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Carla Scarano D?Antonio

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Abstract

My article explores how Margaret Atwood deconstructs dichotomous visions of women and proposes a reconstruction of women?s identity in the dominant sociopolitical context, suggesting alternative aesthetic systems. This implies self-knowledge and acceptance of both the good and the bad side of their identity; the acknowledgement of this reality is required in order to survive.

Index terms— aesthetics, storytelling, transformation, intertextuality, survival, polyphony.

1 Introduction

y critical analysis of the intertextual dialogues in Margaret Atwood's novels reveals a constant conversation within the main text. The novels question and challenge the narratives of the androcentric dominant society via the recurring use of intertexts and allusions and invite a rethinking of traditional discourses. They prompt transformation in a politics of resistance within a world of language that acquires power via its aesthetical implications. The intertextual references are reversed, deconstructed and revised to suggest a different vision which is diverse, multiple and non-dichotomous. The intertextual dialogue attempts to change the narratives from within to form a new human view, a female view, and aims to save human culture in a wider perspective. This perspective is multifaceted and open; it is in progress and encompasses different aspects of being human.

In my article I argue that Margaret Atwood's use of intertexts aims to revise traditional narratives of the patriarchal society in the sociopolitical context that existed at the time the novels I analyse were published. This attempted revision is also relevant at the time of writing in view of the risk of backlashes against women and human rights as well as against environmental concerns. Atwood's rewriting of these types of narratives is an attempt to remythologise the stories, myths and legends that construct our world, a world of language. The intertextual allusions and interpretations parody the texts in a dialogic mode that exposes the incongruities of the constricted roles of the patriarchal society. The intertexts are therefore a tool that deconstructs obsolete narratives and changes them from within and propose alternative visions. Thus, questioning and proposing are the two parallel paths Atwood adopts to envisage a change in a polyvalent view that is diverse, flexible and in flux. It is a work in progress that needs to adapt to different sociopolitical situations. In this new vision, she is committed to giving voice and space to marginalised groups, especially to women.

In this perspective, aesthetics and politics are strictly linked in Atwood's work in two ways. The first is that her novels expose the propagandistic attitude of the dominant society and its consumeristic and patriarchal values that force the individual into prescribed roles. The aesthetic practices of this society are manipulative and threatening and aim to control people. In this way, the political systems become aesthetic, that is, they rely on art and literature to convey and implement their ideologies and values. 1 On the other hand, and this is the second link, the narratives of the novels create a world of language, an aesthetic experience that proposes political alternatives to the status quo.

According to Greek philosophers, aesthetic is a sensory perception, an experience that aims to understand and value the properties of the object. 2 Kant spoke of aesthetic perception as being immediate but disinterested and as having no regard for whether the real existence of the object being perceived. 3 Therefore, aesthetic perception and experience are connected to a 1 Crispin Sartwell, Political Aesthetics (London: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 1. 2 Jerrold Levinson, 'Philosophical Aesthetics: An Overview', in The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics, ed. by Jerrold Levinson, 2009, pp. 1-23 (3-4), available at < 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199279456.003.000> [accessed

30 June 2021]. 3 Ibid., p. 7. world created by art; although they do not necessarily express what happens in the real world, they provide an interpretation and contribute to the understanding of changes and developments in society. 4 The relation between aesthetics and politics is therefore temporal and is manipulated in favour of the dominant regime or in opposition and resistance to it.

According to Heidegger, artworks set up a world that culminates in poetic composition 5 and aims for a collective transformation. 6 Thus, the world of language of the text is the place where this dynamic artpolitical tension takes place in a conversation with traditional narratives that are manipulated by the dominant society. In opposition to the establishment, Atwood's novels envisage aesthetic alternatives that are nonetheless political too. The world depicted by the artist or novelist is re-experienced by the reader, who develops intertextual connections and relations in their interpretation of the text. According to Sartwell, 'Not all art is political, but all politics is aesthetic' and 'at their heart political ideologies, systems, and constitutions are aesthetic systems'. 7 This concept and aesthetic practice are very important for understanding systems, regimes and/or ideologies. These systems use different media that are related to one another. 8 In addition, these strategies affect people and guide them towards certain beliefs and attitudes. Therefore, 'understanding the aesthetics of politics' means understanding politics itself. 9 This is especially true for totalitarian regimes, such as those based on Nazism and Fascism, as Sartwell remarks; a particular aesthetic was central to their programme and was used as propaganda in order 'to reshape the world'. 10 Myths, folktales and music can therefore become the vehicle of these ideologies. 11 This is not only applicable to Fascism but also to anarchism and to alternative ideologies; their critique of the ideological constraints of the dominant society in a 'vision of liberation' implies that there is some aesthetic political system to replace the 'old view'. 12 This culminates in 'a competition to control the state and allocate its resources'. 13 The process is a transformation that implies the involvement of the body.

All of these ideas are present in the novels I am going to analyse in the form of a dominant society that imposes rules and roles through different media and expects the characters to comply with these patterns so that those in power can control their attitudes and reactions and profit from them. The economic aspect is not the only reason for the deployment of a particular aesthetic in politics; there is also and above all the necessity to exert power and to ensure that this control will endure over time and is perpetuated through the rules and roles imposed on the individual. The use and manipulation of the narratives in favour of the dominant society are therefore crucial to make this control effective in the long term, avoiding and/or suppressing any possible alternative discourse. During the narration, the protagonists of the novels become aware that complying with these rules and roles is not only constraining and restrictive but is also dangerous for their integrity. The roles proposed and imposed by society are diminishing and threatening, especially for women. This is revealed in the texts through the intertextual dialogue between the main texts and also through the intertexts and the response of the reader, who might contribute to changing the traditional narratives of the society they live in in a personal and social transformation that might trigger real change. Marion, the surfacer, Offred and Elaine become aware of the diminished, constrained roles the society assigns them but cannot attain a complete transformation as the society they live in does not allow it.

Furthermore, the open endings of the novels that I analyse testify to Atwood having a sceptical view of all of the changes that are possible, because the narratives can be rewritten but old stories loom and the protagonists go back to a society that has not changed (The Edible Woman and Surfacing) or to an uncertain future (The Handmaid's Tale and Cat's Eye); neither case allows the protagonists to implement what they have learned or to be understood in the course of their stories. Nevertheless, in Atwood's last novel, The Testaments, and in recent talks and interviews, she reveals a more optimistic view. She trusts the new generation and recent movements such as MeToo, Extinction Rebellion and Black Lives Matter. According to the novelist, young people involved in these movements are committed to change and fight for civil rights and for a better future for the environment. She remarks that there are several possible futures; which one we end up having depends on people's choices and on the way they vote. My method of examining the intertextual references is therefore in line with and confirms Atwood's sociopolitical aims that are developed in language, that is, in her revision of patriarchal narratives in a dialogic mode. Her desire for change and her exploration of possible alternative 'truths' point to personal and human survival in a world that is risking social and environmental extinction.

Various critics have pointed out that Atwood uses intertexts in a parodic and ironic way to criticise traditional discourses. **??**4 In this sense, Atwood is in line with what Bakhtin and Kristeva claim about the novel:

The novel, seen as a text, is a semiotic practice in which the synthetized patterns of several utterances can be read. **??**5 Thus, according to Kristeva, the novel cannot be considered to be an isolated product but is necessarily connected to other texts which gain value and are defined within the main text. **??**6 In Atwood's work, the exposure of the incongruities, contradictions and threatening qualities of the intertexts in the context of the novels reveals the need to change the angle -to modify the stories, to rewrite them. Consequently, the constructed and constricted roles imposed by the dominant society on the individual are restricting, frightening and entrapping. In the novels, the characters, mainly female characters, struggle to find alternatives to these roles in order to survive. It is a process that does not reach a conclusion and involves many failures but maintains a hopeful view. It is a movement of coming and going in an intertextual dialogue that is complex and implies doubts and drawbacks. This dialogue suggests alternatives but never states conclusions in a constant exchange that engenders multiple interpretations.

2 II.

3 The Edible Woman: Reshaping the Body

The alluring but deceptive rules of the consumerist society depicted in The Edible Woman are challenged and questioned in the sociopolitical context of the novel through the intertextual references. The certainties they envisage and implement are disrupted in an ironic mode that reveals society's discrepancies and threatening undertones. At the same time, the dialogue between texts creates new possibilities or alternatives that are never definite or closed in the novel. At the end of the novel, the protagonist is open to an uncertain future that in part confirms the status quo. Therefore, the use of the intertexts is unsettling and also confirms the power of the subtexts and of the patriarchal discourse behind them. The novel attempts to rewrite the narratives, though partially and provisionally, in an endless process of revision that suggests different interpretations and possible alternatives. As Bakhtin states, different influences between texts have a dialogic quality; diverse interpretations and multiple readings coexist and are always open and deny any 'absolute meaning'. 17 This implies a dialogue and a negotiation between the reader and the texts within the main text that allow different interpretations. 18 Therefore, the dialogue between texts creates different views in which the conclusion is always shifting and the final result is never attained. This reflects what Bakhtin and Kristeva say about the novel -that it opens up a world of language in an intertextual dynamic dialogue that is transgressive and polyphonic and in continuous progress. It unveils obsolete conventions and proposes different multiple interpretations. 19 The body speaks a distinctive language in The Edible Woman, taking control of the protagonist's actions and leading her to an awakening, self-discovery and alternative identities to the stereotyped female roles that surround her. Her body speaks an ideological truth that opposes the roles assigned to her while her mind keeps aligning to the rules of society. The body voices rebellion and subversion; it takes action by running away, refusing food and vomiting, or, on the contrary, searching for renewal in a sexual exploration that encompasses sexual self-pleasure, cleaning, cooking and eating food, exploring the wilderness and connecting to the maternal chora. In this context, Marian's symbolic eating disorder reshapes her body, entailing possible alternatives that are in opposition to the roles dictated by the consumerist society. The final act of cannibalism (eating the woman-shaped cake) is a reappropriation of the body and the dissolution of the enemy via digestion: the woman-shaped cake is like a submissive glossy doll. The protagonist's search for a modelled female identity is indefinite at the end of the novel but needs to go beyond the examples of women she has around her, maybe to a distant past where no one will tell her 'you're just rejecting your femininity'. **??**0 This reshaping of the body has political implications that are expressed in the aesthetic manipulation of the 17 Dennis Cutchins, 'Bakhtin, Intertextuality and Adaptation', in The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies, ed. by Thomas Leitch (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 1-16 (pp. 2-3). 18 Ibid., pp. 4 and 6. 19 As Kristeva remarks, for Bakhtin the novel is 'polyphonic' and its narrative structure indicates 'a becoming', Julia Kristeva, 'Word, dialogue, and novel', in Kristeva, Desire in Language, p. 71. **??**0 The statement is repeated twice in the book, the first time by Peter and the second time by Ainsley at the end of the story. Margaret Atwood, The Edible Woman (1969; London: Virago Press, 2009), pp. 95 and 345. Further references to this text will be placed in parentheses following quotations. Hill Rigney argues that Marian 'never truly grows up, partly because she rejects and denies her own feminine powers of procreation which [...] are symbolic of her potential for artistic creativity'. Barbara Hill Rigney, Women Writers. Margaret Atwood (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1987), p. 5. However, Marian creates the cake at the end of the novel and she acquires a more mature self-awareness after rejecting the 'feminine mystique'. language of the novel that deconstructs the narratives of the consumerist society and proposes an alternative self. 21 The influence of advertisements and commercials is aggressively present in every part of the characters' lives. Of course, the purpose of the commercials is to improve sales, which is the reason why Seymour Surveys exists, but also to dictate gender roles. 22 Their targets are mainly women, who do the daily or weekly shopping and provide the household not only with food but also with cleaning products, clothes, tools and appliances. Though the main case study of the story is Moose Beer, which is targeted at men, women, as the main shoppers, are the tasters and buyers of food. As Becker claims, Atwood's protagonists 'resist and refuse representation without forgetting the seductiveness of media images of women'. 23 In the novel, women are seduced and cherish the products displayed in the supermarket aisles and are soothed by 'gentle music', like cows who give 'more milk when sweet music [is] played to them' (213), as Marian notices when she does her weekly shopping. She reveals the alluring and deceitful strategies adopted by the consumerist society to induce people to buy and consume. The manipulative techniques confirm the fact that people are reduced to pure consumers, alienated from their desires and real necessities. The integrity of the self is endangered as each person acts like 'a somnambulist' in 'a euphoric trance'; people are exploited to give 'more milk', that is, produce and consume more. Marian's senses are deceived by the 'tinkly waltz' and the 'bright label'. Although she tries to defend herself by adopting counter-strategies, such as sticking to her list, choosing brands at random and ticking the things off her list, she is not 'immune'; she has to buy something eventually -she is complicit. The strategies implemented by the consumerist society therefore invade important parts of the self; they cannibalise the subject, depriving them of vital autonomy. 24 21 Some parts of this section on The Edible Woman were previously published in Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal. Carla Scarano D'Antonio, 'Consuming and Being Consumed', Exchanges: The Interdisciplinary Research Journal, 7, 2, (2020), pp. 35-57, available at <https://doi.org/10.31273/eirj.v7i2.446 > [accessed 30 June 2021]. 22 Atwood worked for Canadian Facts, a

market research company in Toronto in 1963. Rosemary Sullivan, The Red Shoes. Margaret Atwood starting out (Toronto: HarperCollins books Canada, 1998), p. 141. The name 'Seymour' suggests 'see more', a pun that ironically comments on the pretentious claims of the company whose aims are merely commercial; 'see more' implies surveillance and some sort of clairvoyance but actually the company's only aim is to 'sell more'. 23 Becker, p. 34. 24 'You let the thing in you that was supposed to respond to the labels just respond, whatever it was; maybe it had something to do with the pituitary gland' (214). The pituitary gland regulates vital body functions, and therefore the passage refers to a dangerous intrusion into people's minds.

Commenting on the Moose Beer commercial, Duncan points out important intertextual connections, citing the Decameron, two Grimm Brothers' fairy tales and Titus Andronicus (58). He refers to the first and ninth stories in Fourth Day in the Decameron. Both stories are about the killing of the male lover (by the father in the first story and by the husband in the ninth). The hearts of the dead lovers are offered to the unfortunate female lover in each story, who eventually commits suicide. The Grimm Brothers' stories about cannibalism are 'The Robber Bridegroom' and 'Snow White'. Titus Andronicus has a notoriously violent sanguinary plot involving multiple murders, rapes and cannibalism. All the stories involve cannibalism, in the specific offering and possibly eating of the lover's (or the enemy's) heart, or of other parts of the body. The heart is also ironically and metaphorically evoked in the Valentine's Day heartshaped cake that Marian buys and offers to Peter. Significantly, he eats the cake after making love, a performance in which Marian is guided and objectified, but Marian spits out the cake, feeling it spongy against her tongue 'like the bursting of thousands of tiny lungs' (258). It seems alive to Marian, warning her about the cannibalistic implication of her love story. Thus, the intertextual references to women's violent deaths are a warning for Marian, whose love life is in crisis and whose failure to attain love may lead to real or symbolic death in the form of starvation or self-effacement.

Therefore, the intertextual link made by Duncan between advertisements and violent stories of women's murders is a metaphorical anticipation of what is going to happen to Marian when she chooses to marry Peter in accordance with the conventions of the modern fairy tale and the fake romance in the commercials. This is her fate, unless she becomes aware of her state and keeps a record of what is happening, like the robber's bride. She needs to progress from being a victim to being a non-victim position to survive. 25 Nevertheless, Marian's progress is continuously mystified in the novel in a constant tension between complicity and rebellion in which her body attempts to reshape a more conscious alternative self.

At the end of the novel, the preparation of the woman-shaped cake Marian was supposed to personify is Marian's performative pre-language and bodylanguage response to all the attempts at assimilation she has endured. It is an offering mainly conceived for Peter but also for the other characters in the story as an edible substitute that should satiate their consumerist hunger and grant her freedom and survival. 26 Consequently, the novel exposes the artificial world of consumerism that threatens the integrity of the individual to the point of cannibalism and self-Volume XXII Issue X Version I 4 ( ) cannibalism. It is a form of self-victimisation, a destruction prompted by the aesthetic strategies of the consumerist society. The alternative is a total rebellion that has aesthetic and political implications. This rebellion starts from the body in a reappropriation that is vital; it leads to survival and to a more open, multiple vision of being a woman and being human. It is a new possible ontological vision that is never definite but is always in progress and a place where different possibilities and interpretations coexist. The dialogue between texts does not give a definite solution but creates a tension; it is a dialectic aesthetic process in which the self is momentarily reshaped but never attains a certain status.

4 III. National and Personal Search for

5 Identity in Surfacing

Atwood takes this aesthetic and sociopolitical perspective in her second published novel, Surfacing, which relates to national and personal identity; she elaborates these in this novel and also in Survival in the 1970s. The two texts are in a symbiotic relationship: Survival creates the 'critical context in which to read [Atwood's] own fiction'. 27 The novel is halfway between poetry and prose and is written in an experimental language that is connected to the disruptive function of the novel. By using this kind of language, the novel opens up to non-dichotomous visions that envisage multiple views of being human and encompass good and evil in the Canadian cultural and environmental context. 28 The intertexts are used in different ways. They highlight a diverse vision in a 'dialogic thought' that is in relation with the narratives of the main text. They parody traditional narratives in a thought-provoking perspective, proposing a different view that engages the protagonist and the reader in a quest at personal and national levels. The fairy tales are almost rejected and reversed or rewritten in a 'Canadian version'; 29 they are parodied in order to expose their incongruence in the Canadian perspective and landscape. The stories about wendigos and werewolves, as well as stories related to humananimal beings, such as Napi the trickster and other indigenous legends, are considered to be the alternatives the protagonist suggests in the course of the narrative. Noticeably, Napi the trickster and the similar legendary figure of Old Man Coyote are 27 Coral Ann Howells, Margaret Atwood, p. 39. 28 destroyers and creators. They help men but also kill and rape other creatures. They are loners and outsiders but are described as human-like characters. In this way, they encompass both the good and the bad side of humanity but in a supernatural way. 30 Wilson speaks of Atwood's characters as tricksters as well. They are able to manipulate and create possibilities. 31 Therefore, the animal beings encompass a wider vision of being human that comprehends good and bad sides,

232 that is, humanity as it should be. Furthermore, according to Hammill, 'the trickster continually disrupts efforts
233 to establish fixed identities based on race, sexuality or gender, religion or social class'. 32 This view questions and
234 challenges the notion of identity in the Canadian context and suggests an alternative to the far-fetched roles the
235 protagonist finds in the civilised society of the city that traumatised her. This is also clear in the protagonist's
236 transformation into an animal being at the end of the novel and in her involvement with Joe, whom she refers to
237 as a 'buffalo' or an animal that is covered with fur and that has little speech and is 'half-formed' (2, 186). In a
238 similar but not exactly equal way, the classical myth involving Callisto and the Demeter and Persephone myth are
239 rewritten in a universal view, exposing the diminished and debased role of women in a patriarchal society. In fact,
240 the myths have a prepatriarchal element that is positive and affirms women's right to self-determination. This
241 element was changed and distorted in the course of the patriarchal narratives. 33 Therefore, a new ontological
242 vision is proposed that in part revives the ancient meaning of the myths by exposing the traumatic experience
243 inherent in the stories and revealing the possibility of rebirth. This rebirth necessitates overcoming trauma and
244 acknowledging being a non-victim as well as a compromise with a society that has not changed and is hostile to
245 women.
246 In this context of a search for cultural autonomy, the important intertexts I will analyse are the following
247 Grimm Brothers' fairy tales: 'The Golden Phoenix', 'The Fountain of Youth', 'The Juniper Tree', 'The White
248 Snake', 'Fitcher's Bird' and 'The Girl without Hands', which have been discussed by various critics, such as
249 Sharon Wilson, Elizabeth Baer and Ronald Granofsky. **??**4 The protagonist also refers to Canadian folktales
250 and legends such as those about the loup-garou, werewolf stories and stories about wendigos. Ancient myths are
251 evoked too, such as the myth of the Triple Goddess as well as the two myths involving Callisto and Demeter and
252 Persephone respectively. indigenous art and culture are present in the form of pictographs.
253 In this quest for alternatives, the protagonist needs to acknowledge that she is both victim and victimiser. She
254 looks for alternatives that cannot eventually deny her Western background in her reintegration into the civilised
255 world of the city. There is a final compromise that nevertheless implies a revaluation of the Canadian wilderness
256 and indigenous culture without denying the role of victimiser. Therefore, the woman's journey is a lonely one,
257 as Adrienne Rich remarks in her poem 'Diving into the Wreck', that envisages a new point of view and implies
258 compromise but also autonomy. 35 Differently from Campbell's hero's journey, which follows 'the rites of passage:
259 separationinitiation -return', where the return is stressed as 'lifeenhancing', **??**6 there is no reward, treasure or
260 elixir for the heroine at the end of her experience. 37 The female hero present in Surfacing does not (and cannot)
261 follow Campbell's pattern, that is, the pattern of traditional myths and fairy tales. Atwood reverses and subverts
262 this pattern in the intertextual references, exposing the marginalisation of women in society, which is not a free
263 choice or a temporary separation. The initiation into society is absent as the protagonist is excluded from the
264 source of power and is reluctant to return to society.
265 However, the codes and rules of the hostile patriarchal world are so deeply rooted and internalised by the
266 protagonist that she creates a disturbing and unreliable fantasy world where she is the victim of abusive
267 relationships. **??**8 The journey to healing and renewal needs to involve rejecting her self-deceptive fantasies
268 deriving from her cultural heritage, which mainly refers to Western European fairy tales and myths. Therefore,
269 she reverses the structure of the fairy tales in a deliberate mirroring that parodies that function as a subverting
270 tool to explore alternative liberating possibilities. 39 The fairy-tale intertexts emphasise the obsolete quality of
271 this mythical devalued past, which is parodied by the drawings the protagonist produces for The Quebec Folktales
272 she needs to illustrate. They resemble the drawings she used to make when she was tenfashion models imitating
273 paper dolls and popular actresses that were 'constrained' in a 'slavery of pleasure' (36). The Golden Phoenix, a
274 symbol of death and rebirth and the eternal power of creativity, is represented as 'a fire insurance trademark' and
275 later reinterpreted as a 'mummified parrot' (170); the princess 'looks stupefied' and has 'one breast bigger than
276 the other' and the giant guarding the fountain of life looks like a 'football player'. Thus, the evoked fairy tales,
277 purged of the loup-garou stories and of the colour red, the colour sacred to indigenous peoples, highlight the
278 debased, constrained roles the protagonist expresses in her drawings and expose the void quality of these roles in
279 the Canadian (and universal) landscape: 'The Fountain of Youth and The Castle of the Seven Splendours don't
280 belong here. ' The irony expressed in the drawings emphasises the obsolete quality of the myth; as Kristeva
281 states, it 'tap[s] a meaning that is always already old, always out of date, as funny as it is ephemeral'. 40 As
282 Granofsky claims, 'Surfacing resists the "happy ever after" closure of the fairy-tale form. Her fantasy in itself is
283 a "fairy-tale" that she must repudiate.' 41 The text, therefore, expresses 'a tension between a traditional form
284 and a critique of that form's unconscious sexism'. 42 These stories need to be rewritten to be believable, as is
285 highlighted in the parodic and reversed exposure of the intertexts through the protagonist's illustrations. This
286 also reveals a different approach through visual language instead of written or spoken language that implies an
287 attempt to find a different path that is related to indigenous pictographs that the surfacer finds when she dives
288 into the lake. These pictures help the protagonist in her journey of self-knowledge and selfawareness.
289 The end of the novel seems to suggest that the protagonist returns to civilisation, with all the risks implied in
290 this. Her surfacing from and surviving the underworld and her traumatic memories have transformed her thanks
291 to her capacity to develop selfknowledge and self-awareness. This allows her to become a non-victim and triggers
292 a process of selfdetermination and creativity that should lead towards a more autonomous self. Therefore, in
293 the novel's world of language, where myths are neither transcendental nor eternal but nevertheless are powerful

and influence personal and collective narratives, Atwood proposes possible alternatives by exposing the obsolete quality of traditional discourses that need to be reinterpreted and remythologised in the sociopolitical context.

6 IV. The Politics of Storytelling in the Handmaid's Tale

In Offred's struggle to survive, the 'dialogic thought' she engages in via her memories and her interconnections with the Gileadean artpolitical propagandistic discourse generate a creative aesthetic reconstruction of her fragmented self. It is a process of transformation that allows her to survive temporarily in the oppressive theocratic Republic of Gilead. Her language is disciplined, her voice is silenced and her body is used as a commodity to procreate in a disturbing dystopian, or anti-utopic, 43 society which emerged from a utopic religious experiment. Nevertheless, she survives, resisting, adapting and finally opposing Gilead's rules, playing between the gaps of apparent outward acceptance of her role and secret transgression. She manages to create her own role eventually, which is different from the one the society assigned her, in a relentless operation of remembering the past and rewriting her life in Gilead. This generates a constant questioning of Gileadean narratives that comment and refer to what has happened and might happen in the real world. Offred survives, though provisionally, in spite of the violence that surrounds her and the risks she takes in transgressing the rules of Gilead. She not only exposes the contradictions, abuse and atrocities she witnesses in parodic and ironic discourses 44 but also revises Gileadean narratives through a complex network of allusions and intertextual references. At the same time, the novel presents these brutalities as they are and encourages Offred's future reader to engage with them 43 Atwood speaks of 'speculative fiction ? a logical extension of where we are'. Bouson, p. 136. The quote is from 'Writing Utopia', in Margaret Atwood, Writing with Intent, (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2004), pp. 92-93. Atwood also claims that '[t]he thing about utopias and dystopias is that they very quickly change into their opposite, and whether it is a utopia or dystopia depends on the point of view of the narrator'. Margaret Atwood, 'The Handmaid's Tale: a Feminist Dystopia?', in Lire Margaret Atwood: The Handmaid's Tale, ed. by Marta Dvorak (Rennes Cedex: Collection Interférences, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1999), pp. 17-30 (p. 19). 44 Coral Ann Howells, The Handmaid's Tale: York Notes Advanced (London: York Press, 2003), p. 6.

critically and to deconstruct them as well as to take a stand.

The novel challenges the narratives of the Gileadean dystopic regime in an attempt to rewrite them from a female point of view, as Atwood claims in her essay 'George Orwell: Some Personal Connections' 45 . She adds that 'this does not make The Handmaid's Tale a "feminist dystopia"' and emphasises the different perspective of the novel compared with dystopian classics; above all, she refers to her direct model, that is, to Nineteen Eighty-Four. 46 She not only started to write The Handmaid's Tale in 1984 but also mentions Orwell's essay on Newspeak that she connects to the 'Historical Notes'. According to Atwood, this connection reveals a positive view that is embedded both in Orwell's essay and in the 'Historical Notes'. In fact, 'the essay is written in standard English, in the third person, and in the past tense, which can only mean that the regime has fallen, and that language and individuality have survived'. 47 In a similar way, the 'Historical Notes' reveal that the Gilead regime is over and that it is now the object of academic study. This connection also emphasises the importance of language in Atwood's novel, which is connected to the intertextual dialogue and to the disruptive function and polyphonic quality of the novel. Kristeva claims that:

[T]he poetic function departs from the signified and the transcendental ego and makes of what is known as 'literature' something other than knowledge: the very place where social code is destroyed and renewed. 48 Kristeva calls this disruptive and heterogenous disposition semiotic and links it to the maternal chora, which is anterior to naming and to the father's law. 49 The narratives that Offred develops in the novel unsettle the constraints of Gilead and of civilisation in general, suggesting a rhythm that is multifaceted and polyphonic. Offred's identity is shattered, dissolved by the regime, and this allows her the possibility of a renewal which is accomplished through the intertextual dialogue and through language. The aesthetics of the political discourse is therefore confirmed both in the Gileadean narrative and in Offred's storytelling. It is 'an aesthetic of transformation' that destroys and reconstructs symbols, 50 and, in Offred's narrative, questions and defies Gileadean propaganda in a relentless resistance. It goes without saying that the power of the regime is also maintained through threats to and the oppression and execution of dissenters and transgressors.

Offred's discourse opposes Gilead through the polyphonic expression of her body language that explores the world around her through her senses. Her fragmented narrative is interspersed with flashbacks and constantly questions the novel's intertextual references, parodying and revising them in order to propose a different view, a female perspective, as Atwood claims. Survival is therefore attained through the female body which expresses a polyphony that engages the protagonist at intellectual and physical levels; it deconstructs Gileadean 'truths' and envisages different interpretations. Thus, traditional stories can be reinterpreted as myths that are not eternal or transcendent but historical. 51 As Atwood claims, referring to Northrop Frye's theories, myths are stories, but stories 'of a certain kind'. 52 They are serious stories that build identity and shape the culture of a country. Hence, though they can be revised, they maintain a power that cannot be completely erased; it emerges in art or political ideologies, according to Atwood. 53 Thus, the intertextual dialogue between the novel and biblical stories, myths, fairy tales and literary texts proposes a different vision, a female perspective that rebels against the linguistic manipulations expressed in Gilead and proposes alternatives that deconstruct traditional discourses in the Gileadean context. These alternatives open up different interpretations which are nondichotomous and in flux.

356 The ironic and parodic use of intertexts and allusions not only highlights the message of the story but also
357 emphasises the necessity of rewriting certain narratives; here the Bible is considered to be at the same level as
358 myths, fairy tales and fictional works. **??**4 In fact, according to Atwood, 'Mythology precedes religion. What
359 we usually mean by religion is theology and ritual.' These stories speak about the origin of the world and how
360 people 'should or should not behave, but those stories are not consistent [?] the Bible is full of such examples'.
361 55 Therefore, the intertextual references both expose the incongruities of the mythical and biblical narratives
362 according to what occurs in the Gileadean world and invite the reader to deconstruct them in a critical engagement
363 with the story of abuse in the totalitarian regime. The sociopolitical context refers to totalitarian regimes such as
364 Nazi Germany, Stalin's 51 Julia Kristeva, 'How Does One Speak of Literature?', in Kristeva, Desire in Language,
365 p. 103. 52 Atwood, In Other Worlds, p. 49. 53 Ibid., p. 55. **??**4 According to Howells, Gilead's discourses
366 testify to an 'abuse of the Bible rather than an endorsement of its teaching', Howells, The Handmaid's Tale, p.
367 10. Nevertheless, Atwood does not treat the Scriptures as 'holy' writing in the theological sense of the word, but
368 as historical narratives that can be interpreted and rewritten. See also Wisker, p. 94. 55 USSR, Ceausescu's
369 Romania and the Philippines, as well as the Puritan New England of the Founding Pilgrim Fathers and the
370 revival of Christian Right movements during Reagan's presidency.
371 This engages the readers in a process of critical thinking about the world that surrounds them, that is, a
372 world of language, an aesthetic reality, but it also refers to a 'real' world where things have happened and might
373 happen again. Atwood's technique of both referring to a physical world and revising myths, fairy tales and
374 literary classics provides space for a rethinking of the rules and roles in the dominant society and questions the
375 readers about their position in this world as well as about power relations. 56 The amputated, manipulated
376 and fragmented biblical intertextual references sustain the rules of the oppressive regime; nonetheless, they have
377 ambiguous, sometimes reversed, implications, which simultaneously contradict them and which are present at
378 the origin of the text. This is obvious in the name Gilead itself, whose etymological meaning refers to a rocky
379 region east of the Jordan but also to a cairn representing Laban and Jacob's testimony in Genesis 31.
380 Laban and Jacob built a landmark with stones to seal their agreement after Jacob fled to Gilead with Laban's
381 daughters, Leah and Rachel, with the goods Rachel stole from her father and a significant number of goats that
382 Jacob bred, cheating Laban.
383 In the context of the novel, the intertextual reference highlights the ambiguity of the toponym and consequently
384 of Laban and Jacob's story. It is a story of business competition where the shrewdest wins and the heap of stones
385 is called as a witness, God's witness, between Jacob and Laban's marking of their territories and of their promise
386 to watch over Laban's daughters. 57 Gilead is also a region of 'evildoers, marked by a trail of blood', according
387 to the prophet Hosea, 58 which gives an additional layer of meaning to the name. Gilead is a witness, a beacon
388 city on the hill, but it is also corrupted by business and stained by blood. These multiple meanings are already
389 present in the Scriptures. The novel exposes these incongruities in the intertextual references that are developed
390 at both ontological and historical levels. Therefore, there is not one interpretation and the Bible itself is not
391 'holy' in the sense of 'pure'; the characters of its stories are not 'perfect' but stained with blood and have greedy
392 and ambiguous traits. The power of the biblical narrative is therefore confirmed and simultaneously exposed as
393 contradictory at its root.
394 The central point in the use of biblical intertextual reference is the impregnation ceremony, during which the
395 reading from Genesis 30:1-3 is interpreted as a right to rape in the business-like world of Gilead where people
396 are used as commodities. Furthermore, her intellectual awareness of the artificial and manipulative quality of
397 the Gileadean regime, to which she never completely surrenders, culminates in her interpretation of the Lord's
398 Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13).
399 Other important intertexts are Nineteen Eighty-Four, which is rewritten from a woman's perspective, and
400 Canterbury Tale. Professor Pieixoto in the 'Historical Notes' mentions the reference to The Canterbury Tales in
401 the choice of the title of Offred's story (313). The three stories linked to Offred's tale, 'The Wife of Bath's Tale',
402 'The Clerk's Tale' and 'The Second Nun's Tale', reveal examples of woman's behaviours that work as a referent
403 model for Offred and are reinterpreted, parodied and rewritten in the narration.
404 Offred's story offers different suggestions in the course of the narrative. The intertextual reading highlights
405 the necessity of rewriting obsolete discourses, which are never absolute, in a dialogue that negates dichotomous
406 views and emphasises multiple perspectives that need to include different 'alternative truths' that are open to
407 marginalised groups. She witnesses what occurs around her and is alert to backlashes that aim to negate women's
408 voices: 'Denay Nunavit', that is, deny none of it, as stated at the end of the story in the 'Historical Notes'. The
409 novel invites the reader to critically rethink the narratives of the regime through intertextual references. They
410 expose in a parodic way the incongruities of Gileadean narratives that are already present in the origins of the
411 intertexts and question the absolute validity of the regime's views, thereby suggesting that changes ought to be
412 made to them. Offred's polyphonic fragmented narrative offers aesthetic alternatives that question and oppose
413 the Gileadean discourse. Therefore, the novel suggests that there is an investigation of the alleged wholeness
414 proposed by a society that is revealed to be propagandistic and based on profit and aims to control the individual.
415 The novel challenges dichotomous views of oppressive and less oppressive societies, exposing what has happened
416 and what might happen in the real world. This process is developed in a world of language, and becomes an
417 aesthetic political vision that proposes alternative views of being human.
418 V.

7 Cat's Eye: The Aesthetic of Sight

In Cat's Eye, a visionary dimension of time and space offers a different aesthetic perspective. The protagonist, Elaine Risley, whose traumatic experiences affect her perception of her past and define her future, is a painter. Her perception of reality is communicated through images that are represented in her pictures and are described in the novel in a reversed ekphrasis. The social rules are questioned in the intertextual connections, proposing a creative reconstruction that, though fragmented similarly to Offred's, suggests alternatives. The novel does not offer definite solutions but allows experimentation. Thus, via the parodic and ironic use of intertexts and allusions, the narrative rewrites the protagonist's past in an attempt to search for possible options through her paintings and intertextual connections. This is chiefly revealed through sight **??**9 and encompasses a multi-layered retrospective reconstruction of her life that includes art, language and science, suggesting an alternative, creative view of being human.

I will consider Elaine's pictures as central intertexts; they have a crucial role in the narrative because they complete Elaine's story. **??**0 According to Sherrill Grace, they are the 'verbal equivalent' of Elaine's pictures, **??**1 and for Fiona Tolan the paintings are manifestations of the protagonist's unconscious. **??**2 Elaine's pictures are visual references that the novel creates; they interweave with other texts, such as the Eaton's Catalogue, commenting on them. In the foreword, Atwood remarks that the pictures are influenced by a number of Canadian visual artists. Therefore, the created intertexts have analogous subtexts in the 'real' world. They are reversed ekphrases because they are depicted through language, which creates the image, instead of having direct referent pictures in the 'real' world. In the intertextual dialogue, they work like the other intertexts, that is, they comment on, subvert and parody the master narratives. They are also linked to Riffaterre's concept of verisimilitude, that is, a consensus about the fictional world created by the novel that conforms with the norms and ideological model of the 'real' world. According to Riffaterre, they are 'signs of plausibility that make readers react to a story as if it were true'. **??**3 These signs 'constitute the system of verisimilitude'. 64 Therefore, 'fictional truth' depends on grammar **??**5 and is constructed inside the text. **??**6 I argue that these signs are part of the intertextual dialogue, **??**7 and that verisimilitude is not only created by conformity with linguistic norms and 'cognitive processes we use in everyday life' **??**8 but also in the 'dialogic thought' that connects with the intertexts, which are both 'tangible' and created texts within the main text. This aesthetic perspective ironically comments on the sociopolitical context, exposing the incongruities and threatening rules imposed by society and, at the same time, proposes alternatives that imply an aesthetic system too.

Through the intertextual dialogue, the novel exposes the debased and rigid prescribed roles of modern society that threaten and endanger the individual to the point of annihilation. These roles amputate the self and do not allow transformation. Consequently, the novel proposes an alternative vision that is multi-layered and polyvalent. This vision is connected to the disruptive function of the novel that challenges traditional narratives, which embody the paternal function. According to Kristeva, the text is 'a force of social change' that is always in dialogue with other texts. **??**9 The 'semiotic chora' is the space where language and subject develop; **??**0 it is a female space where 'the subject is both generated and negated'. **??**1 Therefore, the text implies 'the sum of unconscious, subjective, and social relations' **??**2 and is a means of transformation as well as resistance and dissent. This is also connected with the concept of heterogeneity and to the novel as a polylogue, as Kristeva claims:

This heterogeneous is of course a body that invites me to identify with it (woman, child, androgyne?) and immediately forbids any identification: it is not me, it is non-me in me, beside me, outside of me, where the me becomes lost. This heterogeneous object is a body, because it is a text. **??**3 In the 'plural dialogue' **??**4 of the novel, where the subject 'is pulverized, dismembered, and refashioned according to the polylogue's bursts of instinctual drive', **??**5 the intertextual references and allusions work in polyvalent ways. In Cat's Eye, they are associated with the structure of the polylogue where visual art, language and science mesh in a comprehensive view in which different perspectives coexist.

The intertext of the Eaton's Catalogue is treated in a different way; it exposes the constricted roles of society but it also interweaves with Elaine's artwork, which is an intertext created in the novel. The practice of cutting images from catalogues and women's magazines reinforces the roles assigned to women in society, which are exposed and criticised in Elaine's paintings. She seems to comply with these roles in her girlhood but unconsciously rebels against them in her artwork. Her artwork is therefore the expression of her dissent, an ironic and ruthless critic of the prescribed roles. The paintings uncover hypocrisies and dissect the world and functions narrated in the novel in a figurative, neat painting style. Thus, Elaine's visual art voices her rebellion; it is a pre-language that expresses her revolutionary thought through her body. The 'dialogic thought' therefore develops a complex conversation within the main text that reflects the blurred and uncertain 'subject in process' of the protagonist.

Other works involved in the intertextual conversation are 'The Arnolfini Marriage' by Jan van Eyck, the myth of Icarus, and, in a different way, the recurring image of the cat's eye marble. Similarly to the Eaton's Catalogue, they interweave with Elaine's paintings, commenting on and criticising the narrative of the dominant society; they allow Elaine a reinterpretation of this narrative and a personal transformation that aims for survival. Thus, the master narratives have failed; they threaten the self and force it into constricted rigid roles to the point of annihilation, that is, suicide and insanity. In a perspective of survival, alternatives are proposed in the novel through the intertextual dialogue that is highlighted in the development of the protagonist's artwork.

The intertext of King Lear operates both as a parallel to and as a reversal of the main text. According to

McWilliams, Atwood engages with Shakespeare's text in a complex intertextual dialogue that 'reveals her further engagement with -and rejects -the incarnation of the Bildungsroman intent on singular personal development'. 76 The Shakespearean text provides an example which is distorted and debased in the context of modern society, thereby questioning the possibility of the coming-of-age kind of story and the development of personal identity. The ambiguity of the sign allows a multifaceted interpretation that suggests a transformation which is not allowed in the rigid roles of the male-dominant society and emphasises the precariousness of the subject in motility. The appropriation works as a bricolage in the sense that it appropriates material from different ranges of things that are available. 77 The debasing of the narrative and themes of King Lear in the context of modern society therefore implies that a consumerist approach is used in the intertextual practice.

The theme of sight is crucial in the novel, as it is in King Lear. But while in the play the emphasis is on the acquisition of an interior, spiritual and insightful way of seeing, in the novel it is a detached way of seeing which dissects the object **??**8 and controls and judges the individual. **??**9 This occurs both in Elaine's first approach to biology and then in her approach to painting; this way of seeing is prompted by the progressive vision of the cat's eye marble. It is also clear in the men's gaze that constantly watches, controls and judges women. **??**0 In this way, Elaine feels constantly watched and judged by her best friends, who have internalised the rules and roles of the patriarchal society that are dictated in school and in the family and are symbolised in the novel in the pictures of the Eaton's Catalogue and of other women's magazines. 81 Sight is therefore reinterpreted in Cat's Eye; it is a powerful means of knowledge but it is not, as in King Lear, a means to acquire spiritual growth or insightfulness. It dissects individuals and objects and eventually allows Elaine to have a more realistic and objective vision of the world that surrounds her. The intertext is rewritten from a different angle that emphasises the ruthlessness of sight in modern society. It is a powerful sense that dissects rather than heals, and judges and entraps but does not have any spiritual outcomes and does not allow vital transformations. **??**2 Elaine reconstructs her self through the recollections of her memories that are mirrored in the retrospective exhibition of her paintings after the traumatic experience she has in the hole, where she lost her power (107); it is a 'time marker' with a 'before' and an 'after', which she has momentarily erased from her memory. The episode that took place in the hole symbolically connects to the experience of being a woman, which means being reduced to nothing by the practice of modern society. Therefore, 'to be female is to be dead, to be buried beneath the weight of social expectations'. **??**3 Elaine needs to find an alternative door to go through to escape the black square of nothingness that Cordelia and society have forced her into. The trauma will echo throughout her life, causing indelible consequences.

The pictures are created texts that refer to analogous products that are present in the 'real' world. They are verbalised in the novel as reversed ekphrases, that is, described through language. Similarly to the other intertexts, they refer to and comment on the narrative in a subversive dialogue that challenges stereotypical images in advertisements, catalogues and magazines, dissecting 'reality'. They reveal a multilayered perspective and present a complete but fragmented vision that encompasses the literary, scientific and artistic threads of the novel in an attempt to rewrite the narratives at wider comprehensive levels. They acknowledge the lack of perfection, the necessity of assuming one's responsibilities both at a universal and at a personal level, and the need for multiple visions.

Some of the pictures are particularly interesting in this perspective and in Elaine's personal story, such as the series of pictures featuring Mrs Smeath. 84 They ironise her role, exposing her faults, hypocrisies and ugliness by using a realistic pictorial technique involving egg tempera, which is flat and clear. 85 They reveal Elaine's unconscious thought that she expresses through art, thereby becoming a creative non-victim in the pictorial production. She merges different traumatic experiences in these pictures that caused her to feel a persistent hate towards Grace's mother, such as the 'dying turtle heart' in 'White Gift', or Mrs Smeath's sadistic attitude in 'Leprosy'. 86 The paintings reveal and comment ironically on what Elaine could not remember when she painted them; they also release her hatred and have a therapeutic function. At the same time, the paintings are interweaved in the narration, giving clues about Elaine's feelings -her anger and her difficulty in forgiving. In Chapter Seventy-one she revisits these pictures, looking at Mrs Smeath's eyes that now seem 'defeated ? uncertain and melancholy, heavy with unloved duty' (405).

Significantly, the last painting of the retrospective exhibition, 'Unified Field Theory', summarises Elaine's journey, recalling her most traumatic experience, which was when she almost froze to death in the ravine. She was saved by the apparition of the Virgin of Lost Things, who holds 'an oversized cat's eye marble' (408) in the picture. This underlines the 84 See pp. 86, 225, 338 and 352. According to Roberta White, Mrs Smeath's name is 'a portmanteau of "Smith" and "Death" representing "the forces of anti-art"', White, p. 175. 85 Significantly, Elaine uses simple pictorial techniques linked to domesticity, such as drawing with pencils, and she paints with egg tempera, implying the use of food and pots (p. 326). Her figurative style is mocked by Jon, whose abstract pictorial approach and use of acrylics are considered 'pure painting' (317). See also Ernst H. Gombrich, The Story of Art (1950; London: Phaidon Press, 2006), p. 179. 86 Elaine's hatred is the consequence of Mrs Smeath's backing Cordelia's bullying attitude towards Elaine, saying that it is 'God's punishment' that 'serves her right' (180).

8 © 2022 Global Journals

Volume XXII Issue X Version I 11 ( ) importance of the object in the course of the narration both in terms of its size and in terms of its position at the centre of the image, where the Virgin Mary's heart should be. It is the source of vision as well as the instrument that has allowed Elaine to have a clearer, more realistic view. Thanks to the marble, she could acknowledge her traumatic experiences and transform herself from being the controlled object of the Other's gaze to becoming the subject of this gaze; looking through the marble, she recalls her memories, projecting her self into a more hopeful future. In fact, the cat's eye marble comes back at the end of Chapter Sixty-nine and becomes the magic lens through which she sees 'her life entire' (398), remembers her lost memories and reconnects her past to her present, reconstructing her space-time dimension and defining her future, though temporarily.

The ending remains open and uncertain. Elaine is a contradictory blurred figure until the end, and eventually she goes back to live in her 'cage'. 87 Nevertheless, she has recollected her past, although she is not completely aware of all its implications and is open to the future, in which there is enough light 'to see by' (421). The nondisjunctive function of the novel is therefore confirmed and opens to further developments within the network of intertextual connections. These connections suggest an alternative aesthetic system could exist in the sociopolitical context of the dominant society of the novel.

9 VI.

10 Conclusion

My primary purpose has been to explore the relationship between the novels I chose to analyse and the intertextual references; this engenders a discussion that questions societal narratives in a world of language and attempts to change those narratives from within. The aesthetics of the political discourse of the novels dissent from and oppose the propagandistic narratives of the dominant society, exposing both their incongruities and their damaging effects on the individual and proposing alternative systems. The novels problematise female roles in society and suggest options that are open to further developments and are in progress. The intertextual references merge with the theoretical discourse in an ongoing dialogue that assumes the involvement of the reader, who might alter their views and take a stand. The moral commitment of Atwood's oeuvre does not exclude ambiguities, backlashes and possible tragic scenarios. Nevertheless, her emphasis on possible alternatives reveals hopeful visions that are open to transformation and other perspectives that reach beyond the ends of the novels. 87 See: Howells, 'Cat's Eye. Elaine Risley's Retrospective Art', p. 216.

In my article, I have endeavoured to discuss and disclose the intertextual network in Margaret Atwood's oeuvre. The complex intertextual references in her novels includes both 'tangible' intertexts and created intertexts in a conversation that goes beyond the ending. This confirms the polyvalent characteristic of the Atwoodian novel, that is, the novel as polylogue, as Kristeva claims. 88 The polyvalences and ambiguities of the sign open the possibilities of the subject to multiple interpretations and attitudes that are 'transfinite', that is, they are heterogeneous and go beyond the finite meaning of the sentence. Their significance is multiple in time and space according to the different contexts and interpretations. The semiotic experience takes place in language, 89 where the body expresses itself in the semiotic chora which are linked to the disruptive quality of the novel. The 'speaking subject' is therefore 'a questionable subject-in-process', 90 a shifting identity that is open to the change that is available in the different possibilities offered by the diverse contexts that the individual traverses. New possible interpretations are therefore envisaged that echo traditional narratives but also produce alternative meanings that represent a creative though temporary and fragmentary attempt at renewal.

Thus, the novels exist in a constructed world of language, a 'cultural world' 91 where art's function is 'an essential human activity [?] a way of explaining or controlling the environment'. **??**2 At the same time, art is related to hope in terms of its creative quality; 93 the same act of creation and therefore production stimulates hope and renewal. It is an open process that resists closure and offers 'hesitation, absence or silence' but also new possibilities and therefore envisages different artpolitical systems. **??**4 The storyteller's road is 'a dark road' 95 they need to follow to make their voice heard like the Sybil, 96 a voice that urges that it must be heard in a world where writing is necessarily 'political' and where the intertextual dialogue reflects the power relations of societal narratives. **??**7 These power relations are not absolute and can be changed, because 'power is ascription'. **??**8 [1] [2] [3]

[Note: 29 Ronald Granofsky, 'Fairy-Tale Morfology in Margaret Atwood's Surfacing', Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal, 3 (Fall 1990), pp. 51-65 (pp.51-52).]

Figure 1:

Figure 2:

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[Note: 12( )]

Figure 3:

[1] Margaret Atwood, Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature (1972; Toronto: Anansi Press, 2012), pp. 32-35.26 Atwood, Conversations, p. 15.

[2] An Intertextual Reading of the Politics of Storytelling in The Edible Woman, Surfacing, The Handmaid's Tale and Cat's Eye by Margaret Atwood

[3] Ibid., p. 52. According to Sanders, 'a myth is never transported wholesale into its new context; it undergoes its own metamorphoses in the process'. Julie Sanders, Adaptation and Appropriation (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 81.

[Ibid] , Ibid . p. 37.

[Granofsky] , Granofsky . p. 52.

[Ibid] , Ibid . p. 6.

[Ibid] , Ibid . p. 84.

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