

FL224 -- 2009.03.24

Paper Assignment: Due March 31: 5 pages (please print it out, normal type-size, normal double-spacing, normal margins, spell-checked and stapled with no special coverlets or cover pages, etc.)

- a. Start with a specific passage from *Harp of Burma*, *The Guide*, or *Nineteen Thirty-Four Escapes*.
- b. Consider how the passage maps (and co-maps) the themes we have discussed in class: geography, gender, class, family, race, human bodily characteristics, human development, clothing, things, the boundedness (or shape, or un-boundedness) of societies, social mobility, taboo and transgression, nature, day-night, mood, civilization, time (cultural past, present, future, etc.), language, logic, the position of the reader, nationality, foreignness, social power, desires, social customs, forms of authenticity, a trajectory of enlightenment, etc.
- c. Consider how the images (or characters, or places/spaces) of the passage are associated with special meanings, or perhaps 'authenticity,' and how they resonate with other images in the work (e.g., in *Harp of Burma*, the harp, the ruby, the Buddha statue, the cave, etc.; in *The Guide*, think of the railway station, the remote excursions to Mempi Hills or the caves, the temple by the river, etc.). Can you draw any thematic parallels or contrasts (e.g., between Raju's relation to Rosie and his relation to Velan; or between Velan's way of viewing Raju and Raju's way of viewing 'power'?)
- d. How does the narrator first create -- then 'mess with' -- our ways of understanding the world? Look for 'productive contradictions' that relate to your chosen passage, such as gaps between different people's understandings of a given situation. Does the author renew the reader's awareness of certain aspects of the world?
- e. Search for connections between other texts and/or handouts that we have read.
- f. Be creative. Trust your intelligence.
- g. Document your paper adequately. This means full traceability of all references. Probably the easiest way to do this is with a bibliography at the end (listing author, title, publishing location, publisher, date) and page numbers at the end of any sentence that involves a direct quote or at the end of any paragraph that involves a summation of a particular passage.

My overall grading can basically be summed up as:

D - failure to write a proper paper, or give adequate references, etc.

C - you have demonstrated that you have read the material and understood it basically.

B - you have demonstrated that you can do a basic analysis of a passage.

A - you have gone beyond a basic analysis to show how the author uses the work to creatively restructure or reframe an understanding of the world.