

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

People Park by Pasha Malla

1. *People Park* is described as “a visionary new novel of magic and mystery, dreams and nightmares, people and one very unusual place.” How would you describe the novel?
2. Raven does not dream, so what fuels his illustrations? Why do the neuroses of others interest him?
3. The epigraph to “Thursday” is taken from the 1909 novel *Jacob Von Gunten* by Swiss writer Robert Walser: “People, people, nothing but people! Yes, I feel it most strongly: I love people. Their foibles and sudden excitements are more dear and valuable to me than the subtlest wonders of nature.” How is this epigraph reflected in *People Park*?
4. Performing manhood in the world of the island city involves “punching, wrestling, grunting, roaring — there was so much roaring.” How does this concept of manhood relate to manhood in our own society? How is womanhood “performed” in *People Park*?
5. Kellogg says that his marriage makes him feel “like an amputee striding about on fresh prosthetics.” How does this question the institution of marriage?
6. In returning to the city, Pearl finds that “everything had the slightly skewed look of some dreamworld rendering, nothing matched her memories, not precisely.” How does the author create this dreamworld for readers?
7. How does the mayor represent the politics of her time and place?
8. What aspects of the novel remind you of twentieth- and twenty-first century social movements?

9. Does the New Fraternal League of Men remind you of our own police?
10. Where, exactly, is the climax of *People Park*? How does the author build to this point?
11. Raven says, "I wanted to make them feel. But they long only to be entertained." How does this complaint illuminate our own relationship with popular culture?
12. The idea of "time's reversal" is to return to "the beginning again, before everything went wrong and changed." What aspects of time, space, and history are explored in *People Park*? Does every generation feel that society has gone astray?