***The Postmortal* Reading Guide**

**How to use this guide:** Before completing your reading assignments, read the questions and themes for each part, and then use them as a guide for your annotations.

**Suggestions:**

* Whenever you see something in the text that relates to one of these questions, highlight or underline the relevant text, and write down the question number next to the area you’ve highlighted.
* If you do not own your own copy of the book, keep a separate sheet of paper folded in half where you can keep a chart of: page number, question number, and location on the page and/or starting words of the textual evidence you’re noting.

**Pre-Writing**

* Respond: Immortality will kill us all. From p. 5 in book

**Part I. Prohibition: June 2019**

**Assignment:** Choose **2** of the following questions to answer. For each question, be sure to include at least 2 examples from the text that relate to your response. Come prepared to discuss your answers in class. Also, you must post the definition of 4 of the vocabulary words on our Moodle forum.

**Reading Questions, Part I, pp. 5-72**

1. What is the difference between aging and dying?
2. Are there any members of society who should never age? Why or why not?
3. What are the benefits and downsides of aging?
4. If you received the cure today, what are some things that you would have and/or have to deal with forever? What are some things that you would never experience? Explain.
5. What have been some of the most influential advancements over the last 100 years, and what have been their expected and unexpected consequences?
6. What is a full life comprised of? Explain.
7. What elements of your own health would you have to worry and/or not worry about maintaining if you were to receive the cure today? Explain.
8. What inventions or innovations has access been limited too for the well being of society? Explain.
9. What questions should have been asked before making the cure public? Why?
10. What are the resources needed to sustain a quickly multiplying society? Which would be the first to deplete?
11. How does the concept of responsibility to future generations affect personal, communal, and political decisions? How might that responsibility change in a post-mortal world?

**Themes:**

* Government Regulation
* Scientific Innovation
* Aging
* Health

**Vocabulary:**

Inscrutable Ebullient Scythe Fervent Subsidizing

Pummeled Proximity Insular Serendipitous Innocuous

Castigate Daunting Bereavement Flagrantly Ruminating

**Make Predictions:** What will be different in 10 years? Will the changes make for a better or worse society?

**Part II. Spread: June 2029 (Ten Years Later)**

**Assignment:** Choose **3** of the following questions to answer. For each question, be sure to include at least 2 examples from the text that relate to your response. Come prepared to discuss your answers in class. Also, you must post the definitions of 4 of the vocabulary words on our Moodle forum.

**Reading Questions, Part II, pp. 75-178**

1. Common sayings include: “Nothing is certain but death and taxes” and “Let’s grow old together.” In what ways are aging and dying embedded into what it means to be human? How does removing those things change how people live?
2. If the cure did exist, at what age should people be able to receive it? What are the benefits and dangers of restricting the age of eligibility?
3. John notes in his records that he hears from a friend in China whose family has been branded with their original birthdates for regulatory and discipline purposes. What is an event or occurrence from history that large populations of the world initially ignored, but were ultimately affected by? Why did nations initially ignore the event or occurrence? Why (if ever) did they take notice?
4. As population rises, some resources and skills would be more in demand than others. Who would be best able to survive or even thrive in an overpopulated world? Why?

**Themes:**

* Foresight
* Resources
* Waste
* Inheritance
* Class
* Gender Roles

**Vocabulary:**

Tenacious Acrimony Circumvented Edifice Inedibility Vicarious

Transcendent Dissipating Apparition Periphery Convivial

**Make Predictions:** What will be different in 28 years? Will the changes make for a better or worse society?

**Part III. Saturation: March 2059 (Twenty-Eight Years Later)**

**Assignment:** Choose **2** of the following questions to answer. For each question, be sure to include at least 2 examples from the text that relate to your response. Be prepared to share your responses with the class. Also, you must post the definitions of 2 of the vocabulary words on our Moodle forum.

**Reading Questions, Part III, pp. 179-292**

1. What are challenges that society faces today which would be made worse with overpopulation? How would those problems change society?
2. How would the cure affect social class divisions? How would the wealthy maintain their wealth? How would the poor persist despite even more limited or expensive resources?
3. What is an example of genocide and/or ethnic cleansing from history? How are the circumstances of that event similar to what might happen with an unsustainable population boom?
4. The tale of Dr. Frankenstein and his creature is often referenced as a cautionary tale for scientists. What should be the limits on scientific exploration and development? Why?
5. How does the lack of resources like gas affect global interactions? Why?

**Themes:**

* + Homelessness
  + Containment
  + Hindsight
  + Population Cleansing
  + Desperation
  + Oppression

**Vocabulary:**

Flanked Containment Proselytizing Sheen

**Make Predictions:** What will be different in 20 years? Will the changes make for a better or worse society?

**Part IV. Correction: June 2079 (Twenty Years Later)**

**Assignment:** Choose **1** of the following questions to answer. For that question, be sure to include at least 2 examples from the text that relate to your response. Be prepared to share your responses in class. Also, you must post the definitions of 3 of the vocabulary words on our Moodle forum.

**Reading Questions, Part IV, pp. 295-end**

1. In contemporary society, the elderly are often thought of as wise, but are also frequently taken advantage of or taken for granted. What are the benefits of having recognizable elders in society?
2. How does desperation due to lack of resources affect people’s decision-making and principles? Why?
3. Now that you’ve seen how the story ends, what questions do you think governments and individuals should have investigated further before taking the cure? Given what you know, would you accept a cure for aging? Why or why not?

**Vocabulary:**

Insurgency Destitute Recalibrate Cowering Topography

Cacophony Discernable

**Make Predictions:**

What will life be like for Solara and her child?

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