

The Handmaid's Tale AP-Style Test

from *The Handmaid's Tale*, p22

The vans are surely more silent than the other cars. When they pass, we avert our eyes. If there are sounds coming from inside, we try not to hear them. Nobody's heart is perfect.

When the black vans reach a checkpoint, they're waved through without a pause. The Guardians would not want to take the risk of looking inside, searching, doubting their authority. Whatever they think.

If they do think; you can't tell by looking at them.

But more likely they don't think in terms of clothing discarded on the lawn. If they think of a kiss, they must then think immediately of the floodlights going on, the rifle shots. They think instead of doing their duty and of promotion to the Angels, and of being allowed possibly to marry, and then, if they are able to gain enough power and live to be old enough, of being allotted a Handmaid of their own.

The fourth sentence implies all of the following EXCEPT that

- a) citizens have been expected to become desensitized to brutality.
- b) it is dangerous to feel.
- c) each person has undergone suffering.
- d) ***corruption is a daily part of life.***

The antecedent for "they" in paragraph three is

- a) the vans.
- b) those in the vans.
- c) ***the Guardians.***
- d) the Angels

What is the primary purpose of the last paragraph?

- a) to create a mood of foreboding
- b) to give background and insight into the hierarchy of Gilead
- c) ***to contrast simple ideas to a harsh reality***
- d) to setup Biblical allusions

Continue ▪

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from *The Handmaid's Tale*, p32-33

The men wear white coats, like those worn by doctors or scientists. Doctors and scientists aren't the only ones, there are others, but they must have had a run on them this morning. Each has a placard hung around his neck to show why he has been executed: a drawing of a human fetus. They were doctors, then, in the time before, when such things were legal. Angel makers, they used to call them; or was that something else? They've been turned up now by the searches through hospital records, or – more likely, since most hospitals destroyed such records once it became clear what was going to happen – by informants: ex-nurses perhaps, or a pair of them, since evidence from a single woman is no longer admissible; or another doctor, hoping to save his own skin; or someone already accused, lashing out at an enemy, or at random, in some desperate bid for safety. Though informants are not always pardoned.

These men, we've been told, are like war criminals. It's no excuse that what they did was legal at the time: their crimes are retroactive. They have committed atrocities and must be made into examples, for the rest. Though this is hardly needed. No woman in her right mind, these days, would seek to prevent a birth, should she be so lucky as to conceive.

What we are supposed to feel towards these bodies is hatred and scorn. This isn't what I feel. These bodies hanging on the Wall are time travelers, anachronisms. They've come here from the past.

What I feel towards them is blankness. What I feel is that I must not feel. What I feel is partly relief, because none of these men is Luke. Luke wasn't a doctor. Isn't.

Sentence six is coherent because of its use of

- a) onomatopoeia.
- b) metonymy.
- c) polysyndeton.**
- d) anagnorisis.
- e) allusion.

Sentence seven stands out in contrast, yet is still coherent, because of its use of

- a) allusion.
- b) asyndeton.**
- c) hyperbole.
- d) polysyndeton.
- e) pathos.

The last sentence of paragraph two serves to

- a) imply that fertility rates are low.**
- b) note that women greatly outnumber men.
- c) characterize women as belonging in the home.
- d) reinforce the setting.

Continue ▪

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The author's shift in verb tense primarily indicates

- a) ***a shift in tone.***
- b) a flashback.
- c) the author's ability to create believable characterization.
- d) the use of metaphor.

"The Wall" is an example of

- a) an anachronism.
- b) ***synecdoche.***
- c) imagery.
- d) colloquialism.

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from *The Handmaid's Tale*, p133

The story passed among us that night, in the semidarkness, under our breath, from bed to bed. Moira was out there somewhere. She was at large, or dead. What would she do? The thought of what she would do expanded till it filled the room. At any moment there might be a shattering explosion, the glass of the windows would fall inward, the doors would swing open ... Moira had power now, she'd been set loose, she'd set herself loose. She was now a loose woman.

I think we found this frightening.

Moira was like an elevator with open sides. She made us dizzy. Already we were losing the taste for freedom, already we were finding these walls secure. In the upper reaches of the atmosphere you'd come apart, you'd vaporize, there would be no pressure holding you together.

Nevertheless Moira was our fantasy. We hugged her to us, she was with us in secret, a giggle; she was lava beneath the crust of daily life. In the light of Moira, the Aunts were less fearsome and more absurd. Their power had a flaw to it. They could be shanghaied in toilets. The audacity was what we liked.

We expected her to be dragged in at any minute, as she had been before. We could not imagine what they might do to her this time. It would be very bad, whatever it was.

But nothing happened. Moira didn't reappear. She hasn't yet.

The primary effect of beginning and ending the last paragraph with a conjunction is to

- a) **establish credible doubt of Moira's fate.**
- b) concentrate on the stream-of-consciousness of the writing.
- c) heighten the expectations of the reader.
- d) draw the reader in through use of foreshadowing.

The effects of the diction "loose" in the passage are all of the following EXCEPT to

- a) use anaphora for emphasis on freedom.
- b) create puns that border on symbolism.
- c) evoke hyperbole and further irony.
- d) **signal a shift in tone and mood.**

Continue ▪

The Handmaid's Tale AP-Style Test

from *The Handmaid's Tale*, p146-47

I stand up, in the dark, start to unbutton. Then I hear something, inside my body. I've broken, something has cracked, that must be it. Noise is coming up, coming out, of the broken place, in my face. Without warning: I wasn't thinking about here or there or anything. If I let the noise get out into the air it will be laughter, too loud, too much of it, someone is bound to hear, and then there will be hurrying footsteps and commands and who knows? Judgment: emotion inappropriate to the occasion. The wandering womb, they used to think. Hysteria. And then a needle, a pill. It could be fatal.

I cram both hands over my mouth as if I'm about to be sick, drop to my knees, the laughter boiling like lava in my throat. I crawl into the cupboard, draw up my knees, I'll choke on it. My ribs hurt with holding back, I shake, I heave, seismic, volcanic, I'll burst. Red all over the cupboard, mirth rhymes with birth, oh to die of laughter.

I stifle it in the folds of the hanging cloak, clench my eyes, from which tears are squeezing. Try to compose myself.

After a while it passes, like an epileptic fit. Here I am in the closet. *Nolite te bastardes carborundorum*. I can't see it in the dark but I trace the tiny scratched writing with the ends of my fingers, as if it's a code in Braille. It sounds in my head now less like a prayer, more like a command; but to do what? Useless to me in any case, an ancient hieroglyph to which the key's been lost. Why did she write it, why did she bother? There's no way out of here.

I lie on the floor, breathing too fast, then slower, evening out my breathing, as in the Exercises, for giving birth. All I can hear now is the sound of my own heart, opening and closing, opening and closing, opening

The effects of pairing the words “mirth” and “birth” (paragraph 2) in the same sentence are most strongly reinforced by which of the following?

- a) “I stifle it in the folds of my hanging cloak...”
- b) “It sounds in my head now less like a prayer, more like a command...”**
- c) “...why did she bother?”
- d) “All I can hear now is the sound of my own heart...”

What is the primary purpose of leaving the last paragraph open without a period?

- a) to shift the tone from anxious to hopeful**
- b) to establish a sense of familiarity with the protagonist
- c) to create symbolism with diction
- d) to effectively use aposiopesis

“It could be fatal” emphasizes

- a) society's return to old-fashioned beliefs.
- b) Biblical allusions often used in Gilead.
- c) the severity of the situation for women in society.**
- d) the lack of proper medical practices during this time.

Continue ▪

from *The Handmaid's Tale*, p166-67

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We turn our backs to the Wall, head left. Here there are several empty storefronts, their glass windows scrawled with soap. I try to remember what was sold in them, once. Cosmetics? Jewelry? Most of the stores carrying things for men are still open; it's just the ones dealing in what they call vanities that have been shut down.

At the corner is the store known as Soul Scrolls. It's a franchise: there are Soul Scrolls in every city center, in every suburb, or so they say. It must make a lot of profit.

The window of Soul Scrolls is shatterproof. Behind it are printout machines, row on row of them; these machines are known as Holy Rollers, but only among us, it's a disrespectful nickname. What the machines print is prayers, roll upon roll, prayers going out endlessly. They're ordered by Compuphone, I've overheard the Commander's Wife doing it. Ordering prayers from Soul Scrolls is supposed to be a sign of piety and faithfulness to the regime, so of course the Commanders' Wives do it a lot. It helps their husbands' careers.

There are five different prayers: for health, wealth, a death, a birth, a sin. You pick the one you want, punch in the number, then punch in your own number so your account will be debited, and punch in the number of times you want the prayer repeated.

The machines talk as they print out the prayers; if you like, you can go inside and listen to them, the toneless metallic voices repeating the same thing over and over. Once the prayers have been printed out and said, the paper rolls back through another slot and is recycled into fresh paper again. There are no people inside the building: the machines run by themselves. You can't hear the voices from outside; only a murmur, a hum, like a devout crowd, on its knees. Each machine has an eye painted in gold on the side, flanked by two small golden wings.

Soul Scrolls are an example of the author's use of

- a) personification
- b) metaphor
- c) symbolism
- d) irony**
- e) anachronism

The fact that the Soul Scrolls shop has shatterproof glass

- a) reflects the idea that society prizes the shop above all others
- b) indicates the tumultuous initial response of citizens to the regime**
- c) reveals the author's distaste for the commercialization of religion
- d) reinforces the idea of how removed from reality the women are

What is the main assertion the author focuses on in this passage?

- a) appearances in society are the key to survival
- b) personalization can be removed and replaced in every aspect of life**
- c) detachment is inevitable
- d) division of the sexes can be clearly drawn based upon apparel

Continue ■

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In a well organized essay, analyze the author's use of a motif or symbol as it affects the reader's understanding of the theme(s) of the novel, also noting how the author's style further enriches the reader's ability to identify with the protagonist.