
From Magic to Algorithms: Reimagining Prospero in Atwood's *Hag-Seed*

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Article History : Received : 25th, Feb. 2026; Reviewed : 20th May, 2026; Accepted : 5th June 2026

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.3126/bpjms.v4i01.95893>

Abstract

This paper explores Margaret Atwood's Hag-Seed reimagination of Shakespeare's The Tempest through the lens of digital surveillance and information control, a new form of revenge in the present. Felix's method of observation, manipulation, and behavioral regulation invites digital domination called data colonialism. Using qualitative textual analysis, the novel is analyzed using the theoretical frameworks of digital humanism, surveillance capitalism (Zuboff), and data colonialism (Couldry and Mejías). The evidence shows that Felix's deployment of cameras, recordings, and algorithmic monitoring illustrates a modern system of data extraction that incubates human behavior for controlling and economic motives. The prison theatre is programmed as a controlling microcosm in which inmates are disciplined, programmed, mirroring data control practices. Prospero's magical authority is now transformed for Felix into technological governance, a shifting locus of power from physical to informational control. Thus, Hag-Seed demonstrates how modern technologies, surveillance, and exploitation are new means of colonization. Digital systems create new and widespread threats to human autonomy.

Keywords: Colonialism, data, digital humanism, revenge, surveillance.

Introduction

In commemoration of the four-hundredth anniversary of William Shakespeare's death as well as the Hogarth Shakespeare Project (2015) invitation, contemporary writer, Atwood reinterprets Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* for modern audiences as *Hag-Seed* (2016). It is a reimagination of *The Tempes* set in twenty-first century Ontario and reconstructs Prospero's story through the character of Felix Phillips, a disgraced theatre director. While retaining the structural framework of exile, betrayal, and revenge from Shakespeare's play, Atwood adapts these themes to address contemporary concerns, including imprisonment, surveillance, psychological control, and institutional power. Through this transformation, *Hag-Seed* demonstrates how early modern mechanisms of domination and colonial authority persist in modern social and technological forms. It, an updated version of Shakespeare's play, reminds readers through a reworking of

the original. *The Guardian*, in its book review column, writes the work “with ironic nods to contemporary culture, thrilling to anyone who knows *The Tempest* intimately” (Groskop). It is equally compelling to fresh readers who are not overly familiar with *The Tempest*. More than retelling *The Tempest*, Atwood reinterprets its central conflicts through the medium of a prison theatre program. Felix, like Prospero, orchestrates events from behind the scenes, manipulates others to achieve revenge, and carefully tames those under his control, particularly the inmates who perform in his production. This strategy parallels Prospero’s domination of Ariel and Caliban, in which knowledge, language, and power function as instruments of subjugation. Critics have noted that Atwood’s novel fills interpretive gaps in Shakespeare’s play and reconsiders its colonial and hegemonic tensions within a contemporary cultural framework. By shifting the locus of control from magical power to psychological manipulation, institutional authority, and digital technologies, Atwood suggests that the structures of colonization have evolved rather than disappeared. There are numerous interpretations of *The Tempest* as a drama. The design of Atwood's novels allows for further expansion and freedom in bringing Prospero into the twenty-first century. *The Oxford Cultural Review* writes that the novel explores the gaps and spaces in one of Shakespeare's most ambiguous plays, newly told from Caliban's perspective (Leah). The extract centers on Atwood’s strategy of filling textual “gaps” through revising the story, enabling a postcolonial and counter-hegemonic reading that re-centers the oppressed voice and challenges canonical authority. Hag-seed, meaning witch's offspring, is one of the Caliban in *The Tempest*, Sycorax’s son, resembling the evocative of a fish, rather than a human being. Felix’s method of control replicates Prospero’s colonial mindset in a modern mask. His theatrical direction, surveillance practices, and calculated manipulation of prisoners become algorithmic tools that tame, reveals and dominate to operate the human mind through new media. Thus, *Hag-Seed* extends Shakespeare’s exploration of power to the age of globalization, i.e. data colonialism. In which control is exercised through information systems rather than physical force. By comparing Prospero’s magical authority with Felix’s technological and psychological strategies, the study highlights the continuity from Renaissance to contemporary governance and control. The paper aims to address the following research questions:

- How does Atwood’s character, Felix, adapt Prospero’s strategy of taming and control in a modern institutional setting?
- How does *Hag-Seed* interpret contemporary mechanisms such as surveillance and algorithms as a continuation of colonial dominance?

By examining these questions, the paper demonstrates that Hag-seed is not simply an adaptation but a critical reworking that exposes the persistence of colonial power structures in modern society.

Methodology

This study employs qualitative and interpretive methodology grounded in theories of data science, colonialism, neocolonialism, and digital humanism to examine how Atwood reconfigures Prospero's magical authority into technological taming in *Hag-Seed*. Digital humanism that focuses on the ethical, political, and human consequences of digital science aligns its theoretical lens for analyzing how surveillance, data practices, and technical expertise reshape power relations. A close textual reading with comparative analysis of both texts juxtaposes magic and algorithms. The paper functions within a broader discussion of digital governance and data colonialism. The methodology critiques the question of the human cost of technologically driven power. The approach demonstrates how *Hag-Seed* reimagines Prospero's magic as a modern infrastructure of digital control.

Humanity in Data World: A Theoretical Debate

The paper surveys a theoretical tour of the changing trends in colonization, particularly in the age of AI, offering foundational support for analyzing the psyche of Philix in today's Canadian context. Taming in the digital age operates through pervasive mechanisms such as data extraction, algorithmic bias, digital dependence, and the expanding dominance of artificial intelligence. These innovations simultaneously reproduce older, colonial patterns of control and exploitation in new forms. Data functions as a valuable resource appropriated by technocrats and technologically advanced nations, a parallel to the colonial tendency toward resource extraction. The inequalities are further embedded by Algorithmic systems into social composition, unfolding cultural biases, privileging dominant perspectives, and marginalizing vulnerable communities. Within the narrative of modernization and connectivity, digital technologies deepen global disparities in contemporary technological advancement. How does colonialism function in twenty-first century particularly in the context of Artificial Intelligence? In literature, colonialism often appears as continued oppression, marginalization, or exploitation of vulnerable groups. Thus, it is a colonialism is a systematic oppression. Iris Marion Young's statement in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* about oppression functions through "five categories: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural domination, [and] violence (40)". It redefines injustice as a social condition not only a set of isolated acts. Instead of viewing oppression only as legal inequality or individual prejudice, Young shows how social systems are targeted to certain groups through interconnected exploitation. Exploitation is visible in economic system, labor and commodity in relation to labor. Structural exclusion of certain populations from meaningful participation in social and economic life, pushing them to the margin. Powerlessness is the lack of authority, and decision-making capacity experienced by

neglected population whom have been dominated by universal culture where minority identities are stereotyped. Finally, violence supports to balance a constant threat that maintains this stratification through fear and coercion. Hence, oppression is not only a condition of a group, but also involves the issue of justice as well.

Geographical comfort, exploitation of the natural environment and human labor, and direct control of social structures are the characteristics of historical colonialism. Right after the end of colonization (WWII), a new form of world order came into existence. First is decolonization, which refers to the intellectual, political, economic, and societal work concerned with the restoration of land and life following the end of historical colonial periods (Ashcroft 2006). Therefore, decolonization is a socio-political concern that reclaim cultural identity, questions colonial knowledge systems, and colonial power relations. It is thus centers on marginalized voices and indigenous perspectives as a new and legitimate sources of knowledge. Kwame Nkrumah finds neocolonialism's base "upon the principle of breaking up former large united colonial territories into a number of small non-viable States which are incapable of independent development . . . rely upon the former imperial power for defence and even internal security" (8) Therefore, it is a practice of using economic pressure, cultural dominance, and thus, the political influence to control or influence underdeveloped countries, especially in the Global South, without direct political or military rule.

The contemporary data colonialism, as stated by Ulises A. Mejías and Nick Couldry, extends its root on the historical logic of colonial extraction. By defining it as "a social order in which the continuous extraction of data from our life generates massive wealth and inequality on the global scale (11)", Mejías and Couldry reveal how everyday activities and communication function as raw data for big tech. companies. It has invisibly controlled, brainwashed and modified today's labor and power centre. The free access platforms are itself becomes data, an unpaid labor which supplies propositions to draw analytical conclusions to the targeted community and advertising agencies. On the other hand, the underprivileged population size always remains under monitoring and exploitation. Mejías and Couldry thus claim data extraction is a structural system of inequality. It makes the world realize a new urgency of alternative digital future of proportional rights, autonomy, and collective benefits.

The gradual shift from neo-colonization to data colonization extracts the mechanisms of power and control in the globalized, digital age in a stronger and more dominating manner, reinforcing the thesis that powerful entities dominate weaker ones, and modifying the eco-political landscape and technological control in the 21st century. Data politics involve how tech giants like Google, Meta, and Amazon, as well as powerful countries like the U.S. and China, extract, control, and monetize data from the Global South, creating new forms of dependency. Mejia, in this context,

argues ". . . data colonialism appropriates human life through data, turning it into a commodity. The relation created by Data boosts a colonizing form of power" (339). It foregrounds the transformation of lived experience into digital capitalism. It collects information of everyday - communication, movement, emotions etc. into statistical frame which can be traded and monetized. Hence, daily human life is itself a resource. The corporate estimates control and profit on the stream of raw data. Mejía makes us realize that data infrastructures cover an unlimited territory without geography, a control through surveillance, algorithmic, and predictive analysis that shapes behavior and limits autonomy. Such mechanisms reproduce colonial hierarchies on a global scale, concentrating wealth and decision-making authority in the hands of a few technological actors while rendering users dependent and vulnerable. Thus, data colonialism is not only an economic practice but also a political and cultural system that reconfigures power, agency, and inequality in the digital age.

The argument parallels new form, extractive logic of historical colonialism. However, it is well compatible to digital surveillance capitalism where human beings become data- a new form of exploitation. Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. A. in *The Costs of Connection*, opine that the network of Data is used as a tool to tame human life and make it appropriate for capitalism. Couldry and Mejías further argue:

data colonialism's power grab is both simpler and deeper: the capture and control of human life itself through appropriating the data that can be extracted from it for profit, human life is quite literally being annexed to capital (ix).

The authors suggest that data is beyond business. It is at the centre of human relations. Earlier colonial regimes appropriated land, labor, and resources to fuel industrial capitalism, whereas contemporary digital systems control everyday human activity as raw material for a new phase of power accumulation. Their analysis highlights emphasize the loss of autonomy and agency, where participation in digital life becomes inseparable from exploitation. Thus, data colonialism duly functions as a means of wealth accumulation and decision-making. It appeals to the global community for critical resistance and regulatory intervention. Contemporary capitalism moves beyond exploiting labor and natural resources to data extraction from our everyday communication, emotions, likes and dislikes; converting them into a measurable volume. Human life becomes a raw material which is systematically engaged in digital platforms as a profitable commodity. It is not merely about privacy loss but also keeps question on sovereignty.

In the context of human interactions, resource allocation, and socio-political behavior, algorithms not only travel across societies. It helps to know to examine "how coloniality features in algorithmic decision-making systems as they generate new labor markets, and impact geopolitical power dynamics and influence ethics discourse"

(Mohamad.S. and et.al. 666). It unfolds an unique space of discussion on how AI and machine learning systems institutionally reinforce, replicate, or amplify social inequalities, biases, and discriminatory practices. Human as form of data has been used to control and monetize for tech giant companies. AI-based critical thinking systems direct a new form of policing, surveillance, and regulation of access, reshaping identity in the digital era and deeply influencing judgments, replacing the natural capacity of human cognitive thinking and human authority.

Computational systems, such as search engines, social media, or other recommended platforms, play an active role in structuring the pattern of our interest, automatically confining it to limited access. On the one hand, it explores, based on repetition, our thinking patterns and compels us to shape them accordingly. Algorithms do not just deliver information neutrally. They prioritize, filter, rank, and suppress content. Shoshana Zuboff, in *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, discusses how large tech. companies utilize algorithms to manipulate and erode human autonomy. His center discussion is on digital humanism and the power of algorithms. He gets terrified thinking of the consequences:

A new breed of economic power swiftly filled the void in which every casual search, like, and click was claimed as an asset to be tracked, parsed, and monetized by some company, all within a decade of the iPod's debut . . . Privacy was the price one must pay for the abundant rewards of information, connection, and other digital goods (41).

Zuboff's point is everyday online behavior is now redefined as economic assets. It transforms from selling good and services to extracting and predicting human behavior. It conceptualizes surveillance capitalism as a new economic order that transforms human experience into behavioral data for profit-making and control. An unprecedented economic logic that claims human experience as fresh data to know the human behavior and trade it to giant states which can control and use to predict and shape future behavior for profit and power. August 9, 2011, marked a key game-changer date, as Google announced a significant restructuring that openly embraced a new business logic prioritizing the monetization of user data beyond just improving services - a defining move into surveillance capitalism (65). Google's announcement on August 9, 2011, marks a pivotal moment in seeding digital business practices. It officially expanded a new business venture based on the monetization of user data, a historical shift from personal information as a service to a core economic asset. This strategic move aligns with surveillance capitalism, in which human behaviors, preferences, and interactions are collected, presented, analyzed, inferred, and ultimately commodified in the digital market. It contributes both to revenue and data- driven central to corporate strategy. It undermines the human sphere.

A serious concern predicts on the future of technology is it impacts us often without our awareness or consent. It is a significant ethical, social, and sovereign concerns. Regarding this question, Greenfield's contemporary guide, *Radical Technology* anticipates networked digital information technology has become the dominant mode through which we experience the everyday (5) such as smartphones are always centralizing our attention. Therefore, technology is not neutral. He reclaims that we often mistake convenience and efficiency for freedom, but these systems increasingly automate decision-making, limit discretion, and displace human judgment. It is quietly substituting essential cognitive processes such as introspection and self-inquiry. Dangerously, AI has entered the space of our emotion regulation. Algorithms that read our feelings, emotions, insights, and intuition could be a next-level danger to humanity. In no time, it may become manipulative, handled by power giants, and traded unethically for a limited benefit. The greater we permit spaces to allow machines to read, the less humanity acquires the subtle critical self-awareness, limited retention, and draining personal insight. We are entangled in a significant but controversial time as Greenfield contemplates on “so many of the technologies that are offered to us on the premise that they will spontaneously produce the conditions of equity, justice or freedom” (270). This perspective situates Greenfield within a broader scholarly debate on the politics of technology, aligning with critical theorists who argue that social justice outcomes require deliberate intervention rather than passive reliance on technological advancement. It underscores the need for an ethical and socio-political lens when evaluating the promises of new technologies, rather than accepting them at face value.

Revenge as a Bonding Psyche in Prospero and Felix

The novel *Hag-Seed* opens meta-theatrically with a prison performance script and immediately blurs the boundary between theatre and narrative reality. The novel opens with an unconventional stage production. Atwood foregrounds performance, illusion, and constructs identity as central concern. The play is performed by inmates of the Fletcher Correctional Centre, collectively named as Fletcher Correctional Players, which symbolically transforms a space of punishment in digital space. The setting replicates theatre as both a rehabilitative and a subversive medium, suggesting art can offer prisoners temporary freedom and self-expression.

Felix, the novel's revenger and former artistic director of the Makeshiweg Theatre Festival, finds the staging of *The Tempest* to be his professional epitome, where he believes not only a performance but identifies himself with Prospero. However, this ascent is abruptly disrupted by the betrayal of his assistant Tony, whose political maneuvering removes Felix from power. This betrayal becomes the psychological catalyst for the narrative, transforming Felix's theatrical project into a calculated

instrument of revenge.

VOICES OFF: Let's pray!

BOATSWAIN: What's that you say?

VOICES OFF: We're goin' down! We're gonna drown!

Ain't gonna see the King no more!

Jump off the ship, swim for the shore!

[. . .]

The screen goes black.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: What?

ANOTHER VOICE: Power's off.

ANOTHER VOICE: Must be the blizzard. A line down somewhere.

Total darkness. Confused noise from outside the room. Yelling.

Shots are fired. (Atwood xii)

The prologue reveals that the prison production is not merely educational theatre but part of Felix's elaborate scheme to punish Tony. Thus, performance becomes a strategy of control and manipulation, mirroring Prospero's orchestration of events on the island. The opening scene dramatizes chaos through fragmented voices, cries of drowning, and disorder, evoking both the literal storm and Felix's internal turmoil in Shakespeare's play. The sudden blackout - "The screen goes black"- followed by confusion, shouting, and gunshots, intensifies the sense of disruption and instability. This darkness symbolizes theatrical illusion and Felix's obsession. Atwood establishes key thematic concerns: betrayal, power, confinement, and the redemptive yet manipulative force of art through the abrupt start of the opening scene. The prison stage serves as a hybrid space where reality and performance intersect, predicting Felix as a controlling actor.

Felix, a renowned theatre director, is haunted by grief over the deaths of his wife, Nadia, and daughter, Miranda. His nostalgia for the loss of his daughter transformed into a glamorous life, as embodied in the play *The Tempest*, which he set himself to resurrect his daughter through art. His personal life parallels the life of Prospero. "His wife, Nadia, was the first to leave him, barely a year after their marriage" (22). Felix is a person of critical vision, he assesses his 9flaws like Prospero. As a passionate artist, his mission was to make the art festival a profound one, ignoring the vices that were going on the other side. Unlike Tony, who is a man of flattery and a traitor, keen on finding human weaknesses to nail on it. The inner anger of revenge is reflected as "That devious, twisted bastard, Tony, is Felix's fault. Or mostly his fault. Over the past twelve years, he's often blamed himself. He gave Tony too much scope, he didn't supervise [. . .] Tony's nattily suited, padded, pinstriped shoulder (20). Felix himself reconciles, realizing his blind trust in Tony. The only space of excuse left was that he

was distracted by grief at that time, by the demise of his daughter. As he was trying to realize and feel emotionally his conjugal life, she dies of ‘galloping staph infection right after childbirth’ (23). He repents for not providing modern medicine. His zeal for art made him stupid regarding his family relations. He reimagines her image, love, and compassion, which made him tired and nostalgic. Surviving on the deadly grief, he did not take care of his baby, Miranda (adopted from *The Tempest* character). He was planning to travel the world with her daughter as she grew up. Unfortunately, “But then, at the age of three...High fever. Meningitis” (23) was the cause of her death. Felix is abruptly removed from the stage, given back his belongings, and retreats to a remote cottage to nurse his sorrow and resentment. On the way going to countryside, “he was cold” at first. However, in no time, he could able to normalize himself and could control pain and agony into revenge. Atwood further adds, “Was he in shock? No: he wasn’t shivering. He was calm” (35). As a creative artist, he is neither involved in conspiracies nor tolerates the injustice and bias imposed upon him. He readily exits the circle of power on the belief that he would revive in another way. “The sun was declining; its light slanted, grew yellower. How long had he been out here? Wherever *here* was. He drove on (36).

Felix’s comeback as an art instructor teaching theatre in a Fletcher Correctional literacy program becomes the best circumstance for revenge. Felix molds the players(prisoners) fit to his prison theatre class, introducing *The Tempest* and building trust with skeptical inmates as their eccentric and passionate director. Felix begins teaching under the name Mr. Duke, under the project ‘Literacy through Literature’ arranged by Estelle. The project for inmates was Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* for the years production. The explicit difference is seen here when he tries to impress his players through literacy. He closely observes the close circuit cameras to know their behavior/ activities and tries to read and customize them in his format. The act goes parallelly to the act of Prospero’s style of taming Caliban. Felix using his artistic genius on the project made inmates convince in his design (unlike black magic and any other physical punishment)- which is similar to Mejies’s idea- “This seizure entails not the grabbing of land, but the grabbing of data [. . .] a priceless resource: the intimacy of our daily life as a new source of value” (3). It is generating unprecedented amount of wealth. The big-tech companies are the wealthiest in the world. Felix follows the same footsteps of modern data manipulation.

The prison of *Hag-seed* symbolizes the island of *The Tempest*, a perfect space to Felix to control and exploit lives in the way he wishes. The taming psychology, today, is largely controlled and manipulated and interpreted by digital devices and closed monitoring of tech-giants through the means of data. Felix feels like Prospero, reviving from the pain of exile with a plan to regain control, though it's still in his

subconscious status. The opportunity means the best way to revenge when he found the new of attending two ministers in his theatre show. “You’ll be receiving a visit from a Minister! Even better: two Ministers! That almost never happens, two at once! Maybe even three!” (Atwood 68). Prison for Felix is as a site of Data extraction and control. The correctional center is highly surveilled, controlled environment similar to data subjects are tracked by digital systems. The data logic and algorithm pattern are the power of Felix so as ‘the black magic’ to Prospero. He studies the minds of inmates, explored the pattern of thinking they have. He also implanted the knowledge that he wishes to implant. His performance is similar to the strategy of big-tech houses in our time. The production and distribution of algorithms shape the mind and emotion of entire humanity. Felix treats the prison and inmates as both a stage and an experimental lab where he could gather emotional, narrative, and behavioral data for his personal agenda. Inmates have little autonomy so as Caliban used to have in the kingdom of Prospero. Their voice is channelized through the structure Felix provides; similar to how tech platforms shape user expression, desire, thinking, and emotion. Writer writes, “He wanted revenge. He longed for it. He daydreamed about it. Tony and Sal must suffer.” (41) This is the actual line reflecting Felix’s obsessive desire for vengeance more vividly. The Big Tech giants harvest user behavior for profit by using raw data. Felix in the same line harvests inmates as per his knowledge and make them perform to stage- similar to the revenge plot under the guise of rehabilitation in prison.

Hag-Seed at its heart reflects core fundamental of data colonialism. Felix controls over narrative and behaviors of inmates. The surveillance system seems as a tool for security, in fact its digital spy on their privacy and an indirect but vibrant way to control their knowledge and behaviors. Felix’s project is a continuation of colonial psyche reconstruction in today’s time. It offers transformation, but on his terms. Here a fundamental question arises- is Felix a freedom fighter who fight against justice or he is a colonizer who cartels and reprograms for his sake in disguise? He seems closer to fulfill his revenge ego.

Felix applies the same (tech-based) knowledge to spy on Tony. Just like a data scientist, Felix constructed a complete cyber profile gathering data on Tony over many years as he was exiled from Theatre Festival in Ontario. He stalks Tony online, tracks his career and relationships in digital space in-puts Felix to assess his professional weakness, his network, interest, choices, emotional aspects and his public image. It straightly recalls Prospero’s- defense and revenge strategy influences by his passionate reading (black magic). Felix creative insight as an artist spy government sites and political moves assists him to create a multi-dimensional digital profile of Tony and his team. The formula of pattern recognition and prediction which is beneficial to data scientists to pattern algorithms. Following the pattern of data scientist, he begins to

trace out the movements of Tony:

where he went, what he was doing, his pronouncements, his television appearances. His list of achievements: Tony liked accumulating achievements and was careful to ensure that they were acknowledged. At first this indirect stalking was easy: all Felix needed to do was get the Makeshiweg papers—of which, in those days, there were two—and look up the theatrical news and the social notes. (47)

The calculation, data-driven surveillance and strategic timing of Felix mirror his revenge mirror in the orchestration in *The Tempest*, fusing technological method with dramatic purpose. Exactly, this is Felix's planning and activity. He does not act immediately. He observes Tony's moves and waits for an opportune moment when Tony is vulnerable. His decision to spy on his data is not abrupt. He first thinks of meeting Tony in a restaurant or a swimming pool, physically to avenge or seduce his wife in a traditional pattern, but both ideas he found no longer work. Then he moves to spy on data and algorithms to capture him, and he announces revenge to satisfy him. As per Prospero's design, he finds the appropriate timing to imprison Tom, Sal, and other officials to reveal their vulnerability in Shakespeare's world. His strategy connects with the basics of data science. His script reflects his creative understanding of how to control variables within the prison. He presents himself in disguise through surveillance equipment and scripts. He is straightforward in his understanding of the logic of revenge.

The prison functions as an ideal site for executing the master plan where Tom, Sal, and other officials are carefully engineered to gather all enemies in one vulnerable space. Felix uses scripts, surveillance equipment, and theatrical illusion to manipulate variables within the controlled environment of the prison, which reflects Prospero's use of magic. His disguise through technical apparatus and performance allows him to remain unseen while exercising authority.

First, he needed to get his *Tempest* back. He had to stage it, somehow, somewhere. His reasons were beyond theatrical; they had nothing to do with his reputation, his career [. . .]

Second, he wanted revenge. He longed for it. He daydreamed about it. Tony and Sal must suffer. His present woeful situation was their doing, or a lot of it was. They'd treated him shabbily. But what form could such revenge possibly take?" (4)

The prison's constructed environment facilitates this strategy. Felix deliberately creates a complex scenario involving a simulated riot and a staged kidnapping, events that seem chaotic but are in fact carefully orchestrated. This manipulation of space and perception parallels theatrical production, where illusion determines reality for both performers and observers. By designing these circumstances, Felix compels Tony and

Sal into a state of vulnerability, prompting them to disclose their guilt. The performance thereby functions as a trap, positioning theatre as a tool for surveillance and coercion. He plays the role of Ariel in Felix's prison reimagining of *The Tempest*. They communicate:

Felix: "What exactly do you know about surveillance systems?"

8Handz: "I'm cool, if I've got what I need; like, the tools."

Felix: "I want to see without being seen—in all the rooms, plus the hallway. (12)

8Handz's control resembles the practical, technical nature of his control. Power, today, resides in digital competence and technological resources, not in physical strength. 8Handz (like Ariel) carries out Felix's will through hacking and control over electronic systems. Consequently, the prison becomes a monitored, panoptic environment where visibility is engineered and weaponized. The exchanges highlight how contemporary authority operates through data, observation, and invisibility, reframing revenge as a calculated act of surveillance rather than military retaliation. Felix's art-mind creates a control and transform the plot to revenge, much like Prospero. He navigates grief and reclaims his world through art and creativity. On the other hand, the modern Ariel, 8Handz, embodies innovation, resistance, and the transformative power of technology, brings a tech-based taming and bridges of revenge plan into reality. The moment complicates Felix's position as both a victim and controller. His position is in margin of the institutional structures; he duplicates the logic of surveillance to orchestrate events and manipulate others. The prison thus represents a broader society in which seen and unseen forces determine power relations. Atwood's stand here is that contemporary government largely relies on technological inspection, concerning on data tracking and monitoring. 8Handzs in the novel reflects digital knowledge as a modern-day colonizing force that captures virtual space, human behavior, and agency, reinforcing hierarchies.

Conclusion

Felix's programming and manufacturing of knowledge function invisibly as means of control, closely aligning with contemporary inventions in data extraction and surveillance control. He gathers information, monitors behavior, and engineers' outcomes through an algorithmic process. By extracting and organizing data about Tony, Sal, and others, Felix extends a structure of domination which reminds colonial logic. The prison thus performs as a microcosm of this system, where surveillance dictates every movement and decodes individuals into data, a subject to manage.

Felix, in a holistic scene reflects broader practices of mass surveillance and behavioral tracking in contemporary society, where algorithm-based decision-making increasingly shapes social, economic, political and cultural realities in a

society. Information emerges as a resource analogous to land or labor, facilitating new forms of exploitation through unpaid or involuntary data production. The algorithm network threatens to privacy and disproportionately marginalizes vulnerable communities, creating systematic inequalities, i.e. “tech-colonialism”. Atwood does not anticipate a dystopian future. She positions Felix as a modern Prospero demonstrates how surveillance and data are becoming tools of governance and retribution. The control in the digital era relies less on overt force and more on invisible observation and the strategic deployment of information. The novel strongly suggests that contemporary power is exercised through data sovereignty. Big data house shapes reality itself. This analysis concludes that *The Tempest* is reinterpreted in *Hag-Seed* through the framework of surveillance capitalism. Felix’s theatre exemplifies how knowledge functions as both a colonial and disciplinary instrument which can transform the prison and the stage into domains of algorithmic control. It raises serious ethical questions about the risks of data extraction, which has become a robust legal, political, and moral issue. Atwood critiques the safeguards to protect individual freedom and technological domination.

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