

Module A- Textual Conversations Summary

Rubric:

- Resonances and dissonances
- Reimagining and reframing an aspect to mirror, align or collide.
- Disparate issues, values, assumptions or perspectives
- Appreciation and enjoyment
- Personal, social, cultural and historical context
- Textual features, concepts and values
- Language concepts: motif, allusion, intertextuality
- Innovating with language concepts, form and style.

Consider Hag-seed's relationship with The Tempest and how the **appropriation connects a modern reader to the original text, reinvigorating the characters and amplifying key ideas and issues**. How Atwood has been influenced by Shakespeare's style, concepts and values.

For a Shakespeare purist, the adaptation of Shakespearean **sonnets to rap could be offensive** whereas for others it could open up new and interesting directions and **RESONATE** with a new audience.

Does it **mirror or stay true** to original, **align** with original, **collide** with the original?

Shakespeare reflects **Christian humanist perspective**, Atwood reflects **secular humanist perspective**.

Resonances and differences remind us that issues are common or disparate when we consider values, assumptions and perspectives.

Common between two texts: moderation, compassion, forgiveness, empathy and acting against ambition and revenge.

The **metatheatrical** in the play- aspects of the play reminding the audience that is just a performance derives from the plays of the **ancient Greeks**.

Understanding context allows us to **appreciate the representation, then it is a valid contextual reference**.

Films **engage visual and auditory senses in the experience but even the written text engages us visually and aurally through the imagination**.

Texts are reinterpreted in different contexts through different eyes. The textual combination may lead to **new perspectives** which we can bring to own comps.

Texts connect with each other through language such as the use of **similar motifs** and through ideas that may be **imparted by allusions**.

Biblical allusion to the Garden of Eden may be understood as a comment on **gender** as well as **religion**. It may offer a subtle critique, or it may be an affirmation of element in a text.

Authors use **meanings to reinforce or challenge assumptions**.

Hag-Seed is postmodernist in its self-consciousness and intertextuality as it re-envision, structurally and thematically, the Tempest.

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, the investigation of ways in which **fictional representation mobilises agency**.

The nature of the compositions clearly characterises Hag-seed as an adaptation that draws on the Tempest **consciously and transfigures contemporary contexts to fit production**.

Intertextuality heightens metafictionality and self-consciousness and enables agency at points of tension arising from multiple interpretations of the work.

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 of the present.

Shakespeare the humanist showcases **human beings innate desire for meaningful relationships contrast against their simultaneous thirst for power**.

The Tempest reveals, culminates in a prism of vengeful spite which arises when these competing, want of meaningful relations set against thirst for power and control, are not met.

The plot of the play uses the **dramatic device of a physical storm engineered by the characterisation of an all-powerful and vengeful deposed duke and crafty magician Prospero as the driving force behind the central story, to restore control over his own life and regain his regal power**.

The Tempest

The play's **metatheatrical elements highlight and reinforce the central motif of the play- the trappings of perspective.**

Prospero is "set free" at the end having learnt ironically from the vengeful mirroring experiences, he himself contrived on the prison island, symbolically drowning his book, the source of his thirst, power and revenge.

The disrupting effects of the tempest in the play is an analogy for the **disrupting potential of art and theatre on the individual.**

The disruption represents a **contextual shift for the audience which results in a new perspective informed by a deepened understanding.**

The Tempest is the mirroring effect of **art of the human condition**, and through art, **we can be released from the stifling effects of our own fixed perspective imprisoned within our social, personal, historic and cultural context.**

The play **highlights the trappings of perspective which lead human beings who need meaningful human relations into this prism of corrupting power.**

The characters in The Tempest **represent different aspects of this duality at the centre of the human experience.**

The **setting acts as a physical prison** representing the **trappings of perspective which prevent us from diagnosing the cause of our pain** and suffering.

The **metatheatrical aspects of the play emphasis the power of narrative** to act as mirrors and assist us to reflect on our understanding and **free ourselves from the trappings of perspective.**

Shakespeare explores the nature of power and control through the controlled environment of an unnamed island, **a literary trope used to represent both a paradise and prism of truth.**

A **modern post-colonial** reading would cast Shakespeare's exploration of colonisation through the character pursuit to gain control and power in their respective situations, from their privileged and entitled perspective.

The Tempest suggests **compromise and compassion are more effective political tools than violence, imprisonment, or even magic. THESIS**

Prospero's **moral boundaries** are constantly tested as his conscience tempers his thirst for power from developing in villainy.

Miranda and Ferdinand are **manifestations of renewal and new life** and **foreshadow the spiritual end** of Prospero's journey of manifestation.

The delineation of Caliban **foreshadows the development of Prospero's soul into something equally poetic.**

Every story will be **trapped by the perspectives** that told it, and the perspectives that encounter it hence the trappings the human perspective are inescapable.

The **motif of imprisonment** leads us to an exploration of **what can chain humanity down, and consequently how we should aim to set ourselves free.**

Metatheatre draws attention to the theatrical practices that underlie and produce the fictional world of the play and that also works to recruit the responder in **self-referential behaviour.**

During the performance of a play, actors and playwrights are held captive by powerful audiences who may or may not approve of the artists' work.

Prospero's **entrapment** could be seen as him being trapped within the action of the play in his revenge plot.

The disruptive effects of the island **setting highlight the central irony of the paradoxical human condition** whereby despite the removal of strict social power structures are removed yet individual perception of hierarchy and privilege in society organically unfold.

The Tempest explores the harsh treatment of colonisers on native inhabitants and the rigid class system present in **Europe and Jacobean England.**

The **inversion of power structures represents a renewed perspective of the future** and offers the audience hope in the form of the bonds of love interrupting the poisonous temptation of individual power and its by-product, vengeful jealousy.

Impact of colonisation is highlighted through the **characters pursuit to gain control and power in their perspective situations. EVALUATION**

In forcing the play to conform to classical unities, Prospero demonstrates a compulsive need to exercise absolute authority

Hag-Seed

Felix's craftiness as a thespian allows him to achieve his **own vengeance**.

The protagonists' ability and desire **to manipulate the action of the plot** affects their relationships with those around them.

Ambition is a natural consequence and revenge is a further consequence: some ideas such as ambition and revenge are universal and never change.

Hag-seed is a derivation of *The Tempest*, but it is also a text in its own right, **a reimagining for a modern audience**.

Through Atwood's appropriation, **we are able to acknowledge that Shakespeare's characters such as Prospero and Antonio still walk the streets today and that, despite the shift to a more secular 21st century, his values of moderation, compassion and virtue continue to be guiding principles for humanity**.

Canadian identity has been defined by **a fear of nature, by settler history and by unquestioned adherence to the community**.

Comparison

Hag-seed starts with a performance of *The Tempest* from the first scene signalling the performative focus of the text and the deliberate intertextuality. Although different context, it also alerts us to the **metathreatricity that the novel exploits**.

Hag-seed's language is **colloquial and modernised**.

The tension of *The Tempest* has been subverted through what amounts to parody. The drama conveyed by the original play is reduced to a **simple rhyme of instructions and the threat of drowning. Atwood is commenting on the power of performance rather than the presumed elitism of the theatre.**

The Boatswain in the modern play does not convey the strength of character than in *The Tempest*. The sense of confusion is missing. **Atwood's breaking down the performance to remove the power structures to focus on the power of individuals.**

This is evident in the textual conversation between William Shakespeare's play, "*The Tempest*" (1611) and Margaret Atwood's novel "*Hag-Seed*" (2016), where **Atwood shines a light at the issues of power and retribution from a post-modernist standpoint, appropriating the Jacobean ideologies prevalent within "*The Tempest*".**

Hag-seed is **postmodernist in its self-consciousness and intertextuality as it re-envision, structurally and thematically a prior work**.

A **postmodern hybrid metafictional tale**

Margaret Atwood's *Hag-Seed* is a **multilayered novel that imaginatively transforms its ostensible source text**.

The confusion of the shipwreck has been replaced in the novel by the **insurrection**. Atwood has replaced the confusion of the arrival on the island with the panic & confusion of the riot. **Setting is re-established. Modern context is reinforced, and tension introduced.**

The **illusory and performative nature** of the play which comes through the words, the magical music and the masque is dealt with through the **novel's rap songs**.

Both texts are **open ended** with the expectation that *Hag-Seed*'s characters are in constant conversation about the original text when speculating what happens to its characters after Prospero's epilogue and the end of the play.

The **metafictional nature** of the derivative text is not only appropriate, but also an act of homage, accepting that Shakespeare's text is to be valued.

There's a major difference between Atwood and Shakespeare's context—a **magical island and grand plots of usurpation do not necessarily blend in to this contemporary world, and while Atwood is partially aiming to pay a homage to the playwright, she also has to appeal to her immediate audience**.

Quotes, Technique and Effect

Act 1 Scene 2: Prospero TT

"Both, both, my girl. By foul play, as thou sayst, were we heaved thence, but blessedly hop hither"

Repetition is used to reinforce the heartfelt emotion experienced when he was exiled. The **emotive language** used reflects an era where power and hierarchy was fundamental to the function of society. The emotive language exaggerates the desire to be within power rather than defenceless. Prospero is trapped by the power he creates and reinforces the establishment of **Renaissance humanism** to highlight the trapping of his perspective through power.

Act 5 Scene 1: Prospero TT

"As you from crimes would pardoned be, let your indulgence set me free"

Ambiguity is implemented so that the audience makes their own conclusion to the story. Boosts readers' interest as they are encouraged to reconsider whether they themselves need to be freed by the corruption of power that interferes with meaningful human relations.

Act 3 Scene 3: Sebastian TT

"No matter, since they have left their lands behind; for we have stomachs. Wilt please you taste of what is here"

A **renaissance masque** symbolises a spectacle at the court. The **metatheatrical** banquet is used so that readers consider their morality as they question civil order and move to the fresh **postmodernist** idea of individualism.

Prospero: TT

"Master of a full poor cell"

Shakespeare **juxtaposes** Prospero's power and control on the island with his power and control of the state of Milan to explore the corruptibility of power. His **characterisation** reminds readers of the corruptibility of power when infused with revenge.

Prospero: TT

"Hag-seed, hence!"

Prospero's derogatory language through **alliteration** exhibits his dangerous quest for revenge as he attempts to find fulfilment through his power. Shakespeare reminds the readers of the unjust that was caused toward Caliban and how his meaningful relationship with Caliban is more important than his power over him.

HS

"Blue bathing cap and iridescent ski goggles"

Characterisation and alliteration shows the conveyance of **uncontextualized details** that foreshadow elements of **Atwood's reinterpretation and 'conversation' with *The Tempest***.

"There. Not a syllable fluffed" HS

The **performance metaphor** also calls the reader's attention to the **metatextuality** of the novel as a piece of fiction that involves the staging of the very play it reinterprets.

"Felix the cloud-riding-enchanter" HS

Symbolism highlights that Prospero is concerned more with books and magic, Antonio is someone able to manipulate power for means of political empowerment.

"The snoop gremlin: Google" HS

Felix's use of the internet, something that is more than familiar to the reader, is **ironically** described as a 'new' and somewhat supernatural force. Adjusted to suit modern context.

Act 5 Scene 1: Ariel

"His tears run down his beard like winter's drops"

There is **pathos** in his words, the **simile** creates an image of despair that evokes sympathy from even the reader. This emotive response emerges from Prospero's staging of the metaphorical tempest on the island, Shakespeare reflects on the cathartic experience that is nurtured by theatre itself. This catalyses his movement towards a more virtuous existence and prompting Prospero towards the same arc of development.

Felix even goes so far as to say that *The Tempest* is "a play about prisons." We see a thorough explanation in the novel of such prisons in *The Tempest* when Felix sets the class an assignment to name the various jails that weigh the characters down, **whether literal or metaphorical**, as well as who the prisoner and jailors are. By framing the narrative of the novel around the play whilst still providing plausible reason for such a metacommentary on analysing the original text, **Atwood successfully uses *Hag-Seed* as a medium through which she can deconstruct Shakespearean works in an entertaining, engaging way.**

Sample Response: Intro + Body

The reimagining of texts both highlights the **resonances and dissonances between texts that both affirm and challenge the values within the texts**. Such resonances and dissonances are dependant on both the contexts of the **composers and the context of the audience**. William Shakespeare's **tragicomedy** *The Tempest* and Margaret Atwood's **postmodern novel appropriation**, *Hag-seed*, explore **the concept of transformation from one of revenge to compassion that both suggests that texts escape their temporal bounds and yet, are contextually bound to the composer's perspectives of humanity**

Jacobean England saw a paradigm shift in thought from **providentialism to self-actualisation**. As such, the development of a compassionate character reflects the **Christian-humanism ideals of the Jacobean period that enlightenment must be governed by compassion**. *The Tempest* explores the notion through the **characterisation of Prospero and his transformation from a man seeking revenge, to a virtuous man of empathy and compassion**. When we are first introduced to Prospero, we witness a man driven **by his desire for revenge who disrupts order through the creation of a tempest** in "these, (his) enemies, are all knit up". Such a desire for revenge is reflected in *Hag-seed* and Felix's "sole drift of purpose" and need for atonement. Arguably, Prospero's desire for revenge is an altruistic one as he states to Miranda "I have done nothing but in care of thee" yet the audience is positioned to see through such altruism to the egotistical, self-centred man behind such claims, to a man that prides himself on the "love people bore" which Prospero himself contrast against Antonio's evil nature. Likewise, Atwood also positions the audience in a similar vein through the limited third person narrative that only presents Felix's perspectives, leading to one of the similarities between the texts. Both texts take on a limited narrative. It is through Prospero's eyes that Miranda, and, in turn, the audience are introduced to Prospero. **The repetition of the demanding "dost thou attend me" not only demonstrates that we are to see the characters through Prospero's perspective, but that we are witnessing a man that is consumed by his own self-importance that has fuelled his desire for revenge;** after all he does state that his "library was dukedom enough", so why seek revenge? **It is through the textual conversation with Hag-seed And Felix's own self gratification in his own productions, placing him in the spotlight that we understand that ultimately, both texts are presenting protagonists that are seeking revenge, not because they have been fundamentally wronged, but because their egos have been humiliated.**

Quote- Technique- Analysis

Ariel, Prospero's loyal spirit, prompts Prospero to forgive in "*mine would sir, were I human*". **Ariel's ironic phrase is an allusion to Renaissance humanism, which prompts Prospero to relinquish his magical powers, and forces him to embrace humanist values like forgiveness.** As a result of this, Prospero declares he will "break [his] staff, and down [his] book". **Such declarations are reflective of him metaphorically severing ties with his medieval and tempestuous values.**

Atwood uses her text to create a textual conversation with Shakespeare's piece, however draws upon her post-modern context in order to elucidate the idea of forgiveness for modern audiences. Atwood uses an intertextual reference to 'The Tempest' when "a shadow, a wavering of the light", whispers, "I would, sir, if I were human". While this parallels Ariel's statement in 'The Tempest', Felix's shadowy figure, Miranda, **metaphorically reflects his own subconscious, and in adding such detail, Atwood adopts a sense of psychological realism to allow modern audiences to comprehend his transformation from "vengeance" to "virtue".** Similar to Prospero, this prompt causes Felix to "break out of [his] cell", **metaphorically representing how Felix was imprisoned by his own vengeful plan. In deliberately crafting the text in this way, Atwood enhances the idea that both protagonists were imprisoned by their need for revenge, however their eventual freedom is achieved through forgiveness.**

Margret Atwood, **through appropriating and intertextualising** Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, reconstructs Miranda to be a motivator of action **rather than a receiver of a patriarchal power.**

Prospero's **understanding of the ability of his power** is explicit in the irony of "*some vanity of my art...*" in which Prospero **symbolises the masquerade as 'vanity', meaning that his magic is worthless.**

Composers experiment with language concepts, forms and styles as well as different contexts, values and perspectives to bring a new meaning to the original text.