

Assef refers to Sohrab as “*my boy*”, creating a chilling atmosphere which juxtaposes the fatherly love usually shown through this phrase. This subversion highlights Assef’s possessive and sadistic nature.

Sohrab is compared to a dancing monkey, with Amir remarking that he has a “*brehtaking*” resemblance to Hassan. This adds to the imagery of Sohrab as an oppressed, degenerate, sex slave - he isn’t even in control of his own body. Amir’s description of Sohrab’s “*Chinese doll face*” reiterates the ethnic and visual divide between Pashtuns and Hazaras, whilst also connoting his youthful innocence. The rouge and mascara applied to Sohrab’s face pimps him out and sexualises him. The boy’s shaven head also evokes Nazi Germany’s treatment of those in concentration camps, emphasising the fact that Sohrab is a prisoner (and is viewed as inferior and unworthy of freedom). Sohrab’s passiveness triggers empathy in the reader. Assef’s leeriness and the way he gropes Sohrab implies that he sexually abuses him. As he slides his hands up and down Sohrab’s body and kisses his neck, we feel that Amir is being tortured and the cyclical nature of the narrative is revealed.

Assef’s experiences have undoubtedly shaped his beliefs. His parents live a life of luxury in Western Australia, often playing golf and tennis, and frequently wire their son money. Assef ended up in jail but supposedly had an epiphany during a beating from a prison guard. He realised that God wanted him to live - he had found his purpose. This emphasises the cyclical nature of violence, as victims often become perpetrators later in life.

Amir changes as he barrages Assef with questions about what his “*mission*” is. This suggests that anger and a sense of injustice rise to the surface at this point, hinting at a previously unheralded resilience and courage. By this point, Amir knows that he will die.

Assef orders his guards not to enter when he is fighting with Amir because he assumes that he’ll win and kill Amir. This highlights Assef’s ego and how he is getting revenge against Amir and Hassan, once again. After all, Assef has always been physically bigger and stronger than Amir.

Hosseini writes a disjointed flash-forward in italics, which confuses the reader. Later, we realise that it references Doctor Faruqi, who treats a dream-like Amir after the fight.

Hosseini frequently uses interrogatives and short sentences to show how Amir has suffered memory loss. The erratic sentence structures emphasise the rapid and brutal fight, whilst the repetition of “*Sohrab screaming*” creates a terrifying atmosphere. Sensory language is used to portray Amir’s disorientation and