The Ceremony : THE center scene of the novel !

Use of female body

Religious aspect of it (Biblical reference to Rachel)

Useable for utopia/dystopia, Building and expression of self, Meeting the other (loneliness)

1. White=purity, virginity, health, cleanliness, peace

White is surrounding the women (Serena Joy, Offred)

Marriage, death, birth = opposite are joined by the white surrounding them

All three are religious events, ceremonies !

1. a) Commander, SJ, Offred : the two women lying on a bed, SJ is holding Offred’s hand (hurting her with her wedding ring)

Symbol of birth (delivery) / love-making (getting the same feelings, the same movements)

Uncanny : SJ is « giving birth » to Offred. The woman she once was (in the past) is killed by the Ceremony, she is a new woman !

Destroying of the old self to build another self !

b) Big belly = pregnancy, changing body of women, woman giving birth to another self (1 self becomes 2)

« **propelled forward** by a swollen belly » (l. 12) = being pregnant would give her a promotion, go forward in society

c) Scene = religious ceremony, imagery of flowers, scents, a poem (romantic, love)

Reality = rape ! Violence and chaos

Utopia v. dystopia

d) Compared to ships and referred to as bellies : they are objects ! They are meaningless, they are only reproductive. They do not have an identity. They are nobodies.

FOCUS ON :

Faithfulness of The Ceremony to the Bible : it is the same almost to the letter. They apply the Bible to their daily lives (theocracy !) = denunciation by M Atwood of use of extreme religion to tame women, to make them inferior =====useable for Art and Debating (protesting established order)

STYLE LAB :

She/ her /me/mine/ hers (in the same passage) : they are ONE (« we are one flesh, one being » l.20) = they are merging into one body (from 2 bodies you get one ; from 2 selves, you get 1 self)

A baby is more important than a woman !

Comparison to Lolita : fight between the hero, **Humbert Humbert** (he has a doppelganger, a double), and Clare **Quilty (Guilty), mirroring effect : understand that Clare Quilty is the doppelganger of Humbert Humbert, he is the GUILTY one ! Humbert is fighting his other self, his demon. By killing Clare Quilty, he is killing the bad side of him. He wants to cleanse himself !**

1. ceremony/Serena Joy/(white) canopy./ hands/domination, subordination, control…

Vocab :

To kill 2 birds with one stone

To be inert = to be still, not to move, to be motionless

Canopy= above the head (forest, bed)