

Perfect Paragraph for Tuesday

Azi and The-Mina

In her novel "The Handmaid's Tale" Atwood uses similes and metaphors to show the dangers of dehumanization and the importance of identity, and more importantly, the loss one's identity through that very dehumanization.

The importance of identity and the dangers of losing it is underlined by the following quote: "I can see it as I go down the stairs, round, convex, a pier-glass, like the eye of a fish, and myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something, some fairytale figure in a red cloak, descending towards a moment of carelessness that is there same as danger.". The reader witnesses how Offred perceives herself, thought the mirror, which is an object that is commonly linked to identity, but she feels that she her reflection is distorted. Atwood describes Offred's impression of herself through a listing that doubles as a similie. The description is dehumanizing, as she compares Offred to a "shadow", a plain figure which could be anyone, or at least any handmaid. She then compares Offred to "a parody of something", as if her new self was something to laugh about, as if she lost her past identity to a laughable situation. She continues with comparing offred to "some fairytale figure in a red cloak", in which the word "some " makes the red figure meaningless. In another listing that doubles as a simile, Atwood compares Offred to a prize pig: "I wait, washed, brushed, fed, like a prize-pig.". This simile is considerably dehumanizing as it literally compares Offred to an animal. Most importantly, this comparison illustrates the way the Gilead society dehumanizes handmaids as it only takes care of them for a precise purpose, here it being the ceremony and therefore, bearing a child. As the owners of a prize-pig only take care of it to win a prize, the Gilead society only takes care of the handmaids to give birth. Moreover, this simile could suggest how they indirectly go from "she" to "it". █ Another striking example of dehumanization is the following metaphor: "We are two-legged wombs, that's all : sacred vessels, ambulatory chalices.". Here, Atwood demonstrates the way that the toxic —literally and figuratively— society she lives in sees Handmaids. Handmaids supposedly have one sole purpose and it is to serve as a birth giver, not even a mother. This metaphor reduces handmaids to a single part of themselves and pulls away the possibility of identity by treating the people like an object of which we only want one part of, a bit like a Kinder™ egg. Everyone wants the toy, but nobody truly cares about what's outside.