



# Literary Themes

*Commonly found in creative writing*



## **What is a theme?**

- Themes can be found everywhere: **literature, stories, art, movies** etc...
- The theme of a **fable** is its moral.
- The theme of a parable is its **teaching**.
- **The theme of a piece of literature is its view about life and how people behave.**



# Theme & Meaning

## Theme is the...

- underlying meaning of the story,
- a universal truth,
- a significant statement the story is making about society, human nature, or the human condition.

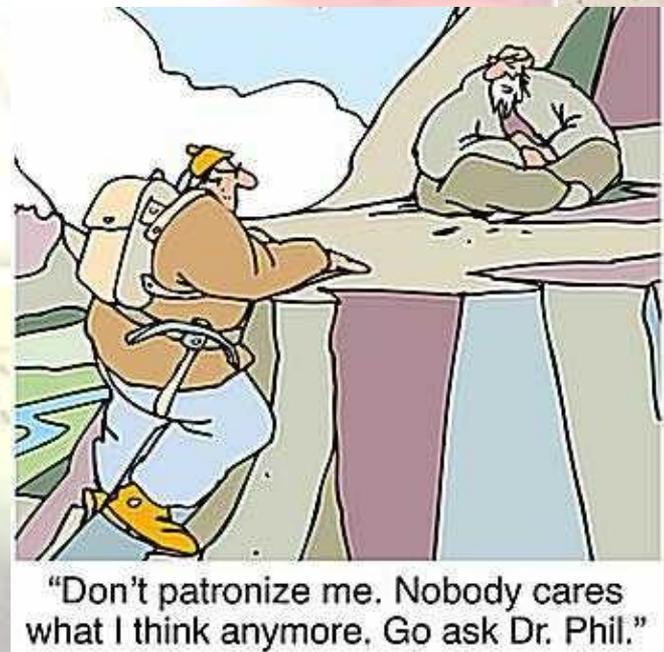
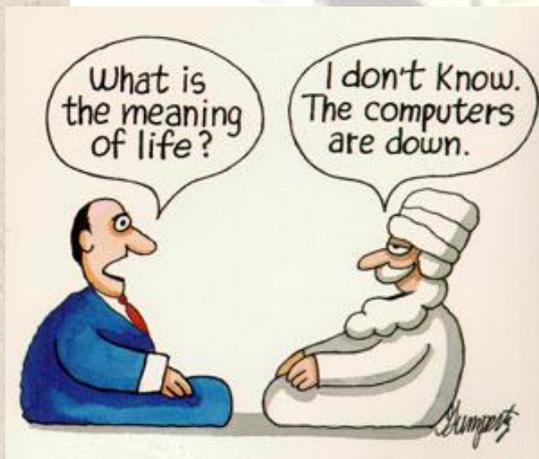
# **Theme = idea**

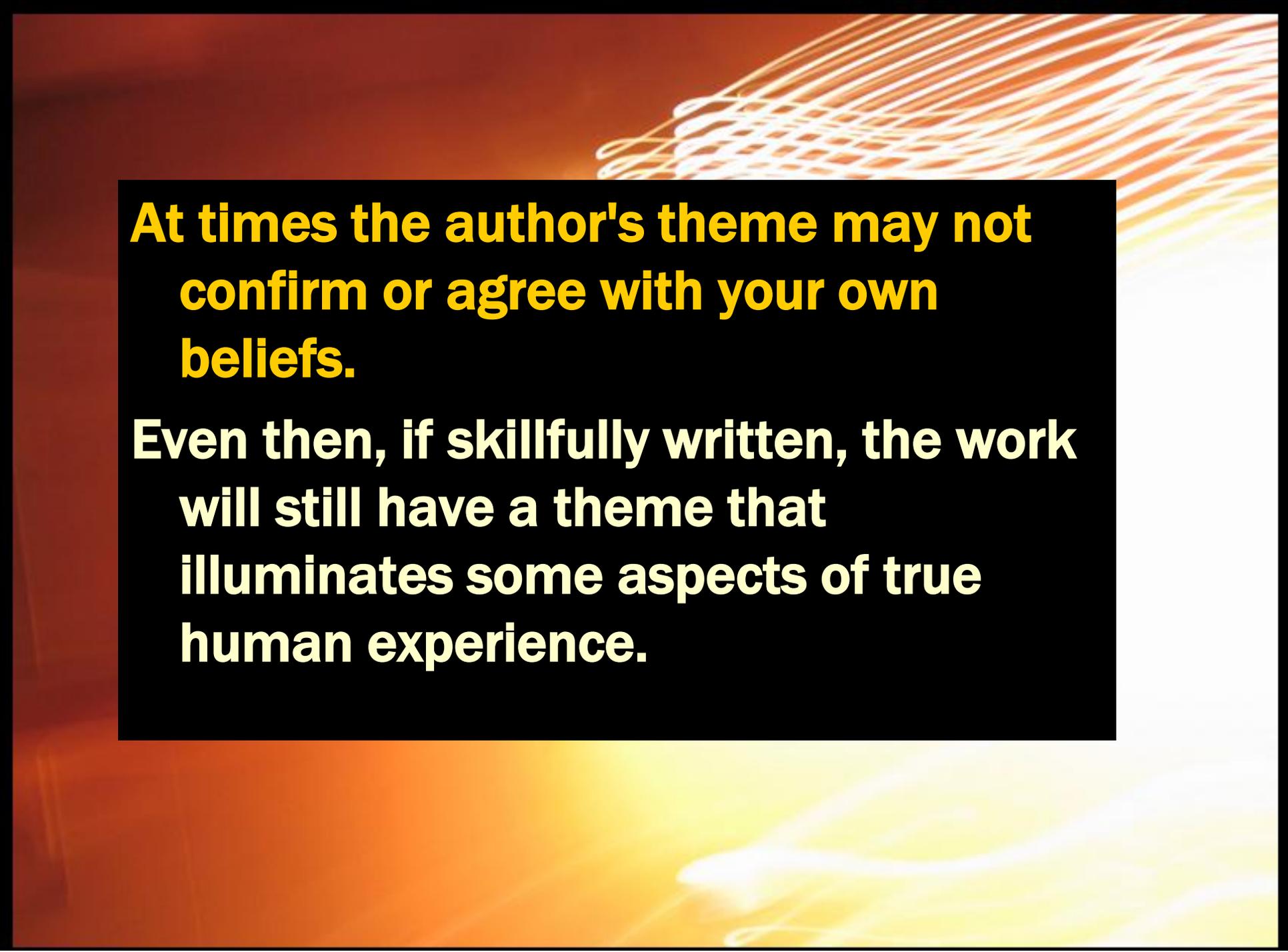
A satellite view of the Earth, showing the Americas and surrounding oceans. The image is centered on the Americas, with the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The landmasses are green and brown, and the oceans are blue. There are white clouds scattered across the globe.

**The theme of a literary work is its underlying central idea or the generalization it communicates about life.**

# Theme...the meaning of life?

The theme expresses the author's opinion or raises a question about human nature or the meaning of human experience.





**At times the author's theme may not confirm or agree with your own beliefs.**

**Even then, if skillfully written, the work will still have a theme that illuminates some aspects of true human experience.**

**The author's task is to communicate on a common ground with the reader.**

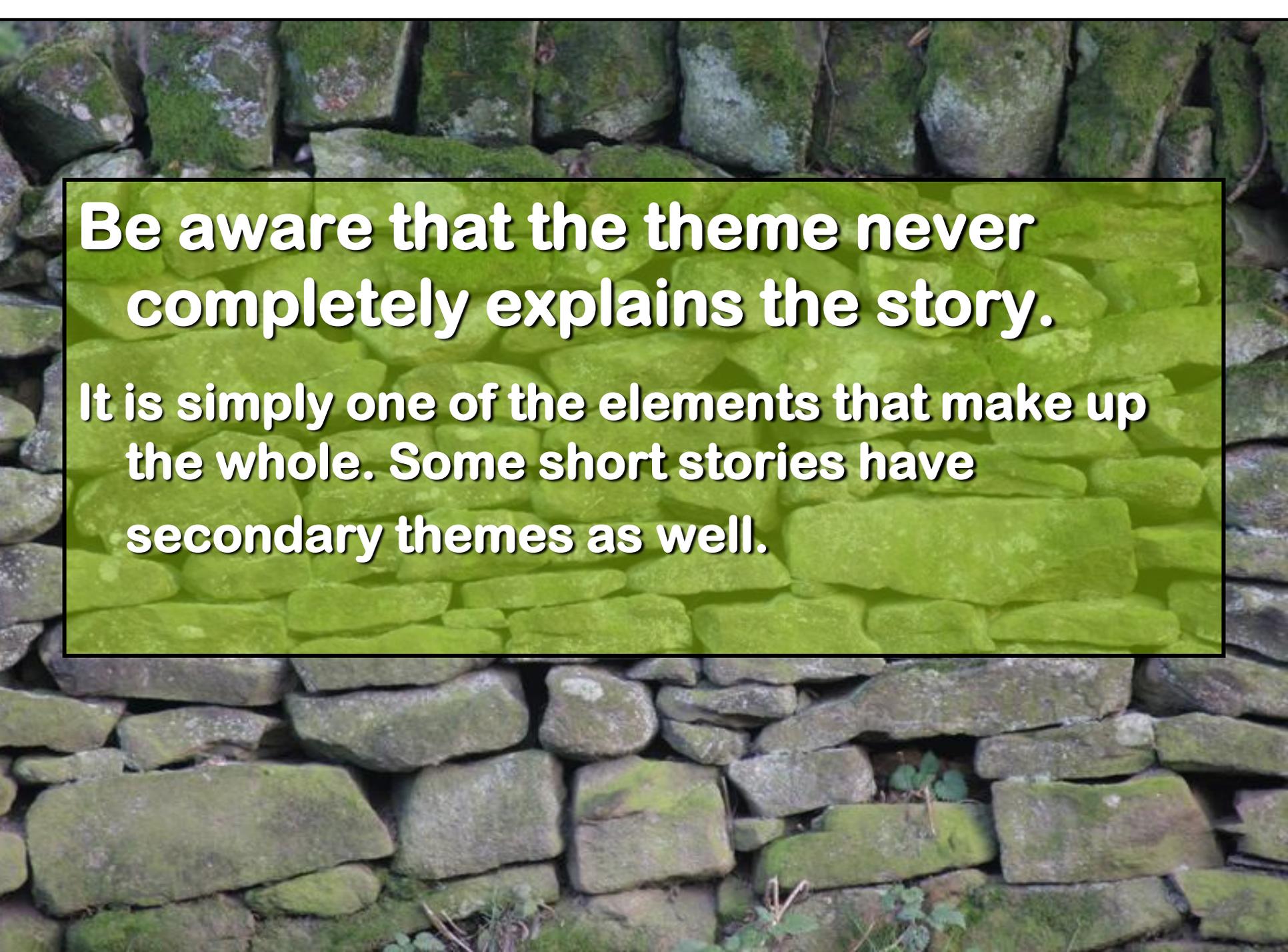
*Although the particulars of your experience may be different from the details of the story, the general underlying truths behind the story may be just the connection that both you and the writer are seeking.*





*An understanding of theme  
is dependent upon one's  
previous experience of life  
and literature.*

*At the same time, theme  
in literature can  
enlarge one's  
understanding of life.*

A photograph of a stone wall. The top and bottom sections are made of grey, weathered stones. The middle section is a vibrant green, textured surface, possibly moss or a different type of stone. A black-bordered box is overlaid on the green section, containing white text.

**Be aware that the theme never completely explains the story.**

**It is simply one of the elements that make up the whole. Some short stories have secondary themes as well.**

# **Common Literary Themes**

*(Themes repeated in many works)*

# 1. THE QUEST FOR IMMORTALITY



***“Stranger, stop and cast an eye.  
As you are now, so once was I.  
As I am now, so you shall be,  
Prepare for death and follow me.”***

## **2. The individual's relationship and obligation to society.**



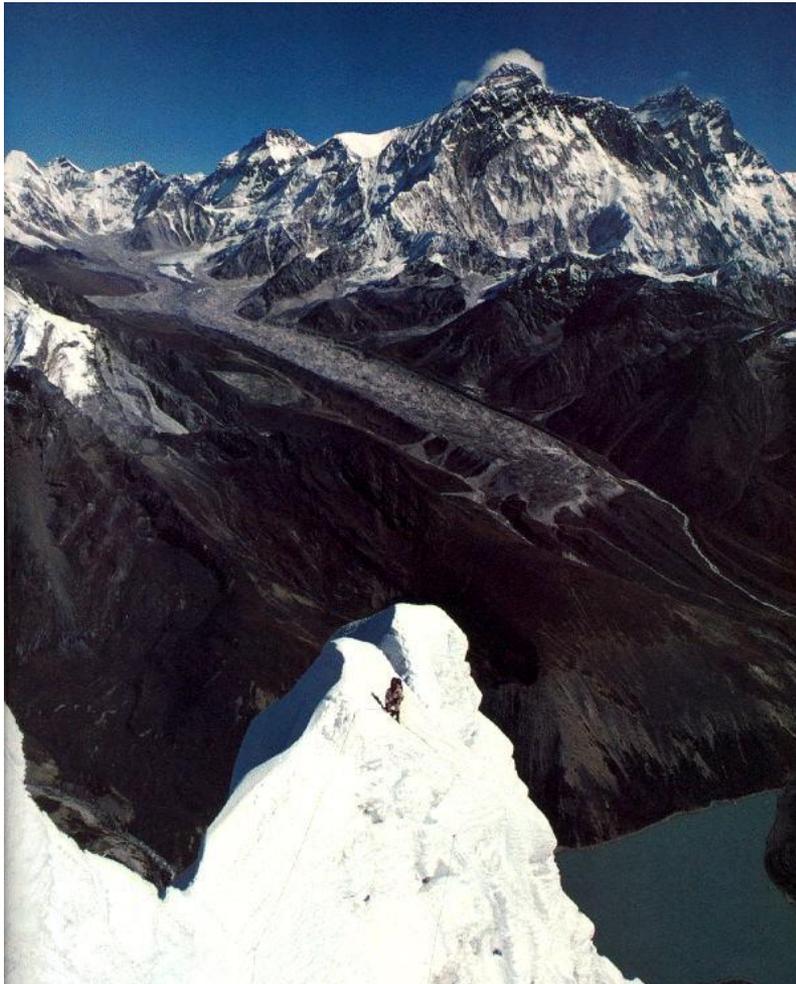
**Sometimes called “man vs. society”**

3. The individual's inward journey to understand himself or herself/identity.



*Sometimes called "man vs. self"*

## 4. The individual's relationship and obligation to the natural world.

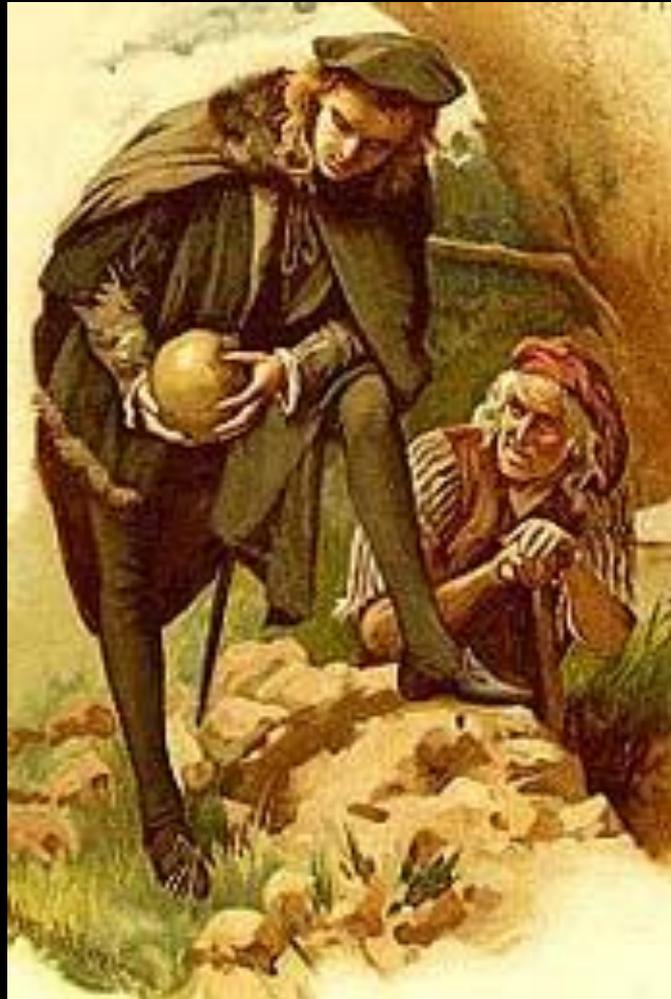


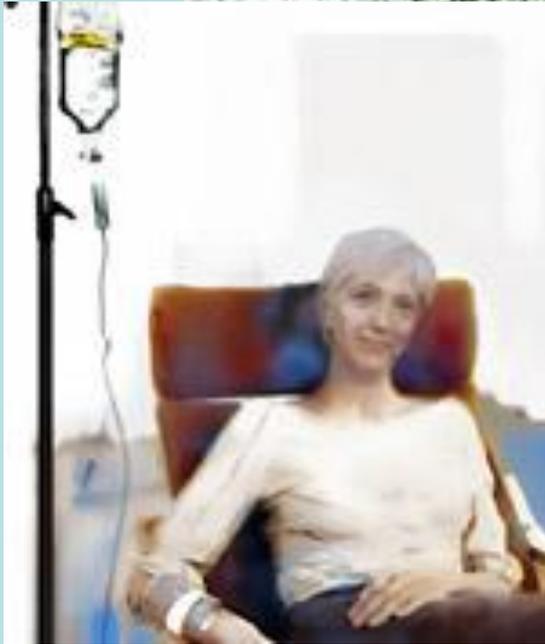
SOMETIMES  
CALLED  
“MAN  
VS.  
NATURE”

## 5. How **justice** and **injustice** are decided



# 6. The individual as hero; what it means to be a hero or anti-hero.



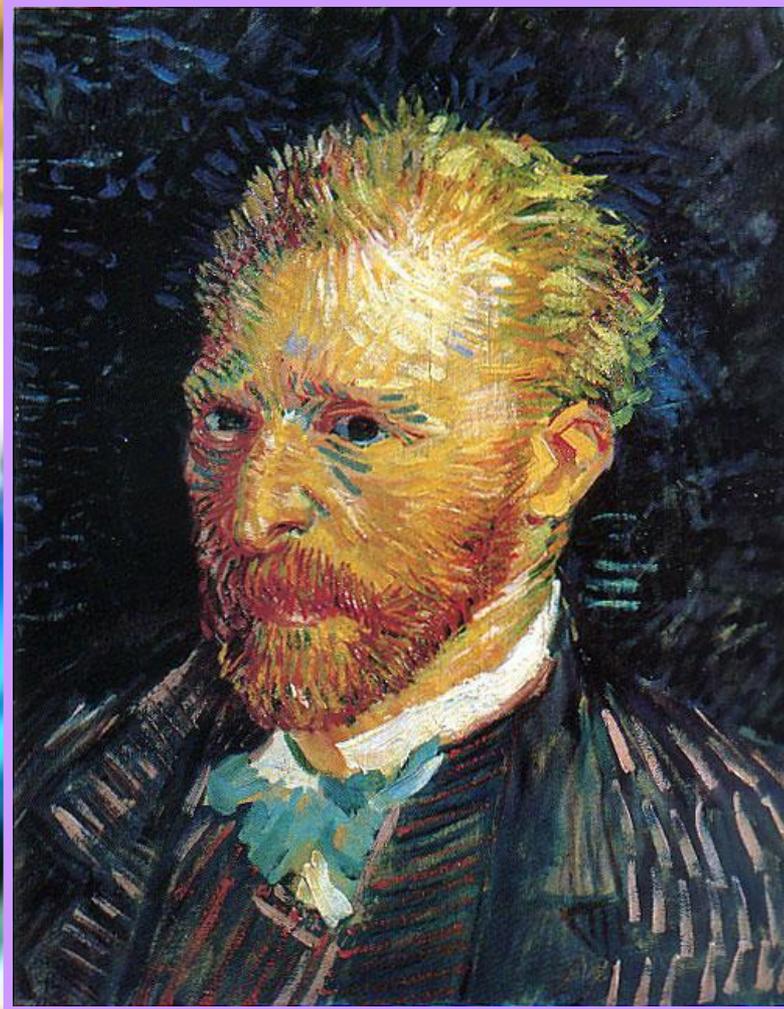


**7. What it means to be a “survivor.”**

# 8. The individual's experience of alienation and despair

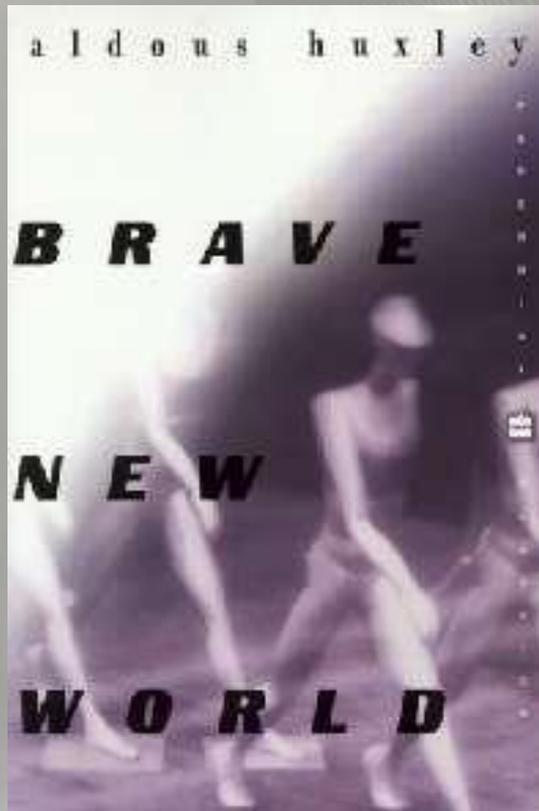


# 9. The artist's relationship and obligation to society.



10. What tomorrow's world holds for us ...

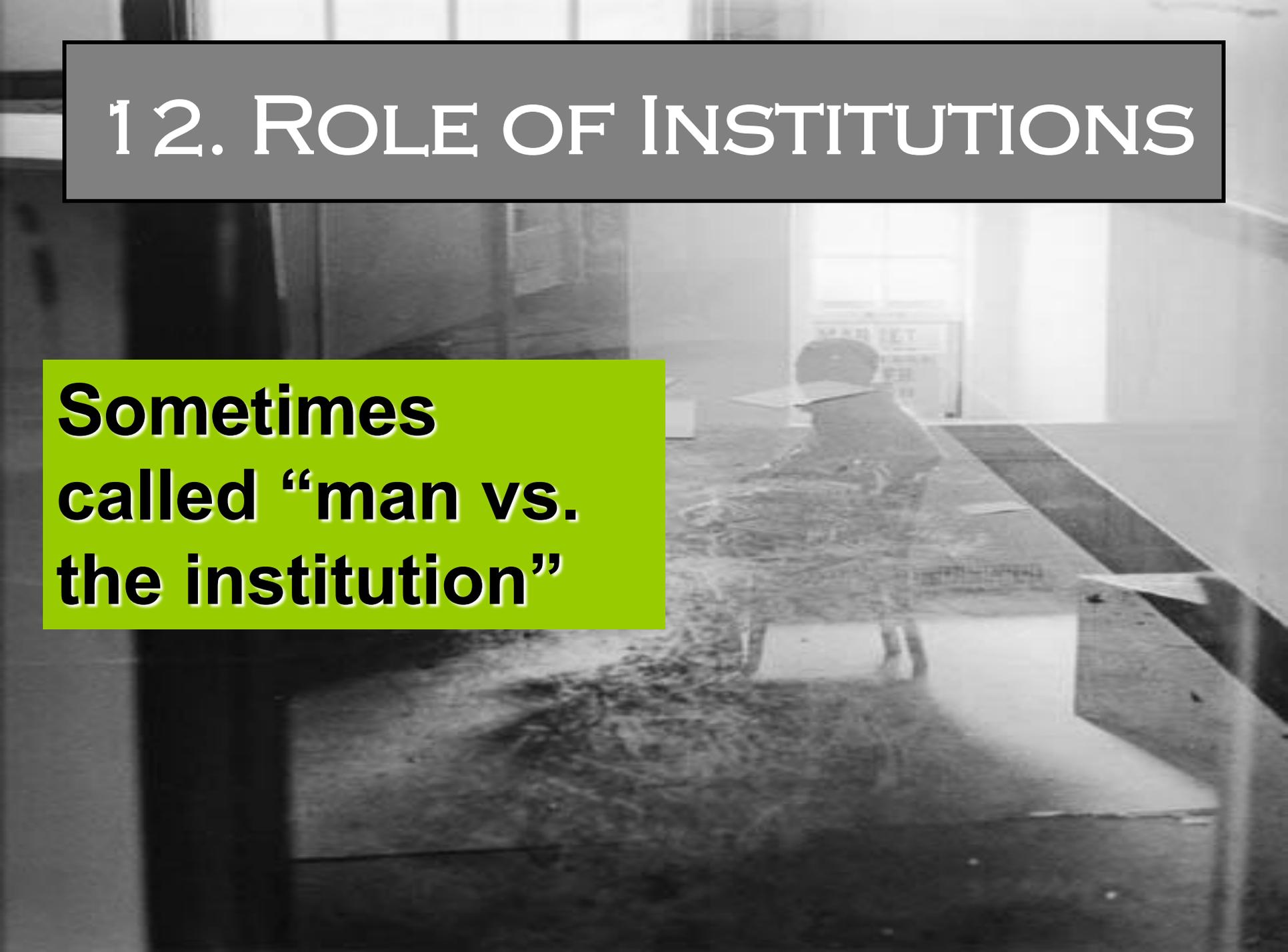
aka: "The Future"



# 11. *Love: Topics/Effects*

- Marriage
- Romance
- Platonic or companionate love
- Altruistic love
- Love of Country
- Admiration
- Possessiveness
- Intense dependency
- Logical-sensible love
- Self-centered love
- Game-Playing
- Unrequited love
- Godly love
- Familial love
- Infatuation
- Erotic love
- Jealousy

# 12. ROLE OF INSTITUTIONS



**Sometimes  
called “man vs.  
the institution”**



## **Creativity provides many possibilities**

- **Think about these themes—what would you add as an important theme often expressed in creative writing?**
- **What theme would you most like to explore?**

# LITERARY THEMES

**End of Presentation.**