

IOC Practice #2

From Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Chapter 5, page 28.

A group of people is coming towards us. They're tourists, from Japan it looks like, a trade delegation perhaps, on a tour of the historic landmarks or out for local color. They're diminutive and neatly turned out; each has his or her camera, his or her smile. They look around, bright-eyed, cocking their heads to one side like robins, their very cheerfulness aggressive, and I can't help staring. It's been a long time since I've seen skirts that short on women. The skirts reach just below the knee and the legs come out from beneath them, nearly naked in their thin stockings blatant, the high-heeled shoes with their straps attached to the feet like delicate instruments of torture. The women teeter on their spiked feet as if on stilts, but off balance; their backs arch at the waist, thrusting the buttocks out. Their heads are uncovered and their hair too is exposed, in all its darkness and sexuality. They wear lipstick, red, outlining the damp cavities of their mouths, like scrawls on a washroom wall, of the time before.

I stop walking. Ofglen stops beside me and I know that she too cannot take her eyes off these women. We are fascinated, but also repelled. They seemed undressed. It has taken so little time to change our minds, about things like this.

Then I think: I used to dress like that. That was freedom.

Westernized, they used to call it.

The Japanese tourists come towards us, twittering, and we turn our heads away too late: our faces have been seen.

There's an interpreter, in the standard blue suit and red-patterned tie, with the winged-eye tie pin. He's the one who steps forward, out of the group, in front of us, blocking our way. The tourists bunch behind him; one of them raises a camera.

"Excuse me," he says to both of us, politely enough. "They're asking if they can take you picture."

I look down at the sidewalk, shake my head for no. What they must see is the white wings only, a scrap of face, my chin and part of my mouth. Not the eyes. I know better than to look the interpreter in the face. Most of the interpreters are Eyes, or so it's said.

I also know better than to say yes. Modesty is invisibility, said Aunt Lydia. Never forget it. To be seen- to be *seen*- is to be- her voice trembled- penetrated. What you must be, girls, is impenetrable. She called us girls.

Guiding Questions:

- What is a main idea or theme in this passage, and how has it been developed through literary elements?
- How does Offred's diction (her choice of words, phrases, and style of narrating) affect the story, the message?

Name_____

Self Assessment & Reflection

As you discussed the text, how well did you meet the following criterion? Using the IB rubric for the IOC, listen to your practice commentary and score yourself based on the prompts below.

Criterion A: Knowledge & understanding of the text

- Did you show knowledge and understanding of the text?
- Did you use textual evidence to support your comments?

Score yourself: (1-10, 10 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Criterion B: Understanding of the use and effects of literary features

- Did you discuss the literary features used in the text?
- Did you discuss how the literary features contributed to the text's meaning?
- Did you discuss how the literary features affected readers?

Score yourself: (1-10, 10 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Criterion C: Organization

- How well organized was your commentary?
- Were your main points easy to identify and follow?

Score yourself: (1-5, 5 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5

Criterion D: Language

- How clear, varied, and accurate was the language you used?
- Did you apply vocabulary terms we discussed in class to talk about the text?
- Did you use a formal tone to discuss the text?

Score yourself: (1-5, 5 being the best)

1 2 3 4 5