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Abstract :

In line with growing interests in the intertextual dimensions of literary works, this paper explores how Atwood infuses her novel with intertextual references from Hans Christian Anderson's "The Little Mermaid" to convey her protagonist's chattered identity and fragmented memories. It further highlights that Atwood's novel is deeply entrenched in her protagonist's life choices and her struggle to change the status quo. In other words, it grapples with how Atwood uses the fairy tale as a tool to invite the reader to rethink of traditional discourses which she reverses, deconstructs to suggest and to form a new human view in a female perspective. The study also examines how the author problematizes the protagonist's distorted figuration in a patriarchal world. Using what critics say about intertextuality and its use, the study finds out that Atwood's rewrites multiple fairy tales as Anderson's "The Little Mermaid" to reveal the vices in her society on female characters. For the sake of achieving these aims, the study uses a distillation of studies on intertextuality and fairy tales to unravel how drawing on and revisiting fairy tales, in Lady Oracle, is seen as a sort of empowerment of Atwood's protagonist.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Margaret Atwood, Lady Oracle, Empowerment, Representation and the Self.

المخلص :

تم اشياع الاهتمام المتزايد بالأبعاد التناسية للأعمال الأدبية، يستكشف هذا البحث كيف قصفي أتوود على روايتها إشارات تناسية من قصة "حورية البحر الصغيرة" لهانز كريستيان أندرسون، ليعر عن هوية بطلتها المـ، شتتة وذكرايتها المـ. كما، يسلط الضوء على تجنـو رواية أتوود في خيارات حياة بطلتها وكفاحها لتغيير الوضع الراهن. بعبارة أخرى، يـالج البحث كيفية استخدام أتوود للحكاية الخرافية كـ أداة لدعوة القارئ إلى إعادة التفكير في الخطابات التقليدية التي قيد صياغتها، وحقكها، لتـجي برؤية إنسانية جديدة من منظور أنثوي. كما يـبحث البحث في كيفية إشكالية الكاتبة لتشويه صورة بطلة الرواية في عالم أبوي. وبالأستناد إلى آراء النقاد حول التناس واستخدا ماته، تكتشف الدراسة أن أتوود قيد كتابة العديد من القصص الخرافية على غرار "حورية البحر الصغيرة" لأندرسون، لكشف عيوب في مجتمعا. لتحقيق هذه الأهداف، تستخدم الدراسة خلاصة دراسات التناس والحكايات الخرافية لكشف كيف ينظر إلى الاستلهاـم من الحكايات الخرافية وإعادة تناولها، في رواية "ليدي أوراكل"، على أنه نوع من تمكين شخصية أتوود الرئيسية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التناس، مارجريت أتوود، ليدي أوراكل، التمكين، التمثيل، والذات

Introduction:

Inherited from the oral traditions and folkloric tales, fairy tales have been formed to shed light on the human struggle with immortality and resurrection. Authors adapt fairy tales to present day concerns. Robert Coover, Angela Carter, Emma Donoghue and Margaret Atwood are cases in point. In *Do not Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*, Jack Zipes highlights that women writers rewrite fairy tales to “challenge conventional views of gender, socialization and sex roles” (1986, p. XI). Angela Carter, for instance, in her “Notes from The Front Line” refers to her process of re-writing fairy tales to highlight such intellectual development. (p. 69). From Carter’s perspective, one can say that different authors use intertextuality as a literary technique not to only introduce to the reader different forms of deconstructing literary and non-literary works but also to rework conventional literary forms as fairy tales to inscribe and evoke certain topics. The reworking of fairy tales in Atwood’s fiction has been a main topic for critics including Sharon Rose Wilson, Brooks Bouson and others. On this basis, the present study explores Margaret Atwood’s reworking of Christian Anderson’s “The Little Mermaid” in her novel *Lady Oracle*, showing how her protagonist passes through a process of metamorphosis.

Informed throughout by contemporary critics of the fairy tale such as Jack Zipes and Marina Warner, this study grapples with Atwood’s *Lady Oracle* and its drawing on “The Little Mermaid” to investigate the intertextual relations between the two texts, highlighting the mutual images, motifs, and themes. Also, it explores the empowerment of Atwood’s protagonist as a reaction to the passiveness of women in fairy tales. To achieve these goals, the present study seeks to answer the following questions: which types of texts create the network from which Atwood, in *Lady Oracle*, draw her inspiration? How does Atwood construct different and alterative female model for “The Little Mermaid”? And finally how does Atwood use intertextuality of the fairy tale “The little Mermaid” in her novel and to what effect?

Margaret Atwood (1939 –present) is considered to be one of the authors who have interests in intertextuality. Atwood’s writing foreground ways in which she uses fairy tales’ characters, settings and plots in her literary works to evoke certain themes and issues and to provide alternate and reversed meanings of fairy tales. In *The Robber Bride*, *the Edible Woman* and in *Surfacing*, Atwood

adapts and intertexts from fairy tales to fit with her characters' situations and transformations. In *Lady Oracle*, Atwood draws on different literary forms and conventions. Among the literary precedents evoked in Atwood's novel is "The Little Mermaid" which serves as a fecund source for the transformation of the main character in Atwood's novel. The latter revolves around the story of a young artist named Joan Delacourt Foster who has spent her life running away from her current situations. The novel alternates between flashbacks from the past and scenes from the present. Through flashbacks, the reader sees her first as an overweight child whose mother constantly criticizes her, and later, as a woman hiding her career as a writer. In the present, she has recently published a volume of feminist poetry which becomes a breakthrough success. The novel involves different references to allusions, to magazines and to fairy tales as "The Little Mermaid. The latter deals with the life of the mermaid who falls in love with the prince. The plot is set when the Little Mermaid visits the surface of the sea to observe life on land. As the plot develops, the Little Mermaid sacrifices her life as a mermaid to transform into a human in an attempt to win the affection of the prince. Ultimately, the Little Mermaid is faced with a decision to either murder her beloved or die. It is important to mention that "The Little Mermaid" is present in almost Atwood's works. As an illustration, in *Cat's Eye*, Elaine harms herself, resembling Anderson's little mermaid who suffers from mutilation in order to be accepted. On this basis, the present study explores the presence of the story and the purposes behind such intertext of the fairy tale in Atwood's *Lady Oracle*. It is significant in the way it adds criticism to the field of research about Atwood and her intention in using intertextuality throughout her literary career. In other words, it sheds light on Atwood's use of intertextuality as a tool to empower her protagonist against patriarchal norms.

In the field of research on Atwood's fiction and intertextuality, a lot of research has been done to analyse how Atwood's fiction thoroughly intertexts from previous literary works to achieve certain purposes. In "A Female Houdini: Popular Culture in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*" (1992), John Thienne grapples with how Atwood reworks gothic romances and the comic novel of manners to serve the purpose of self-expression. In "The Old Maps Are Dissolving : Intertextuality and Identity in Atwood's *The Robber Bride*" (1999), Donna L. Potts argues that Atwood, in *The Robber Bride*, draws on countless intertexts to contest authorial authority as the patriarchal society and the traditional concept of the self. To further illuminate her argument, the researcher

maintains that Atwood's intertextuality, in *The Robber Bride*, is seen as a postcolonial endeavor to devise a discourse that displaces the effects of the colonizing gaze. In "Polyphonic Resonances of Fairy Tales and Myths: *The Magic Toyshop* and *Life Before Man*" (2019), Katarina Labudova highlights that fairy tale themes are recurrent in the works of Atwood who seeks to show her protagonists' quests and searches for identity, transformation, healing and awakening" (p.159). The researcher compares the employment of fairy tale elements in Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* and Atwood's *Life Before Man* to find out that both authors see the fairy tale genre as an open source to be rewritten and can be subverted. Research as a whole is never done in vain; researchers are motivated to conduct projects in order to enrich the already existing body of knowledge. Likely, this study contributes to the field of intertextuality in Atwood's *Lady Oracle* by shedding light on issues like self-expression, and deconstruction of traditional themes as the submissiveness of female characters in patriarchal societies. Because of the scarcity of criticism dealing with the presence of intertextual elements from "The Little Mermaid" in Atwood's *Lady Oracle*, and the limited criticism considering why Atwood draws on such fairy tale, this study seeks to show how Atwood reinterprets and shifts the original fairy tale's themes from a romance to a story of transformation and identity.

1. Atwood's Intertextual References from Anderson's "The Little Mermaid" in *Lady Oracle*:

Intertextuality is a term coined by Julia Kristeva, in her work "Word, Dialogue and Novel" (1966) in which she defines intertextuality as "a mosaic of quotations" in which "any text is the absorption and transformation of another" (p. 37). In her definition, she focuses on the relationship between a given text and another one: "an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings" (p. 65). From her perspective, the text is related and inspired by another text, where different elements as the characters, the narratives, imagery and motifs can be read through the lens of pre-existing ones. She explains that texts are interconnected because they allude to, convert and draw from the preexisting texts. Thus, a text, from Kristeva's view, is a mosaic of quotations for the sake of commenting on, critiquing, and revising, correcting and subverting previous beliefs and issues.

In the twentieth century, the theory of intertextuality has been discussed in discourses about texts from Mikhael Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva and other

theorists such as Gerard Genette, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Michael Riffaterre and others (Alfaro, p. 269). Despite the fact that Julia Kristeva is the one who coined the term intertextuality, Mikhail Bakhtin, was the first who referred to the concept. Thus, Kristeva relies on Bakhtin's criticism in dealing with the concept of intertextuality. However, Andrea Lesic-Thomas maintains that Intertextuality substitutes Bakhtin's concept of dialogism through which he refers to the text as 'mosaic of quotations, an absorption and transformation of another text. Significantly, taking from Bakhtinian thoughts, kristeva replaces dialogism by Intertextuality to refer to the interconnectedness of texts in one single piece of writing. One should also refer to Roland Barthes who has contributed in the evolution of intertextuality. In his essay "The Death of the Author," he argues: "We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture (1967, p. 146). From the passage, one can say that Barthes highlights that the author has no longer the authority to interfere within the narrative; instead, the whole text is an area where there is a mixture of meanings, perspectives and thoughts that clash together. From this point, it seems clear that Kristeva and Barthes agree on the point that the text is a product that is built on multiple texts and different preexisting narratives. In the same vein, Frow, in *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices*, argues that the intersection of texts is seen as an act of interpretation that serves the objectives of reading (1991, 46).

Accordingly, intertextuality is used in Atwood's fiction to make up the fabric of her novels as a tool to break previous beliefs about feminism and the human nature in general. She is a revisionist author of conventional stories. She tends to create fictional female heroines who are different in character in regard to conventional heroines who surrender to the society authoritarian voice. It is worth noting that there are some critics who use the German word "Marchen" referring to the word fairy tale. Stith Thompson refers to the term: "a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs and episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite creatures and is filled with the marvelous. In this never-never land humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms and marry princesses" (1977, p.8). As a latecomer, Atwood seeks to present antithesis and to have a clear space for herself within an going literary tradition. In her use of the fairy tale genre in *Lady Oracle*, Atwood provides her

novel with another layer of meaning. In other words, she shows how her protagonist undertakes a journey of metamorphosis. Jack Zipes argues: “Oral and literary fairy enunciated, articulated and communicated feeling in efficient metamorphical terms that enabled listeners and readers to envision possible solutions to their problems so that they could survive and adapt to their environment” (p.27). Marie Luise von Franz is a Jungian scholar who emphasizes the meaning of fairy tales. In her book, *The Interpretation of Fairy Tales*, she maintains that fairy tales are not only associated with the psyche but they are also expressed through symbols (1996, p. 62). Wilson asserts that in Hans Christian Anderson’s tales and Atwood’s novels, women “symbolically lose their eyes, tongues, heads, or hearts and bodies, hands, or feet in phallogentric culture” (p.122). Thus, Atwood’s narrator is influenced by conventional heroines as the little mermaid to the extent she mentions them in her automatic writings. She, however, refuses to live the mermaid’s mode of life as being passive and having a sense of passiveness. She maintains: “I sat at the table with my hot cup, trying to organize my life” (p. 23). She instead strives to transform her life and be her true self.

2. The Affinities between Atwood’s *Lady Oracle* and Anderson’s “The Little Mermaid”

There are affinities and differences between the two stories’ main characters and their lives. Atwood sets up a whole set of mechanisms whereby the reader can assume the affinities between the two texts. An explicit intertextual reference within the novel is that Joan refers to the little mermaid in her writings, particularly when she refers to the situations of women in a patriarchal society, highlighting explicitly the protagonist’s life and the mistreatment of women in a patriarchal society. In *Lady Oracle*, Joan can be seen, in the beginning, as a parallel to the little Mermaid in terms of passiveness, identity crisis and the quest for self-expression. To begin with, both characters are seen as passive. The mermaid cannot break the laws of her father’s kingdom. She always asks her grandmother about her rights. Similarly, in the beginning of the novel, Joan seems to be passive and unable to act against the patriarchal mores. Her passiveness is clearly shown during her stay in Paul’s home as a mistress. She declares: “Paul began to have fits of jealousy. It was alright as long as I did nothing but loll around the flat, reading and typing out my Costume Gothics and going nowhere except with him” (p.158). Joan’s marriage with

Arthur is also another example of her identity crisis and passiveness. She repeatedly declares that Arthur laughs at her, at her clothes; this is why, she wants to liberate herself from his shackles: "I burst into tears and shoved my head under the pillow then I decided this would have to stop. I could not let Arthur go on controlling my life. I was someone else now, I was almost someone else" (p. 23).

Both of them experience an identity crisis as they begin their journeys to achieve their goals. In Anderson's tale, the little mermaid strives to gain a human shape while, in Atwood's novel, Joan wishes to reconstruct her true self and to reshape her body. In the "Little Mermaid," the narrator indirectly refers to the heroine's situation while she fits into a new form and world of humans. The narrator declares: "Then your tail will divide and shrink until it becomes what the people on earth call a pair of shapely legs... But every step you take will feel as if you were treading upon knife blades so sharp that blood must flow. I am willing to help you, but are you willing to suffer all this?" (14) In *Lady Oracle*, identity crisis is shown through Joan's struggle to fit into societal expectations through her fragmented identities and fear of exposure. She narrates: "By this time I was eating steadily, doggedly, stubbornly, anything I could get... The war between myself and my mother was on in earnest; the disputed territory was my body" (55). The theme of sacrifice is also present in both texts. In Anderson's tale, the little mermaid sacrifices her voice and immortality that causes her "great pain, as if a sharp sword were cutting through (her)" to have legs so that she can dance with the prince (48). In *Lady Oracle*, Joan sacrifices at first her career as an author to please her husband. Both suffer silently and never get what they yearn for. Anderson's tale is a tale of love and sacrifice. This latter represents the Mermaid's destruction. The fact that both characters' emotions and patterns of sacrifice that emerge in both works are strikingly similar to Marian, in Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, in which Marian totally forgets herself to satisfy the needs of her fiancé. This argument can be illustrated by her assertion that when she looks at Peter's eyes, she sees her reflection as "small and oval, mirrored in his eyes" (98) while she sees Peter's eyes as "gleaming like an animal's in the beam from a car headlight" (97). Unlike The Little Mermaid who surrenders, Joan, in *Lady Oracle*, casts off the patriarchal mores, questing for her authentic self. Barbara Godard highlights "Neither of them had been able to please the handsome prince: both of them had died" (p.69).

Ironically, Joan undergoes a fake death. As a narrator, however, she criticizes these plots implicitly by following another line.

One may push the analogy between Joan and the little mermaid further by referring to the theme of marriage. Joan, at the beginning, expects that, through marriage, girls are supposed to be rescued by a prince. After her marriage, she realizes that “those who got married too young, who had babies too early, who wanted princes and castles, ended up with cramped apartments and grudging husbands” (p. 99). To clarify her point, Joan gives examples of fairy tales in which girls fail and have tragic endings as Anderson’s “The Little Mermaid.” Joan declares, “I thought I had no soul; I just drifted around, singing vaguely, like the little mermaid in Anderson’s fairy tale. In order to get a soul you had to suffer, you had to give something up” (p.235). Joan refers to the little mermaid’s tragic end to understand more her relationship with her husband. In other words, the mermaid’s destructive end in Anderson’s fairy tale guides Joan to put an end to her unhealthy relation with her husband. Unlike the little mermaid who fails to express herself, Atwood’s protagonist strives to express herself by empowering herself against patriarchy. To express her protagonist’s empowerment, the author uses the metaphor of the balcony that stands for Joan’s hope to achieve her goals and construct her true self.

3. The Differences between Atwood’s Protagonist and Anderson’s Protagonist:

Atwood’s portrait of Joan constitutes an aspect of feminist rewriting. In Anderson’s tale, the little Mermaid is depicted as the beautiful mermaid under the sea: “Her skin was as clear and delicate as a rose petal, and her eyes were as blue as the deepest sea” (p. 35). She has a voice which is “the most beautiful voice of all down here at the bottom of the sea” (p. 48). In Atwood’s novel, by contrast, Joan is depicted as a fat lady who feels rejected even by her mother. Atwood uses a fat lady to challenge traditional conventions of ideal beauty. A comparison may also be made between Joan and the little Mermaid in terms of adaptation with reality. Joan is different from the little mermaid in the way that Joan does not want to adapt with her situation; she strives to escape it via writing. The theme of how women face and deal with cultural and patriarchal male authority is depicted through the eyes of Joan Foster who becomes an author and through her protagonists. This theme has been a main focus for critics including Edina Szalay who, in “The Gothic as Maternal Legacy in

Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*," argues: "The costume gothics, however, are not the only means of Joan's self-scrutiny. While working on *Love, My Ransom*, she experiences an ebb of creative energy and tries to find new impulses that can sustain her fantasy. Her only solution is Automatic writing. (p. 227) In the same vein, Vijeta Gautam and Jyotsma Sinha announce that by using imagination as a tool of escapism, Joan survives the social prejudices and then improve herself through fantasizing and creative writing (p. 234). This takes significance when Joan reacts against and protest to patriarchal mores represented by her mother. One might argue that this is a typically a rebellious feminist line of thinking. At the end of the novel, Joan emerges as a true artist who transforms herself, constructing a coherent identity.

Atwood shows that her protagonist's life is a combination of stories. The narrator asserts: "I had taken precautions of course. I was using my other name" (p.10). In this passage as in many, the author shows that Joan's life is under the influence of old fables and codes as Joan herself intertexts from other works including gothic romances in the process of writing her piece of art entitled *Lady Oracle*. Through writing, Joan recollects her own past memories and heals herself from them to be able to wake up and transform herself into an individual who has a coherent identity and a powerful character. Joan declares: "So when I shrank to normal size I had of these fears, and I had to develop them artificially. I had to keep reminding myself: do not go there alone. Do not go out at night. Eyes front. Do not look. When the hands appeared I could not cope with them" (p.138-39). Significantly, the author uses an open ending that stands for the notion that Joan resists and refuses to end her story as an image in the mirror. In other words, she rejects the patriarchal mores for woman to be the angel of the house. Godard highlights: "Atwood's parodic quotation of the fairy tale material in *Lady Oracle* is marked by a disdainful, rather than a reverential impulse whether tale or anti tale" (p.68).

The storyline, in *Lady Oracle*, does not depart as Anderson's story. In contrast to Anderson's traditional opening and impersonal narration in "The Little Mermaid," Atwood replaces it with an opening that brings to the fore an internal narrator's voice " I planned my death carefully; unlike my life, which meandered along from one thing to another, despite my feeble attempts to control it" (p.3). Thus, Atwood endows the female protagonist with a voice, empowering her against patriarchy. *Lady Oracle* illustrates various contemporary writers' attempt to rethink about feminist concerns. The

protagonist, in her gothic writings, challenges patriarchy by presenting a new story, plot and characters through a rewriting of its main intertexts. Joan, as an author, tries to portray her characters from a perspective that differs from that in "The Little Mermaid." Godard maintains: "Joan is conscious of the fact that completion of the fairy tale plots would find her in the grave. Equating marriage to death, Joan like Scheherazade, tells stories to save her life" (p.69). From Godard's perspective, one can say that Joan, in her automatic writings, uses the technique of the unreliable narrator and multiplicity of voices to survive her death as an author in gothic fiction and to escape her death in the real life.

4. Empowering Atwood's Protagonist through Intertextuality:

In the process of drawing on the fairy tale, Atwood involves tales within tales. To approach this issue, it takes us to another strategy that Joan uses as an author, she resists the traditional ending of death using story within story to give hope to her protagonists. Additionally, she changes identities as a way to resist the patriarchal codes that a woman is an image in the mirror. She declares: "They smelled of my death, of Lake Ontario, spilled oil. My funerary costume. My former self, damp and collapsed, from which the many colored souls had flown" (p.17). She adds that she "climbed back up to the balcony, feeling relieved. Once she dyed her hair, all the obvious evidence would be taken care of and she could start being another person, a different person entirely" (p.18). In other words, she uses the power of narration and different identities to challenge the authoritarian mother and society. Godard argues: "Storytelling literally does support (Joan's) life." She spins out Gothics based on fairy tale plots to fill other women's empty lives, giving them something to dream about. For in her role as author, Joan is cast in a different role in the fairy tale plot as "fairy godmother" with the power to turn them from pumpkins to pure gold (p.69).

As a revisionist author, Atwood alludes to the fairy tale of "The Little Mermaid" to focus on the emotions and experiences of her protagonist who conveys her desires and anxieties in the novel as she escapes from her country and her traumatic past. Joan declares:

For the first time since arriving, I began to feel afraid. It was more than depressing to have returned to this town, it was dangerous. It is no good thinking you are invisible if you are not. I needed something more familiar. A place

with no handholds, no landmarks, no past at all: that would
have been too much like dying (8-9).

As a fairy tale revisionist, Atwood focuses primarily on the theme of gender role models which endorses the stereotypical image of women and how Joan challenges such stereotypes. In "Transformation of the Protagonist in Margaret Atwood's *Lady Oracle*" Gautam and Sinha argue: "Joan's development through self-splitting, enactment of multiple roles to finally performing a ritual of death and rebirth denotes her escape into fantasies and then her gradual realization of the stereotypes imposed on her" (p.233). In the same vein, in "Tales within Tales: Margaret Atwood's Folk Narratives", Godard argues: "*Lady Oracle*'s frame plot is clearly based on those metamorphoses characteristic of the embedded fairy tales whose plots Joan undergoes a reverse metamorphosis from butterfly back to the poison that will kill it. This pattern of inversion makes *it* a traversy of fairy tales. (p. 60).

Accordingly, the author further intertexts from "The Little Mermaid" to satirize and parody the traditional patterns of passive female heroines, using her protagonist's strategies to express herself. As an illustration, Joan employs over eating to challenge the traditional standards of beauty. In other words, Joan breaks the role of the obedient and passive girl and becomes powerful through overeating. As a reaction, she becomes like a fat lady in a freak show. She describes herself as "A pink vision to the poor farmers of the Stc Lawrence Valley" (p. 111). She adds: "by this time, I was eating steadily; doggedly, stubbornly, anything I could get. The war between myself and my mother was on in earnest; the disputed territory was my body" (p. 71). She also criticizes the situation of married women in a patriarchal society. Unlike the little mermaid who sacrifices to satisfy the prince, Joan totally rejects being passive. She maintains: "How destructive to me were the attitudes of society, forcing me into a mold of femininity that I could never fit, stuffing me into those ridiculous pink tights" (p. 108). In the same vein, Joan uses her bodily gestures to express her resistance of the patriarchal codes. Since Joan senses a gap between reality and her culturally embedded self-imposed ideals, she strives to escape such situation through writing. Easy as it may seem to construct a new self as a reaction and escape from the unwanted self. Her epiphanic episodes make the character realizes her capacity to change herself. She maintains: "How much better for me if I had been accepted for what I was and had learned to accept myself, too" (p. 109). Through intertexting from Anderson's fairy tale, Atwood

empowers her protagonist, Joan, to accept herself and to move forward. Intertextuality; thus, is used as a tool of empowerment and self-actualization in *Lady Oracle*.

Conclusion:

The study provides a discussion of Atwood's intertextual allusion, in *Lady Oracle*, to Anderson's fairy tale to raise certain concerns as the theme of self-expression and empowerment against patriarchal mores. It shows that the fairy tale of "The Little Mermaid" has been proved to be a fertile field of criticism for critics. By resorting to parody, role reversal and other strategies, Atwood's retelling and adaptation of Anderson's fairy tale has contributed to the development of the tale's criticism. Atwood resorts to intertexting from the fairy tale in an attempt to transform and deconstruct the traditional female roles by giving her protagonist voice, power and the capacity to create her destiny by herself. Thus, the study finds out that by subverting elements of Anderson's fairy tale, Atwood's novel uses intertextuality as a tool to shed light on the concerns of the female character in an authoritarian society.

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