

Response paper #3

Choose **one** of the following questions, and write two pages in response.

1. The young Haha is innocent, yet in her matter-of-fact narration the reader comes to understand some of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. Write about two or three such excesses you came to understand through Haha's reflections. What is the tone of her narration of these events? How does the author's tone affect your understanding?
2. There is lots of humor in this novel. What was your favorite humorous scene? Why?
3. The chaotic writing of this novel mirrors the chaos in Haha's life. Analyze any stylistic innovations from traditional novels you have read that you noticed as you read this book. (think about time, music, slang, traditional poetry.)
4. On p. 125, Liu Ding says "It'll be chaos and all that, no point thinking about it." Why do you think the author chose this sentence that has to do with motherhood/gender as the title for her novel?
5. In London, Haha has an affair with a sex-obsessed professor. Study two or three aspects of her life in London that reflect her "hybrid" cultures.
6. In the translator's postscript, on p 133, he says "What holds these disparate narrative and linguistic elements together is a comical sense of the absurd. Received truths are lampooned, values are scorned, dignity is deflated myths are subverted, and momentous events are trivialized." Choose one or two of the absurd elements in the book and argue about how it is related to the whole.

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21F.076 Globalization: the Good, the Bad, and the In-Between
Fall 2009

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