

Asian 204 Summer 2010

Homework 02: Close reading and analysis of a fictional text

For the second week's homework assignment, write out responses to the following questions and turn them in at the beginning of class on Thursday 7/3. Your responses should be printed out (word-processed), double-spaced in an easily legible 10 or 12 point font, carefully checked for correct spelling and grammar. You may respond to each question separately, or combine your responses in a continuous essay; make sure though that you address each of the points. Feel free to draw on class discussions for your responses, and even to discuss the assignment with classmates. Your write-up, however, must be your own work.

Carefully read the portion Chapter 1 of "Ah Q—The Real Story" labeled within the text as "Two—it begins with the first complete paragraph on p. 103 and goes to about halfway down p. 104. Here the first-person narrator tells an anecdote about Ah Q.

1. Sum up, in no more than one or two sentences, the content of the incident: what happens?
2. What's the ostensible point of the anecdote? That is, why does the narrator tell it; what, according to him, does this anecdote illustrate or prove?
3. What does this incident show the reader about the village and its society?
4. How does this incident foreshadow events or themes of the rest of the story?
5. What's the connection between what the anecdote is supposedly about (question 2) and what it shows us about the village (question 3)? Are the two the same, or different? If different, do you think the

narrator is aware of the discrepancy? If so, what is his point; if not, what does his lack of awareness show us?

Bonus Question

If you like, you can include discussion of the following in your responses:

6. Although the incident is related by the first-person narrator, the words the narrator uses reflect the varying perspectives of several different parties.

- a. Copy out one or more phrases or sentences that reflect the narrator's own perspective on events.
- b. Copy out one or more phrases or sentences that reflect Ah Q's perspective.
- c. Copy out one or more phrases or sentences that reflect the perspective of others in the town.
- d. What is the effect on the reader of the shift between different perspectives?