a local homeless shelter or soup kitchen. Encourage students to ask the people they encounter there what they think the community could do or provide (besides handouts) that would make their lives easier.
- Invite a local grocer or restaurant owner to explain how he or she would feel about making edible but unsellable food available to the homeless.
- What do you see of value just lying around (like aluminum cans) that could be recycled or reused? Do you see people collecting this material? See if you can find out what they do with it.
- What did the Israelites have before the Pharaoh "let them go"? What did they give up by being let go? What did they ultimately gain?

UNIT 27 Accedence, Pro and Con

"I like the way my life is now." · What would come of it? · I'm not entirely alone! · Objections ·
The most telling objection of all

- Three of the people quoted on the first page of this unit stress the fact that they're "doing what they want." How great a value is it to you to "do what you want"?
- Why do you think that any given homeless person can't get more than "just an hour" from a social worker?
- Is the author proposing an end to the distinction between deserving and undeserving poor? Do you think this distinction should be preserved? Why or why not?
- Quinn claims support from social scientist David Wagner. Have students write a paper "translating" Wagner's proposals into the language Quinn uses for his proposals.
- Which of the "objections" does the shopping-cart story illustrate, and how?
- Quinn claims that acceding to homelessness would "open the prison gates of our culture," and that the disenfranchised and disaffected would "pour out." Do you agree? Do you agree that it "might be exciting"?
- Carlos achieved a degree of freedom by "living in a hole." What do you think of this freedom? How does it differ from "real" freedom? Can you imagine how any circumstance could bring you to the point where living in a hole under a loose grate in a park might seem like your best choice?

UNIT 28 An Inadvertent Tribe

The tribe of crow--and others · The East Mountain News · Why it worked · The East Mountain News as circus · The success and failure of the paper

- The Tribe of Crow "isn't for everybody," Quinn says. Is it for you?
- The author often spends time describing his difficulties in the process of discovery. Why do you think he does this? Does it add anything to your understanding of the ideas or is it just a distraction or an irrelevancy?
- Bring a newspaper to class (a Sunday edition will give you plenty of material to work with), distribute sheets from it, and have students estimate the ratio of advertising to news on the sheets they have. (It will average out to about 50/50.) Use this experience to help them understand the "rule" followed in publishing the *East Mountain News*.
- Why was a week with a twelve-page paper better than a week with an eight-page paper?
- Imagine that the *New York Times* suddenly began publishing a twelve-page paper instead of its usual-size paper. How do you think this would affect its employees?
- Quinn says their tribe needed a couple more members, but the only people who presented themselves were people looking for a wage. Why didn't they just pay them the wage?
- Why did a shopper succeed when the *East Mountain News* folded?

UNIT 29 The Occupational Tribe

The tribal benefit · What happened to Hap and C.J.? · Tribal business: the ingredients · What ventures lend themselves to it? · A new tribal venture · Tribal tasks and organizational patterns

- The author makes it clear that they could have made a living more easily with a shopper--either making more money with the same amount of work or the same amount of money with less work. What would you have chosen to do?
- Why do you think Quinn devotes space to what happened to Hap and C.J.? Would you have wondered what happened to them if he hadn't brought it up?
- One of the requirements Quinn identifies for a tribal business is for its members to be "content to make a living" out of it? How does this differ from the traditional American ideal of entrepreneurial success?
- How does having "a modest standard of living" help in starting a tribal business?
- Aside from the examples Quinn notes here, what are some other businesses that would seem to lend themselves to the tribal model?
- It's not uncommon for people to have one occupation that supplies them with their basic living and another occupation devoted to creating things that have "little or no 'commercial' value." Identify and discuss some examples.
- This study guide is one of many publications of New Tribal Ventures. Why do you think it would have "little or no 'commercial' value" to the company that published *Beyond Civilization*?
- The author says that the lack of someone to handle marketing for the *East Mountain News* impeded its success. What is marketing and how might marketing have helped the newspaper succeed?

UNIT 30 Tribal Goals

Cradle-to-grave security? · What about care for the elderly? · Tribes of the mind · The tribe is its members · Why make a living at all?

- The author seems unable to give an unqualified answer to the question, "Will occupational tribes be able to provide cradle-to-grave security?" Why?
- The author seems unable to give an unqualified answer to the question, "Will occupational tribes be able to provide care for the elderly?" Why?
- Which world would you rather live in, one with no taxes or one with no government services?
- What do you think? Is the university the faculty or are the faculty just employees of the university?
- The author says that "the tribe is what its members want it to be." Does this explain why he's unable to give unqualified answers to questions like "Will occupational tribes be able to provide cradle-to-grave security or care for the elderly?"
- How did the idea of "living on nothing" come to be associated with virtue and the good life in our culture? Examine traditional role models like Buddha, the Cynics, Jesus, and St. Francis of Assisi to see what light they may shed on this question.
- Is there a difference between "work" and "making a living"? Sparrows make a living, but do you think of them as "workers" in the same sense that auto mechanics or store managers are workers?

UNIT 31 Tribes and Other Communities

Another tribal example - Scuffling in the usual way - But can't an X be a tribe? - Communities and tribes: origins - Communities and tribes: membership

- Compare and contrast the operation of the Neo-Futurists with that of the *East Mountain News*.
- From what you can gather here, write a paper matching the Neo-Futurists with the "ingredients" Quinn gives for a tribal business.
- Anthropologist Sharon Bohn Gmelch lists some reasons why groups like the Gypsies survive. Write a paper comparing her list to Quinn's "ingredients" for a tribal business.
- Do you know anyone who scuffles for a living? Can you think of anyone in books or movies who scuffles for a living?
- What does a scuffer give up and gain by making a living this way?
- Suppose you're working at some job, and the owner of the business decides to make it a tribal business. You're invited to join the business as a tribal member. What factors would you consider in making your decision?
- Do an online search on "intentional communities." Download and distribute information on two or three different communities and have students evaluate how they size up as tribes in Quinn's terms.
- Quinn says that "to the extent allowed by law and custom, ordinary communities make it their policy to exclude certain kinds of people and include all the rest." During the 1950s and 1960s many laws were passed limiting the extent to which communities could exclude "certain kinds of people." Give some examples of the "kinds of people" communities wanted to exclude. Certain means of exclusion are now prohibited by law. Have people given up trying to exclude "certain kinds" of people?

UNIT 32 Tribes and Communes

Can't a tribe be a commune? · Can't a commune be a tribe? · "Let's do the show right here in the barn!" · Aren't the Amish a farming tribe? · Noble savages?

- Have students look up and discuss the terms *commune*, *communalism*, and *communism*.
- Why is it unnecessary for a tribe to be communal?
- After doing some research on the communal movement, have students write a paper on this question: Was "making a living" an important issue or irrelevant to the success or failure of most communes?
- In the lore of police drama as seen in films and on television, "partners" constitute a sort of tribe. The partners "make a living" together, at least in the sense that they depend on each other for their very lives. In fact, the tribal closeness of partners often interferes with their family lives. Why? Does each department (vice, homicide, and so on) constitute a sort of "tribe of tribes"?
- What other tribes are the popular subject of television dramatic series? Lawyers? Emergency Room physicians?
- Why are people "making a living together" the subject of drama while people "living together" are more likely to be the subject of situation comedy?
- Who are the Amish?
- Can you think of other examples of the "familiar bipolarity" Quinn mentions, which sees people as incapable of being anything but either totally selfish or totally altruistic?

UNIT 33 Other Tribal Enterprises

An intermittent tribal business · My next tribal enterprise · To distinguish is to know · The civilized hate and fear tribal people · Tribes and communities

- Quinn uses an *illegal* business as an example of a tribal business. Although he calls no attention to this fact, what point is implicit in this? At the end of *The Sting*, the participants divide up the proceeds of the sting--and then what? Make a conjecture about what they do next.
- Besides the ones the author suggests, what are some activities you'd like to see offered at a Circus of Learning? Suggest some sites in your own area that would seem suitable for the kind of Circus of Learning that Quinn describes.
- Do you know of any enterprises in your area that seem to you to be as tribal as, say, the Rimskykorsakoffeeshouse?
- Does it "sound plausible" to you that tribal people get more out of life? Would it have sounded plausible to you before you read this book?
- Reacting to revelations in the fall of 1999 that the government did in fact shell the Branch Davidian compound with pyrotechnic devices, one of the survivors of the ensuing conflagration said they'd been saying this "for years," explaining that "people just automatically believed what they were told because the government and certain members of the press did such a good job of demonizing the Branch Davidians." Does Quinn's idea that "the civilized hate and fear tribal people" satisfy you as an explanation of people's readiness to "believe what they were told"?
- Do you find it hard to imagine "totally decent" people being attracted to the tribal life?

UNIT 34 Our Unsustainable Society

A parable about sustainability · Why what we've got is unsustainable · Let's bail out and go over the wall! · A systemic change · But why "humanity's" next great adventure?

- Have you ever owned anything that stopped working after a few hours of use? Make some estimates about whether this was because of bad design or poor workmanship.
- What are some real-life inventions that didn't work because they were "systemically flawed"? [All heavier-than air flying machines before the one built by the Wright brothers. All perpetual motion machines (whose builders almost always thought they'd work if made with finer material or more exact specifications).]
- Have students collect expressions of the idea that some institution or system would work if people were just made of "finer materials."
- What does Quinn mean by "greened-up versions of our traditional religions"?
- What "mixed metaphor" is Quinn referring to in the section titled "Let's bail out and go over the wall"?
- Do you feel that Quinn has given you "something better to want" than belonging to the culture of maximum harm?
- Quinn says that "when the plane's going down and someone offers you a parachute, you don't demand to see the warranty." What does he mean by this?
- Does the New Tribal Revolution sound like a "great adventure" to you? Compare this with the "Star Trek" adventure. Are the two adventures mutually exclusive?

UNIT 35 A New Way To Go

Liberation · Listening to the children · The Littleton bloodbath · Listening to the monsters · A cultural space of our own

- Discuss the connection between communes and the parable about the Russian poet.
- Paul Eppinger, the real-life model for Quinn's character Jeffrey, didn't drown himself. He took himself off to a quiet spot in the hills and shot himself. Does this invalidate Quinn's point here?
- Describing his own school experience of unpopularity, Quinn says that he and his accomplice "in exclusion" had "tons of hope"; they knew they could do anything they really wanted to do, because everything was just going to go on "exactly this way," getting better and better forever. What are your own feelings about the future? Do you have "tons of hope"?
- Do you agree that if Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had another way to go, they would have disappeared from Columbine "long before their only dream became a dream of vengeance and suicide"?
- Do you think Quinn and the authors he cites (Côté, James E., and Allahar, Anton L. *Generation on Hold: Coming of Age in the Late Twentieth Century*. New York: New York University Press, 1996) are too pessimistic when they say young people "are becoming increasingly ghettoized in retail and service sectors, where they endlessly lift and carry, stock shelves, push brooms, bag groceries, and flip burgers, gaining no skills and seeing no path of advancement ahead of them"?
- How do you feel about the prospect of "taking the world back from the pharaohs"?

UNIT 36 No One Right Way

Why things didn't end up a-changin' · Another story to be in
No one right way · Gotcha this way! · Gotcha that way!

- Do you know anyone who still embraces the ideals of the hippie revolution? What are their ideas about making a living?
- Who are "the folks who gave us powdered wigs"?
- Once again Quinn describes his faltering efforts to fulfill a promise made to his readers, in this case to articulate "another story to be in." Does this help you understand what he's doing when he finally articulates it here?
- Does "There is no one right way for people to live" seem to you to qualify as "a story"?
- In what sense was this "the story that was enacted here during the first three or four million years of human life"?
- How do you feel about Quinn's suggestion that our story was "just a special case of a much wider story, written in the living community itself from the beginning, some five billion years ago"?
- How do you think Quinn would answer this challenge: "Aren't you saying that the way we currently live is the wrong way for people to live--or at least 'a' wrong way?"
- How do you think Quinn would answer this challenge: "Wouldn't you agree that having one right way for people to live is a wrong way for people to live?"

UNIT 37 The Beginning

The beginning is not the end · What, no miracles? · 140 words of advice · A dynamite ending

- Write a paper to complete these two sentences: "Old minds focus on _____.
New minds focus on _____."
- What does it mean to "play the devil's advocate"? Why do people *want* to play the devil's advocate?
- What are some solutions to our problems that seem to you to come under the heading of miraculous? For example, you'll hear people say that we have to "evolve to the next level" if we hope to survive. Does that come under the heading of miraculous?
- Which of Quinn's 140 words of advice do you consider easiest to follow? Hardest to follow?
- Quinn has written elsewhere that the least-followed piece of advice given here is the last one. "People can't resist the temptation to try to turn people around with arguments," he says. "Personally, I've never seen a single mind changed by argument." Has anyone ever changed your mind by arguing with you?
- Is "writing a dynamite ending" to this story a challenge you intend to accept?