

The Boy, 1980 Consider This... Questions

Question	Interpretation	Evidence
Chapter one is written from the perspective of Dong-ho, a middle school student. Additionally, it is written from a second-person point-of-view. Why do you think Han Kang chose this technique for the first chapter?		
As you read, do you notice any differences as to how boys and men are physically described versus girls and women? Are the physical appearances of each sex described equally? If not, which sex seems to have more attention paid to the way they look?		
The citizens of Gwangju sing the national anthem and "Arirang", a traditional Korean song used to unite the people. What does this tell you about the citizens of Gwangju?		
What symbols do you encounter in the first chapter? Flowers, the colour white, rain, and darkness are all repeated, but do you think they could stand in for any larger, more abstract ideas or themes? Do any of these symbols change over the chapter and, if so, what might this change suggest?		
There are lots of uses of consonance, alliteration, and assonance in this chapter. For example, Dong-ho describes "the right side of [a woman's] skull completely caved in, seemingly the work of a club." What effect do you think this has? What other examples of 'sound devices' can you see?		
Time is an important theme introduced in this chapter, where Kang highlights the effect of time in addition to jumping back and forth in time within Dong-ho's narrative. What examples can you see where the effects of time are depicted or where the narrative changes in time? Are the past and present, living and dead,		

connected through these changes in time? Why do you think these choices have been made?		
The narrator or other characters often discuss violence with a matter-of-fact tone. What examples can you see of this? Why do you think such horrific things are spoken about in such an unemotional way?		
What examples of class do you see in this chapter? What class do you think the protestors of Gwangju predominantly are in the novel and what evidence do you have of this? What social class do you think certain characters (like Dong-ho, Jeong-mi and Jeong-dae, Eun-sook, and Seon-ju) belong to?		
How are the soldiers and military government depicted in this chapter? How does Kang juxtapose two collective groups: the soldiers and the protestors? What larger philosophical points might Kang be making?		
How are the corpses of dead protestors described and what effects do stylistic choices have on such descriptions? For example, what effect does the narrator's diction in describing coffins being "shoved together" with many "dead bodies crammed" in the hall, comparing it to a "mass rally of corpses", have? Or what about the simile calling the young men recently shot by the army as "crumpled like puppets whose strings have been cut"?		
How does Dong-ho's youth influence how we interpret the events of the chapter? What moments reflect his childishness — and which ones suggest he is being forced into adulthood?		
In what ways is the treatment of the dead an act of resistance? How do characters show reverence or care toward the corpses, and why does that matter?		
What examples of specific violence shocked you in this		

chapter?		
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