Movement And Maturity Essay, Research Paper

It has been said, “The only thing constant is change itself.” A change that we all must go through is the inevitable evolution from childhood into adulthood. In “Doe Season,” David Michael Kaplain writes about Andy, a young girl, who makes this transition while she is on a hunting trip. In the story the author uses parallels between light, water, and blood, all things with continuous movement, to symbolize the constant changes that are a part of life.

Light plays a very important role in the story. There is always a continuous movement in nature from darkness to light. Andy believes there is a clearly defined moment in which dark turns to light and expresses a desire to see this change. “ There has to be just one moment when it all changes from dark to light…. She had missed it yesterday…today she would watch more closely” (354). In the story the darkness represents childhood and not being self-aware. Light, on the other hand, is a symbol for self-enlightenment that comes with maturity and adulthood. Contrary to what Andy thinks, there is no precise moment when it all changes. Just like life, it is a constant process. Not only the process of light is important in the story, but also the source. At the beginning of Andy’s dream, she awakens and “sense[s] light, blue and pale, light where before there had been none. The moon must have come out, she thought” (359). Here the author is using a foreshadowing of sorts, but to understand it, one must have knowledge of mythology. Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon, was also the goddess of the hunt. This is fitting not only because the characters are hunting, but also because the moon plays a vital role in assisting Andy’s transformation. Through all of these uses of light David Kaplain symbolizes the change from girlhood into womanhood.

In the story Andy sees the feminine light from the moon, and then she sees the doe. From the doe flows yet another reference to change and womanhood: blood. Genesis 9:4 says that blood is the “life of the flesh.” Throughout history women have been known as the preservers of life. They provide care and nourishment, whereas the men are the hunters and killers. “That’s what the woods are all about anyway…it’s where women don’t want to go” (355). The blood Andy sees coming from the doe appalls her. When her hand was in the deer it caused her physical pain because it was not in her nature to see the pain and blood and experience the horror that comes with killing. “And then her hand pulled free, followed by a steaming rush of blood, more blood than she ever could have imagined-it covered her hand and arm, and she saw to her horror that her hand was steaming” (360). Andy then tried to remove any trace of the blood on her. “She moaned and fell to her knees and plunged her hand into the snow” (360). Women are not unaccustomed to blood. Their menstrual flow is a natural part of a mature woman’s life. But, Andy despised the blood that came from the doe because it represented death and pain. Blood symbolizes the flow from girlhood into womanhood, but more than that, it also illustrates the womanhood Andy is brought into.

The ocean is another symbol used in the story to represent change. This metaphor, however, is complex. While it alludes to the change that is undergone, like the blood, it also represents what Andy changes into: womanhood. A woman’s body consists of more water than a man’s. Just like the water in the ocean is susceptible to the gravitational pull of the moon, so is the water in a woman’s body. She is like and ocean in that she has tides. But how the tides affect each woman may be different for each. Nonetheless, there is a movement of water inside a woman’s body. The movement is key, not only in the physical sense, but also the abstract. Andy remembers the first time she sees the ocean, “it frightened her. It was huge and empty, yet always moving. Everything lay hidden” (352). To Andy, the ocean represents her as a woman, but also it describes life in general. A young girl such as Andy may not be able to conceptualize life. It scares her because it is so big and unknown, and yet she realizes that it is constantly changing. She too is changing, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. “…All around her roared the mocking of the terrible, inevitable, sea” (360). As much as Andy resisted the change, it was certain. Just as Andy’s body is constantly in motion of change, so is her life and so will it always be.

In “Doe Season,” David Michael Kaplain successfully uses the moving images of light, blood, and the ocean to represent the prevalent changefulness of life and the maturity of one girl into womanhood. Even though, like Andy, one may not want to change, the author proved it is impossible to escape that intrinsic feature of life.

Bibliography

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