Things to think about: H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau*  
(Penguin Classics edition, introduction by Margaret Atwood)

In her introduction, Margaret Atwood suggests that this novel is at least as much about religion as about science. Do you agree?

What do you think of her suggestion that Moreau represents God the father, Montgomery the son, and M’ling the holy spirit?

Did Wells intend the book to be an extended blasphemy?

What is the effect of the Laws and the Sayer of Law? (59-61, 89-91, 120-121)

Why does Moreau consider himself a religious man and Prendick a materialist? (73-75)

What is the effect of the skeptical internal introduction by Prendick’s nephew? Why did Wells frame (or half-frame) the book in that way?

Is it significant that Prendick only narrowly avoids becoming a cannibal? (8)

What is the significance of Montgomery’s comparison of Prendick to a natural history specimen? (19)

Why does Wells make Prendick an amateur naturalist? What is the relationship of his interest in the animal world to that of Moreau? Of Montgomery?

Why does it take Prendick so long to recognize that M’ling and the beast people that he encounters on his arrival on the island are not really human?

Why is he less perceptive than the grayhounds?

Why do the beast people inspire Prendick with disgust (as opposed to pity or some other feeling)?

What is the significance of the beast people’s attempt to decide whether Prendick is “made” (like them) or a man like Moreau and Montgomery? (85-86)

What is Prendick’s attitude toward human races? Why does he emphasize the prognathism of the beast people? Why does he always mention whether they are black, brown, or pink?

Is it significant that Prendick is a teetotaler and Montgomery is a drunk?

Is Prendick’s response to Moreau’s experiments a normal antivivisectionist response?

What is Prendick’s attitude to vivisection? To animal welfare? What is his response to Moreau’s revelations on pp. 76-79?
Why does he initially misunderstand the nature of Moreau’s research project (that is, get it completely backward)?

Can Moreau be considered to have succeeded in attaining his scientific goals, at least partially?

Is Prendick’s execution of all the animals remaining in the laboratory sacrifice, mercy killing, or punishment? (105)

Can you distinguish between Prendick’s attitudes to hybrids (mongrels) and to chimeras (monsters)?

What makes an animal a good candidate for humanization? Does this have any relation to its position on an evolutionary family tree?

After Moreau’s death, can either Montgomery or Prendick be said to have become one of the beast people?

The cargo that Montgomery brings to the island at the beginning of the novel carries the seeds of the destruction of Moreau’s little world. Which is most responsible for the catastrophe: the rabbits, the puma, or Prendick?

Why does Prendick repeatedly emphasize the difficulties that the beast people have with language?

Do you agree with Prendick that the beast people suffer more after their transformation than under Moreau’s surgical knife? (95)

Does Prendick (or Wells) have a special problem with women?

What does Prendick’s experience suggest about the relation between people and animals?

The final chapter of this novel is strongly reminiscent of the end of Gulliver’s Travels, when Gulliver prefers the company of horses to that of his family. What is Wells trying to suggest about Prendick’s desire for isolation?

Is Prendick sane at the conclusion of the narrative? If not, when did he cease being so?