Use Of Literary Reinvention

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Introduction

Literary Reinvention is used extensively in the reproduction of literary plays. Different terms come into account when discussing literary reinvention. For example, this includes rewriting a piece of writing to improve it. Reinvention, at times, keeps text intact like the original with some minor changes, while it is possible to incur drastic changes in the text when they are not confined under copyright laws. For example, when the original writer has passed away, and the literary estate cannot restrict reproduction. Reinvention can vary from reinvention in other plays to movies, books, essays, narrations, paintings and more. The text can be reinvented to alter the story, the theme, the characters and more according to the reinventor's discretion and the intended audience.

The Tempest

When it comes to plays, it is necessary to keep in mind the inevitability of the play being reinvented. They are meant to be recreated to please the people of the time who are watching the play. The reinvention of the play "Tempest" by William H. Shakespeare can be witnessed in the changes in music, costumes, screenplay, actors and even the script to some extent.

Varying renditions of the play have been altered to suit the audience and its preferences; an example can be taken from the music of the songs in Tempest. The song "Where the bee sucks," also referred to as Ariel's song (Act V, I, p 68), was presented by Alfred Deller's style of music in a time when Shakespeare still lived. Later, in the year 1999, a second version was presented; this differed a great deal from the style adopted previously. It was reinvented for the audience of Barbados, and the style of music became Barbadian from the previous English version of Alfred Deller.

Plays like the Tempest are also reinvented using different types of actors to portray the roles. The character of Ariel has been reinvented by different actresses throughout time. The rendition produced in 1952 featured Margaret Leighton as Ariel. She was known for her resplendence and grand image. In a later version produced in 1960, the role went on to an actor known as Roddy McDowell. The reinvention is evident in how the role previously played by a woman in the 1952 rendition now became a role played out by a man, as the play had been reinvented such that it was acceptable for the role to be given to Roddy McDowell.

Most recently, in the year 2010, two renditions of Tempest were produced, and both were reinvented to attract audiences. One of the productions again featured Ariel as a woman, while the other featured Ariel as a man. The rendition, directed by writer and director Julie Taymor, also featured one of the main leads, Prospero, who was previously depicted by a man and was now depicted by a woman. Different writers reinvent plays through rewriting and reimagining the different scenarios portrayed in the play.

The reinvention of the play Tempest, according to the director Julie Taymor, can be considered a great reinvention while keeping the essence of the play intact. Some changes, however, like the change in gender of the wizard "Prospero" to "Prospera" affect the overall picture William Shakespeare had intended to show; the father-daughter relationship between the wizard and his daughter has now been reinvented to portray a mother-daughter relationship between Prospera and Miranda, the daughter. The dynamics of a patriarchal bond have changed into an effeminate one.

The sounds and special effects used in different productions of the play also play an integral part in how it is conceived by the audience regarding the main idea being reinvented. The rendition by Julie gives a more modernistic touch than Shakespeare could have ever imagined or intended for Tempest.

The Tempest has also seen reinvention in its textual forms. It has been reinvented regarding its text for use in on-stage shows or in films by some people; it has even been through the process of textual revisions as many as four times over a period of sixty years. The time between 1622 and 1675 is referred to as the restoration period for many classics. One of the reinventions for Tempest written by Davenant-Dryden and Shadwell for the plays and opera had become favorites of the viewers in the restoration times. There were changes in both versions, i.e., the opera version of The Tempest and the play version.

To appeal to audiences of different countries, the play was reinvented to appeal the most to the respective audiences. In the Caribbean version of The Tempest, the characters were reinvented regarding ethnic background. Caliban was shown to be of an African background, while Ariel was a mix of European and African ethnicity; this was relevant to the Caribbean audience as it emphasized colonial issues faced by people of the Caribbean. The people could relate to the issues, and hence, the purpose of the reinvention was fulfilled.

The essence of most of Shakespeare's plays, including The Tempest, gives the audience a lot of exposure to poetry. W.H. Auden reinvented the play in 1944; much of the reinvention in this version was regarding the poetry of the play. Another writer and poet, Kamau Brathwaite, redesigned the poetry of the play, keeping in mind the Caribbean audience and the African heritage. She portrays the character Caliban as a poet of the time who was born to Sycorax, who was an activist for African culture.

The Tempest has been reinvented in different forms like films, plays, opera shows, essays, books, etc. Different people and nations reinvented it according to their liking; for example, in a Cuban version of the play, the main role digressed from Prospera or Ariel and was focused on Caliban instead. Robert

Fernandez, who portrayed Caliban as a revolutionary figure, mentioned, "*.Our symbol then is not Ariel, As Rodo thought, but rather Caliban.*" (p14). This was said in contrast to Rodo's version, which focused on Ariel; he said "*Shakespeare's ethereal Ariel symbolizes the noble, soaring aspect of the human spirit. He represents the superiority of reason and feeling over the base impulses of irrationality.*" (p31). As reinvention differs based on imagination, the Caliban of Fernandez was a revolutionary figure, while the Caliban of Rodo was a protagonist in their respective plays.

Not only do plays get reinvented in forms of other plays and written art, but they also get reinvented by visual artists in paintings and tapestries. One famous painter of The Tempest is Hogarth. His painting called "A Scene from "The Tempest" is further comprehended by the viewers with the assistance of written cues like the essay by Dadybeen labeled "Hogarth and the cane Cutter," which is further complimented by a poem called "Miranda" penned by Daddybeen himself.

Particularly, "The Tempest" is relevant to the idea of literary reinvention. The nature of the play also plays a big hand in the retention and innovation of the characters of the play. The reinvention only brings about a new audience and introduces a more relatable context. Ariel as a character is reenacted to give the viewers a timeless piece and to keep them updated with the current social construct. For instance, at first, women's characters were played by men or young boys, but today, the proper enactment of the script is done to bring about the best effect. Most of Shakespeare's work is timeless in that the enactments have long stayed after his era and there are the introduction and amalgamation of new sound effects and portrayals in the works.

Waiting for Godot

Samuel Beckett wrote the play "Waiting for Godot" in the year 1953. The play was a hit of its time and is supposed to be based on reinventions of the films and art of the famous actor and comedian known as Charlie Chaplin, who was the inspiration for Samuel Beckett to write his play Waiting for Godot. The play is said to be a reflection of Beckett's thoughts from the time of the Second World War. The play was written originally in French with the title of "En attendant Godot" and then translated by Beckett himself. Waiting was a major part of the lives of the people who lived in France during the Second World War; this included Beckett himself as well, who worked in the resistance in France. Hence, the term Attendance was then comprehended to be an attitude of the people known as "Attentisme," which can be literally translated to "wait and see." It was a known term in France with which much of Beckett's French audience would have been acquainted.

Much of Beckett's play is inspired by Charlie Chaplin. One of the terms frequently used in the play, "Tray Bong," is picked up from one of the music hall plays by Charlie Chaplin. Acts seen in the music hall plays had been vividly incorporated into the plays of Beckett. It is seen that "Like Chaplin, Beckett uses this music hall tradition to transform the democratic into the universal" (p67). This refers to the style picked from Charlie Chaplin, which is used by Beckett.

It can be deduced that while Chaplin focuses on visually appealing to the audience, Beckett plays more into the verbal effects he can have on his audience (p74). Some of the performances said to inspire Beckett to write Waiting for Godot include Vaudeville, Laurel and Hardy, Shaw, and Lee, along with Charlie Chaplin's classics like "Charlie Chaplin's Walk," Chaplin's "Search for the cocaine clip" and renowned performance "The Great Dictator Speech" by Chaplin. "Waiting for Godot" also reinvents another play by the name of "Ubu Roi" by Alfred Jarry, performed in 1896. The scene titled "Lucky's Speech" and the Hat swapping can be seen reinvented in Beckett's production.

Regarding philosophy, Waiting for Godot could have taken some points from Sartre's theory of existentialism. The waiting can be linked to the "bad faith" Sartre had in God and the belief that no help from God shall arrive. Although it can be seen that Beckett's play is not in the same genre as Sartre's, Beckett provides more of a comic front, while Sartre relies purely on philosophical tones for his play.

"*Waiting for Godot and Philosophy." Lance St. John Butler. 48-55. "Waiting for Godot is not a philosophical play in any direct sense of the term.... Sartre's plays contain characters who have clearly defined philosophical roles, and they explicitly discuss questions, such as the nature of human freedom and responsibility, that are also discussed in his philosophical works of the period...Beckett, of course, wrote no philosophy. His plays try to avoid simple identifications of all sorts, including philosophical ones, and they do not offer any coherent discussion of the issues they raise. They are, we may say, the opposite of Sartre's.".* 48.

Beckett's play makes the audience think about the issues at hand with the help of humor and comedy to lighten the mood yet still shed light on philosophical ideas even when the plays seem to be complete opposites. Sartre takes a negative approach to the idea of waiting for help in his play, while Beckett shows a glimpse of hope and longing in his waiting for Godot.

The play written by Beckett was also reinvented when he chose to translate it from French to English, which gathered a larger English-speaking audience. Ann Beer focused on this aspect of Beckett's work by saying, ".*To have two tongues, two modes of speech, two ways of responding to the world, is to be necessarily outside the security of a unified viewpoint.".* (209). This meant that his plays could offer different points of view to different audiences and appeal to different mindsets.

Charlie Chaplin is a timeless classic in its right, and the relevance of reinvention can be seen in that the works are inspirational for all the viewers in the many different time periods in which the play is retained. The language barrier is also an issue that is rectified with the translation of the manuscript. Many times, the retention of the play and the script results in the timeless captivity of the play's context. Reinvention works across many domains and does not only involve the element of time but relates to the many languages that are prevalent in the region. As the plays are translated into different languages, there are many different meanings of the dialogues. There are many different aspects in Beckett's play that relate to many cultural values. The genres are also changed in many modern plays, and the results are mostly successful. The current era has introduced many viable

options for the reinvention of previous literature, and this is seen in the many different effects the technology has on rebooting plays such as Beckett's.

The play by Beckett was a reinvention of different philosophical and entertainment sources and has further been reinvented by people for comic effects like the play called "Waiting for Elmo," which is a children's story using the comedy effect left by Beckett in his play Waiting for Godot.

Equiano

The text Equiano is classified in the life writing category. This category can hold any text which talks about the experiences that people have lived through. It includes autobiographies, memoirs, letters, diaries and even modern-day amenities like blogs and emails which describe the experiences of people. Equiano was based in 1789; the texts existing in the life writing category at that time include some parts from religious texts like the Bible, Caesar's account of his Gallic War experience (c 50 BC), Daniel Defoe's The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe (1719) among others.

As the text on Equiano describes his life struggles in transatlantic slavery, the most relatable content, in this case, would be the ones that focus on the same issues faced by Equiano or, at the very least, similar ones. Some of the texts which have been reinvented by Equiano include similar texts like "Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, A Negro Man" (1760), which tells the life story of a slave man abducted by the Caribbean people and kept for 13 years before being given back to his master.

Other texts specifically about African slavery and abduction include *"James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw. Narrative of the Most Remarkable Particulars in the Life of James Albert Gronniosaw, An African Prince, as Related by Himself".* (London 1770). This was one of the first texts focusing on the horrible effects of slavery. It included details about the prince's slavery, kidnapping and later life.

The text written on the life of Equiano spoke deeply to some people and sparked the rage and emotions of many people, even the ones who were previously in denial about the effects and even the existence of slavery.

"The British abolitionists were shocked by what they came to learn about slavery and the. slave trade*. They were deeply convinced that they lived in a remarkable time that would see both evils swept from the face of the earth. Like anyone who wages such a fight, they discovered that injustice does not vanish so easily. But their passion and optimism are still contagious and relevant to our times, when, in so many parts of the world, equal rights for all…seem far distant.*

The movement they forged is a landmark for an additional reason. There is always something mysterious about human empathy, and when we feel it and when we don't.… Slaves and other subjugated peoples have rebelled throughout history, but the campaign in England was something never seen before. It was the first time a large number of people became outraged, and stayed

outraged for many years, over someone else's rights" (pp 4-5).

The extract above focuses on the impact that writing about Equiano had on the emotions of the British and how it affected slavery and the slave trade.

The writer for Equiano's biography claims that some of the early parts of the biography may have been reinvented from previous accounts of African slavery to add to the picture the reader perceives. Equiano seeks to reinvent himself through the narration in the text. It provides a contrary view of traditional memoirs. As Equiano goes on to write about his compliance with the Christian master regarding his baptism, he reinvents the Christian life by writing texts like "The Confessions of Saint Augustine.".

The life story of Equiano, published with the title "An interesting narrative of the life of Olaudah Equiano," was later reinvented by many others who wished to write slave narratives. Henry Louis Gates emphasized this by stating that Equiano's narrative had become a prototype for all the people wishing to write slave narratives. It helped reinvent future narratives by adding rhetorical strategies like the trope of chiasmus and the use of two voices to represent one person. This could be the future and past selves.

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