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Theme: Art et Débats d'Idées

Part 2: Translation

English Version: (Text A: <i>I've become a woman of few words</i>)
<p>I've become a woman of few words.</p> <p>Tonight, at supper, before I speak my final syllables of the day, Patrick reaches over and taps the silver-toned device around my left wrist. It's a light touch, as if he were sharing the pain, or perhaps reminding me to stay quiet until the counter resets itself at midnight. This magic will happen while I sleep, and I'll begin Tuesday with a virginal slate. My daughter, Sonia's, counter will do the same.</p> <p>My boys do not wear counters.</p> <p>Over dinner, they are all engaged in the usual chatter about school.</p> <p>(1.1-8)</p>
Translated (to French) version:
<p>Je suis devenue une femme qui parle peu.</p> <p>Ce soir, pendant le dîner, avant que je ne prononce mes dernières paroles de la journée, Patrick touche l'objet argenté à mon poignet gauche. C'est une touche légère, comme si l'on partageais le même calvaire, ou, peut-être me rappelais-t-il de tenir ma langue jusqu'à l'auto réinitialisation du conteur, à minuit. Cette magie s'opère pendant mon sommeil, et je recommencerais mardi blanche comme la neige. Le compteur de ma fille Sonia fera de même. Mes garçons eux, n'en porte pas.</p> <p>Pendant le dîner, ils ont tous eu la conversation habituelle à propos de l'école.</p> <p>(1.1-8)</p>

Part 1: Short Commentary

The first document, A, is an extract of the book *Vox*, written by Christina Dalcher in 2018. The extract deals with a wife whom we think is the narrator. The wife explains that women and girls wear a silver-toned device which is nothing else than a word-counter. These counters reset themselves at midnight, men and boys need not wear one. As a matter of fact, in the extract they do not. The second document, B, is an extract of an article named *Why the handmaid's Tale is so relevant today* by Jennifer Keishin Armstrong on the 25th of April 2018. The article has been taken from the website BBC.com and analyses the impact the book written by Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaids tale*, has on nowadays society. In the article, they also analyse a few characters of the book and why they might be acting as such. The third document, C, is an advertisement for the third season of the handmaid's tale (the adaptation of 2017). In the foreground of the image is text. The first paragraph, in white, of two lines, is "Wake Up, /America" and is centred at the top of the advertisement. The second paragraph, also made of two lines, is "A hulu Original/The Handmaid's Tale", the first line is in white, The words "The" and "Tale" are in black and the word "Handmaid's" is in red, a symbol of the handmaid's movements and of the clothing of the handmaids in the book. At the bottom of the image is "season 3 coming soon" in white and centred. In the background, at the top is a translucent image of women that look like handmaids. Beneath that image is what looks like a Nazi movement of handmaids dressed in red and in a sort of military formation. So, how can fiction, politics and women's oppression be intertwined in these three documents? We will start by analysing how fiction, politics and women's oppression are shown in these documents. Then what impact it could have on the targeted people. Finally, we will conclude.

In the first document, women see their right of speech contained and restricted. They have a counter on their wrist, and it is not said what happens to them if they exceed their limit, but it is possibly an unpleasant punishment. This is the same kind of scheme in the second document, Serena Joy, a character in the book, used to make speeches but now has to stay at home, and everything she says is taken by the word. In the third document, the bottom part of the advertisement show a look-a-like of a military regime. This conveys the message that the handmaid's have the right to remain silent and blindly follow given out orders. All theses documents clearly show that there is a certain form of control over the human being, thus rendering it inhuman.

The impact of these kind of regimes can lead to serious unstableness of the targeted people. Depending on the level of deprivation, food, procreation, freedom of speech and/or (not an option) thought. In document A, the lack of freedom of words could lead to suicide, incapacity of answering other people's essential questions. These targeted restrictions also have an impact on other members that know the person. These impacts can severely sever links between them. As an example, when the father questions his daughter (who also has a counter) he can only ask yes or no questions, to which his daughter can answer by nods or side nods, in other terms: to speak without speaking. If she is asked a question that require more than one of these two words, she has to answer by not answering, which is basically wiggling her nose to inform her partner that these questions require to many words. In the handmaid's tale (document B and C), they are not regulated by the number of words but by their actions (or non-actions) and also by what they say and show. If they are considered dangerous by the government in

place it is easy to believe, from the bottom part of the advertisement (document C) that they will severely be punished or even killed.

Finally, throughout these documents, in these specific conditions, the women is considered as a danger and thus is oppressed as best as possible in the aim of preventing any rebelling or demonstration. According to these documents, we can think that the thought running the oppressions is: if the woman cannot express herself, she thus cannot turn against the regime and try to destroy it. Where the fiction comes in is because all these books are speculative and announce a possible outcome of nowadays conditions. One can wonder how the world would really be if one or more of these books where to become reality.

Word count: 797 words