Adaptation and/as Agency in Margaret Atwood's Hag-Seed (2016)

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Abstract

This paper probes the conflict between the past and present and the manifestations of agency in novelistic adaptations. The argument draws on Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* (2016), which is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611). Marked by a shift in time, space and genre, *Hag-Seed* is postmodernist in its self-consciousness and intertextuality as it re-envisions, structurally and thematically, a prior work. *Hag-Seed* recounts the revenge orchestrated by the protagonist Felix, a playwright and director, who is ousted from his position by his rival Tony before his production of *The Tempest*. Twelve years after his forced retirement, Felix produces the play with a cast of prison inmates, laying a trap for Tony to extract revenge. While the theme of revenge driving *Hag-Seed*'s plot resembles Shakespeare's *Tempest*, the depiction of Miranda in Atwood's *Hag-Seed* departs from Shakespeare's. Felix's daughter is dead and appears as a spirit-child through the novel, an imprint of the past that is laid to rest only through a successful performance of *The Tempest* in the present. In the process, agency appears at points of tension, in the plot and novelistic structure, when the present/Self/novel reinvents itself using the past/Other/play as a point of reference. By extending the implications of *Hag-Seed*'s Miranda as a metaphor for the conflicting, fragile yet tenuous relationship between the past, present and future to the study of the novelistic adaptation of a 17th century English play in the 21st century, this paper considers the ways in which fictional representation mobilises agency.

Keywords: Adaptation, agency, intertextuality, representation.

> [T]here must be something particularly appealing about
> adaptations *as adaptations*.
> Part of this pleasure, I want to argue, comes simply from
> repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined
> with the piquancy of surprise. Recognition and remembrance
> are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an
> adaptation; so too is change.
> (Hutcheon 2006)

In 2015-2016, Hogarth Shakespeare Project invited a number of authors to choose a Shakespearean play and "revisit it in the form of a prose novel" (Atwood 2016) to commemorate William Shakespeare's 400th death anniversary. This brought together leading international authors like Anne Tyler, Howard Jakobson, Jeannette Winterson and Margaret Atwood, among others, to render novelistic adaptations of Shakespearean works. The nature of this commission clearly characterizes the novels as adaptations that draw on a prior text consciously and transfigure them to suit the contemporary contexts of their production.

This paper argues that novelistic adaptations enable agency when they retain dialogism in their structure. Dialogism promotes multiple interpretations by underscoring the heteroglossic possibilities contained in creative works. To examine the manifestations of agency in postmodernist novelistic adaptations, I study Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* (2016) that is, as stated in the subtitle, "The Tempest Retold" in the 21st century. For the purpose of this paper, I approach agency as an act of individuality, originality and creative freedom that reflect, alike, in the structure and theme of the novel. *Hag-Seed* registers a spatio-temporal-generic shift, thereby problematizing the implications of agency within a culture that suspects claims to authenticity and originality in creative works.

This paper is divided into three parts. The first part explores the implications of overlaps with and departures from Shakespeare's 17th century play in *Hag-Seed*'s novelistic plot, within the context of adaptations. The second part reviews theoretical approaches to adaptations and intertextuality, drawing on the work of Linda Hutcheon, and focusing on one particular instance of re-presentation of a Shakespearean character in the novel. In the third part, I extend these discussions to novelistic representation and examine select narrative features to consider the way intertextuality heightens metafictionality and self-consciousness and enables agency at points of tension arising from multiple interpretations of the work.

Adaptation: On Convergences and Departures

Atwood's *Hag-Seed* is an explicitly stated retelling of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Shakespeare's *The Tempest* is set on a magical island, with Prospero, his daughter Miranda and his slave Caliban as its human residents. Following a gale started magically by a sprite Ariel that washes ashore Prospero's antagonist, Antonio and his crew, Prospero enacts a revenge to reclaim the dukedom from which he was forcefully evicted by Antonio. Prospero's daughter Miranda remains his sole reminder of the past and a tool that he uses to reclaim his lost dukedom.

Despite the spatio-temporal-generic shift in the novelistic plot, *Hag-Seed*'s reflection of the original play is reinforced in multiple ways – through the plot, through postmodernist narrative techniques and through paratexts – that lend the novel to a study of adaptation and agency. Felix, the Director of the Makeshiweg Theatre Festival, is an eccentric, imaginative and volatile personality with a quick temper, who re-envisions and directs Shakespearean plays in 21st century Canada. He is in the process of directing Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which is, according to him, his best effort when he is ousted from his position by his aide Tony who takes over the company. A victim of power politics, Felix goes into exile under the name of F. Duke[1], and starts teaching Shakespeare to prison inmates as part of an adult literacy campaign called the Fletcher's Correctional Program. Here, he plans his revenge by directing and re-enacting his interrupted play, *The Tempest*, before his rivals Tony and Sal, imprisoning them through a play within a play, and extracting their promise to have him reinstated as the Director. In this respect, the theme of *Hag-Seed* resembles that of *The Tempest*, where a disinherited lord sent into exile uses the power of drama on a magical island to trap and seek revenge from his antagonists. The play and the novel end, alike, with the return of the lord to his throne. At the level of theme, *Hag-Seed* qualifies as an adaptation of *The Tempest*. The nature of its adaptation of the original play is, however, complex.

The influence of *The Tempest* is evident in many aspects of the novel, an instructive instance of which is characterisation. Felix has a late marriage and a young child, when his wife dies. Even as he mourns her death, he is attached to his daughter whom he names Miranda. Felix identifies with Prospero, the middle aged widower to a young infant. "Miranda: what else would he have named a motherless baby girl with a middle-aged doting father?" (Atwood, 2016, p. 14).

Like Prospero, further, Felix is immersed in his work and artistic endeavor of conjuring magical worlds through dramatization, words and visual extravaganza on stage. This depth of involvement however causes him to lose his daughter at three, when Miranda dies of meningitis. Consumed by grief and guilt, Felix is convinced that the only way to immortalize Miranda is through *The Tempest*. As an art form, the play would erase the past by making it a perpetual present, and resurrect Miranda every time it is performed. Felix envisions this as a tribute to his daughter, which results in his taking an interest in directing the play with renewed urgency.

> This *Tempest* would be brilliant: the best thing he'd ever done. . . . It was like the Taj Mahal, an ornate mausoleum raised in honour of a beloved shade, or a priceless jeweled casket containing ashes. But more than that, because inside the charmed bubble he was creating, his Miranda would live again. (Atwood, 2016, p. 17)

The connection between the past and the present is reinforced when Felix starts hallucinating, imagining Miranda growing up. Envisioning her thus requires Felix to construct her through his vision, juxtaposing the Miranda of the past with his requirements in the present. He remarks to himself, for instance, that Miranda is at an

[1] There is a Shakespearean echo in Felix's choice of *nom de plume*. While the initial 'F' indicates his first name Felix, the last name 'Duke' references Prospero, the Duke of Naples who is overthrown and goes into exile. The parallels become more intense as we see Felix identify closely with Prospero as a middle-aged single father wronged by his subordinate.

awkward age of adolescence and yet remains sweet, pure and docile. This re-visioning is a self-conscious act, as Felix realizes that what he creates is not a real child but a representation. Miranda acts as a metaphor for what the past can mean in the present as a fragile yet irrevocable link. She functions, therefore, as an extended metaphor for what adaptations signify. There emerges, in the process, a tension between the current and the original artefact. This tension is visible in several instances in the novel as Shakespeare's play is adapted to the current conditions of its re-presentation.

Adaptation, Intertextuality and Possibilities: Interpreting Ariel

Adaptations are marked, according to Linda Hutcheon, by their ubiquity and "self-consciousness" where "art is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories" (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 2). Stories, when retold in different media, adopt the characteristics of that medium. Assuming that form and content of representations together contribute to meaning, adaptations present possibilities of sometimes significant deviations from the original. Herein lies one point of locating agency in adaptations, as prior content is remade within contemporary contexts. At the same time, moments of adaptations are also moments of tension where artistic agency is governed by an underlying fidelity to the prior text. Hutcheon says that

> the stories [adaptations] relate are taken from elsewhere, not invented anew. Like parodies, adaptations have an overt and defining relationship to prior texts, usually revealingly called "sources". Unlike parodies, however, adaptations usually openly announce this relationship. (Hutcheon, 2006, p. 3)

Not surprisingly, intertextuality characterizes adaptations. As adaptations travel across time and space they register a "repetition without replication" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. xvi) that correspondingly influence the meaning of the new story[2]. The poetics and politics of structuralist discourse correspondingly colour adaptations. Adaptations, it can be argued, derive from the parole of a prior text as they display local langues. Their structures contain within them an implicit differential of meaning as comparison with the original becomes inevitable.

Atwood's *Hag-Seed* confronts this paradox as it demonstrates, through its novelistic representation, avenues for agency within adaptations. Shakespeare becomes a motif through the novel, signposting intertextuality as an undercurrent in adaptation. Intertextuality in turn illustrates the principles of Bakhtinian dialogism whereby texts are constantly negotiating meaning with other texts within the novelistic structure. This entails polyphony and heteroglossia that makes the work dynamic.

A case in point is the interpretation of Ariel, an "elemental spirit" (Atwood, 2016, p. 102) in Shakespeare's *Tempest*, by the Fletcher Correctional Players. Initially, the players do not want to enact Ariel since he is, in their opinion, effeminate. Felix

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[2] In the Preface to the second edition of *The Theory of Adaptation* (2013), Hutcheon discusses the way new media and advancements in technology have promoted not simply wider dissemination of adapted works but also new ways for their creation and consumption. A result of this is that "'adaptation becomes a strategy of participation. Rather than develop wholly new works, audiences take ownership over existing media, adapting the stories, shows, and films that they most identify with'" (Moore, quoted in Hutcheon 2013, xxv). Democracy and dynamism, it can be argued, define the process of adaptations in contemporary culture and offer possibilities for agency.

anticipates their resistance and recasts the character within the cultural context of the 21ˢᵗ century in a manner that the inmate-actors identify with greater ease. As criminals in a culture driven by machismo, the Fletcher Correctional actors inhabit a space of exhibitionism and masculine prowess. Male bravado and toughness is integral to their self-perception as virile individuals. Felix's interpretation locates Shakespeare's Ariel within the cultural materialism of the present – of superheroes, aliens and vegans in the 21ˢᵗ century ("January – March 2013"), underscoring the play of Self/novel/present versus the Other/play/past dichotomies in the reconstruction.

Felix's de/re-construction proceeds through two steps. Felix first decontextualizes Ariel, viewing the character through his qualities and the functions he performs in Shakespeare's play. He tells his players:

> "So, before sticking on a label, let's list his qualities. What sort of a creature is he? First, he can be invisible. Second, he can fly. Third, he has superpowers, especially when it comes to thunder, wind and fire. Fourth, he's musical. But fifth, and most important." He pauses again. "Fifth: *he's not human*." He gazes around the room. . . . "Let's *suppose* that Ariel is real in some way," says Felix. . . . "*Suppose* you'd never heard of this play, and all you knew about this being called Ariel was what I told you about him. What kind of a creature have I just been describing?" (Atwood, 2016, p. 102, emphases mine)

Next, he requires the players to see Ariel as a "function" in the play. When he says,

> "In our play, then, Ariel is the character Ariel, but he's also the special effects," says Felix. "Lighting, sound, computer simulation. All of that. And Ariel needs a team, like the team of spirits he's in charge of in the play." Light is dawning: they love fooling with computers, on the rare occasions when it's possible for them (Atwood, 2016, p. 104)

Felix urges his students to widen their vision of the character by actively re-interpreting him.

Through the two step process, Felix links the past and the present in a manner similar to keeping the memory of Miranda alive. This process involves self-consciousness, acknowledging that a work is being transfigured. Subsequently, when Felix asks, '"So who wants to be on Team Ariel?" . . . Every hand in the room goes up. Now that they grasp the *possibilities*, they all want to be on Team Ariel.' (Atwood, 2016, p. 105, emphasis mine)

Possibilities are signaled through the 'supposes' that open doors of dialogue. The Fletcher Correctional players and their director take ownership of the work as they restructure it for the contemporary audience. It is noteworthy that Felix is not merely transfiguring the Shakespearean character but also making the character *accessible* to his present audience since the play is being performed "now".

Adaptations in this respect depend on possible ranges of interpretations mobilised through re-conceptualisation, rather than correspondence, of meaning[3]. Hutcheon's observation in her Preface to the second edition to *The Theory of Adaptation* becomes relevant at this point where she notes that unlike the emphasis on fidelity that characterized debates on adaptations in the late 20th and early 21st century, contemporary cultures of mass media necessitate a change in criteria for evaluating success of adaptations. This could include "popularity, persistence, or even diversity and extent of dissemination for criteria of success" (Hutcheon, 2013, p. xxvi).

One consequence is that the adaptation becomes dynamic and leads to the creation of spaces of possibilities[4]. At the same time, dialogism with the past is accompanied by the awareness that the original source of the work cannot be totally disrupted. Consequently, acts of agency entail a) negotiating these tensions to articulate a current unique interpretation within a prior context and b) recognizing that one's interpretation is a perspective that cannot foreclose the possibility of alternative perspectives. This approach can mobilise dialogism, polyphony and heteroglossia in the process of adaptation.

Similar possibilities are signaled through fictional representation that deploys narrative techniques to mobilise dialogism and eschew closure.

Intertextuality and Dialogism: Possibilities in Novelistic Representation

In this section, I look at the possibilities signposted by the paratexts (the title, epigraphs, prologue and epilogue) and diegesis as fictional techniques that foreground intertextual possibilities in the novel.

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[3] Atwood, remarking on the creative process of writing the novel, says that she sets the plot in a town in Canada in 2013 where an annual Shakespeare Festival did take place. Her choice of setting it in prison was also because prison forms a pervasive trope in *The Tempest*. Further, Canadian prisons have correctional programs and literacy drives to equip the prisoners with skills to help them when they leave prison, as do prisons in UK, USA and Italy (Atwood 2016). Shakespeare, Atwood states, has been taught in some of these programs. The convergence of these facts enabled her to envision an adaptation that exploits the trope of imprisonment at multiple levels in the novel – of Felix bound to his past and the memory of his daughter; of Caliban and the inmates bound by legality and laws; of art and adaptations bound to a pre-existing past. Breaking these bonds and becoming free is one way of expressing agency. To be able to do this, dialogue and interpretation become critical and is signposted by *The Tempest*, which for Atwood is open-ended, concluding with more questions than neat resolutions.

[4] Dynamism arises through cultural exchange and collision of meanings across time and space. That literary texts are cultural artefacts is fundamental to Felix's understanding of Shakespeare, evident in his description of the way Shakespeare has been reconstructed through memory: "'He was simply an actor-manager trying to keep afloat. It's only due to luck that we *have* Shakespeare at all! Nothing was even published till he was gone! His old friends stuck the plays together out of scraps – bunch of clapped-out actors trying to remember what they'd said, after the guy was dead!'" (Atwood, 2016, p. 52, 53). The absence of a single original text keeps the Shakespearean works fluid and opens up the space of possibilities for future interpretations. As Felix muses during the course of a discussion with his students on the nature of the curse words used in the play, "Equally useless to tell them that "suck" in Shakespeare's time did not have the many derogatory meanings it has since acquired, *because it has those meanings now, and now is when they're putting on the play*." (Atwood, 2016, p. 102, emphases mine). Similarly, he tries to explain to them that tortoise was considered abusive in the 17th century since it referred to someone who is slow. The connotations have however changed in the last four centuries.

The Title

Gerard Genette, in his discussion of paratexts[5], suggests that a thoughtful use of title serves to enhance the layers of meaning within a text. Titles act as triggers of interpretation, since they are the entry points to the text for meaning making. Some titles are straightforward, like Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, which directly signposts the theme of the novel. Others are cryptic, like Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. For Genette, a good title should "embroglio" (Eco, quoted in Genette, 1988, p. 720), teasing the reader and leading them towards an intellectual adventure, rather than barricading ideas.

Hag-Seed acts as a deceptive title, raising the readers' expectations only to disrupt them. The name "Hag-seed" is attributed to Caliban, Prospero's slave and the native of the magical island, in *The Tempest*. Using *Hag-Seed* as the title of a novel would suggest to the reader that the work is about Caliban. Perhaps a more adventurous reader may factor Prospero into their assumptions of the novelistic theme. The subtitle ("The Tempest Retold") reinforces this idea as it explicitly connects the novel with the play. Retelling at the same time suggests that the current work may not be an exact replication of its dramatic original but offers fresh constructions of meaning. The title raises expectations in the reader of what they might encounter in the work and acts as the first frame of interpretation, influencing readerly response in meaning making. *Hag-Seed* however disrupts these expectations since the novel deals, not with Caliban, but with Prospero/Felix. The pointed use of Caliban's name therefore performs several functions.

First, it establishes an implicit relationship with a prior text (*The Tempest*) thereby characterizing the novel as an adaptation. Second, it frames its relationship with the past as not derivative but disruptive, thereby underscoring the tension between the novel and Shakespeare's play. Third, the choice of title indicates agency, equally, at the authorial and audience levels. By naming the work after Caliban, the novel signals a deliberate choice by the text-external author. At the same time, the ensuing ambiguity in signification suggests that the reader must actively engage with the work to co-construct meaning.

Paratexts: The Epigraphs, Prologue and Epilogue

The dialogism between *Hag-Seed* and *The Tempest* is underscored through the three epigraphs, the Prologue ("Screening") and the Epilogue ("Set Me Free"). The three epigraphs in the novels are quotes from Sir Francis Bacon, Charles Dickens and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Bacon's quote from "On Revenge" reads, "'This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge,/ keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise/ would heal, and do well.'". Taken from Charles Dickens is the quote: "' . . . although there are nice people on the stage, there are some who would make your hair stand on end.'". The quote by Shelley are from "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills": "Other flowering isles must be/ In the sea of Life and Agony:/ Other spirits float and flee/ O'er that gulf . . .". The epigraphs work dialogically as they highlight the theme

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[5] Genette defines the paratexts as those entities in a work that occupy the boundaries of the text. While they do not comprise the body of the work, they play a role in influencing meaning and interpretation of the work. Some examples of paratexts are the title, the epigraphs, dedications, prefaces, prologues and epilogues.

of revenge, keeping wounds open deliberately to allow festering of the sense of wrong, the motif of performance and representation as art constructs reality and the human condition of living in a state of agony and sorrow while questing for happiness and peace. These suggestive meanings shape the interpretation of the novel, supported by the Prologue and the Epilogue that frame the novelistic plot.

The Prologue[6] begins *in media res* and at a climactic moment, as the players at Fletcher Correctional capture the antagonists, Tony and Sal. The Epilogue, with its title "Set Me Free" that provides a synopsis of Shakespeare's *Tempest* aligns with the third epigraph from Shelley's work, signposting arrivals and freedom. "Set me free" are also the last three words uttered by Prospero in *The Tempest*, indicating freedom from bondage. The nature and position of the Epilogue in the novel urges the question: what is it that is set free through adaptations – the prior work with its ossified interpretations or the current work that is bound to the prior text as source? As a quest for spaces of freedom and creativity in a postmodern world, articulating the self is a self-conscious act of agency.

Intertextuality, reinforced by the title, epigraphs, prologue and epilogue, is sustained through narrative perspective within novelistic representation.

Diegesis: The Question of Perspective

The interplay of points of view, and the fluid use of second and third person narrative voice in the novelistic structure are two instances that foreground the metafictional nature of the work.

Consider the following passage for an interplay of perspective.

> The first few weeks were a little rough, granted. Felix and Shakespeare had needed to work their way uphill over some fairly thorny ground, and Felix discovered that he was less prepared for the conditions inside than he'd thought he would be. He'd had to assert his authority, draw a few lines in the sand. At one point he'd threatened to walk out. There'd been some quitters, but those who'd stayed had been serious, and in the event the Fletcher Correctional Shakespeare class was a hit. In its own modest way, it was cutting edge; it was also, *you could say* – and Felix did say it to his students, explaining the term carefully – avant-garde. It was cool. After the first season, guys lined up for it. (Atwood, 2016, p. 54, emphasis mine)

While the passage begins with the third person, signaling an omniscient narrator and an implied author, the use of the second person "you" indicates an implied audience or reader. This direct address to the reader as interpreter of the text infuses dynamism

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[6] According to J. A. Cuddon, the prologue is the "opening section of a work; a kind of introduction which is part of the work and not prefatory. It was common in drama in the 17th and 18th c., when it was often in verse. Occasionally found in novels. In plays the prologue is usually a Chorus (*q.v.*)" (Cuddon, 1999, p. 703). This definition places the beginning of the play within the frame of the plot. The link to drama is retained in *Hag-Seed* as we see the Fletcher Correctional Players sing the song of Caliban as they imprison Tony and Sal. Equally instructive is Cuddon's comment that the prologue is part of the work. One of the functions the prologue performs in *Hag-Seed* is to provide a critical lens for viewing the events that unfold in the plot. Since the prologue is a play depicted *in media res*, it serves the additional purpose of reinforcing the intertextuality of the novel.

in meaning making by evoking a sense of performance. At the same, it introduces a tension in the act of interpretation. Conventionally, third person omniscient narrators control the meaning of the text, evident most strongly in the Victorian novels. An omniscient, omnipotent narrator possesses God-like power and remains the sole determinant of meaning in the novel. Postmodernist novels challenge this discourse by suggesting that omniscience is not always infallible. The use of a second person perspective disrupts the authority of the third person narrative. As the dominant voice in oral traditions, the second person perspective invites audience's involvement as co-creators of the story with the storyteller. In this instance, the deliberate use of the phrase "you could say" encourages the reader to form an opinion on Felix's projection of his plays as avant-garde. While the reader may or may not agree with this interpretation, enabling the reader to take decisions undermines the authority of the omniscient narrator as the sole determinant of meaning and establishes subjectivity of the narrative.

Another technique used to effect dynamism in the narrative is through an interplay of the intradiegetic and extradiegetic narrative voices. Extradiegetic narratives register an omniscient external narrative voice, while intradiegetic narratives are those told through characters within the novel. The shift between the intradiegetic and the extradiegetic narrative voices in the plot causes shifts in focalization, taking us in and out of the thoughts of characters. This problematises absolute meanings and underscores the role of perspective in representation. The description of the death of Felix's three-year-old daughter Miranda is a case in point.

> So he was on his own with his newborn daughter, Miranda. Miranda; what else would he have named a motherless baby girl with a middle-aged, doting father? She was what had kept him from sinking down into chaos . . . But then, at the age of three . . . High fever. Meningitis. They'd tried to reach him, the women, but he'd been in rehearsal with strict orders not to be interrupted and they hadn't known what to do. When he finally got home, there were frantic tears, and then the drive to the hospital, but it too late, too late. (Atwood, 2016, p. 14-15).

The narrative is in third person but moves from an external to an internal focalization, giving a glimpse of Felix's thoughts. His reasons for naming his daughter Miranda, his despair over her loss come across with immediacy as he grapples with two successive personal tragedies, first losing his wife and then his daughter. Shifting the narrative perspective to his thoughts and actions personalizes representation. At the same time, by shifting between intra- and extra-diegesis, the novelistic structure becomes dynamic and metafictional, enabling (inter)textual play that performs critical functions in meaning making. How do these metafictional devices enhance the dialogism of the text? Bakhtin's statements on the novelistic structure become relevant at this point.

In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin argues that the novel, as a form, is inherently dialogic because the discourse of the novel always begins *in media res*. As a newly emergent form that compares and contrasts with the epic (and other traditional genres of writing), the novel intervenes in pre-existing discourses on the literary imagination. As a result, any form of representation exists as a dialogue between the new and the

pre-existing discourse, making them intertextual. Multiple meanings, or heteroglossia, and multiple voices, or polyphony, characterize the dialogic imagination of the novel.

Some Concluding Remarks: Adaptation and/as Agency

Adaptation presupposes an original work that influences the construction of the work and its interpretation by the reader. If we define agency as an act of individuality, originality and creative freedom, then agency in an adapted work presents a challenge. *Hag-Seed* offers an instructive insight into the way adaptations can enable agency through dialogism where interpretative acts create possibilities of meaning making and reject closure.

Tension characterizes possibilities in adaptation: between perceptions of the past and present, the spatio-temporal and generic shifts. Dialogue is located within these tensions of constructing and critiquing meaning. Like Felix's Miranda who holds the threads of the past and the present by remaining alive in/because of his imagination, present acts of adaptation depict the current vision of their creator as a dialogic acknowledgement of their debt to the past. Agency can be located within the negotiations that accompany these textual encounters in adaptations.

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