

BOOK CLUB REPORT – May 15, 2018

Eleven members met to discuss Hag-Seed by Margaret Atwood. This book is part of the Hogarth Press Project which was set up to invite famous authors from different countries to rewrite and update famous works of Shakespeare. The Canadian contribution was Margaret Atwood taking on The Tempest. It is the story of Felix a well-known art director who gets unceremoniously fired from his job just as he is about to present The Tempest. Felix already suffers from profound grief over the loss of his wife and 3 year-old daughter. Another loss (his job) sends him into a spiral of depression and he goes to a small town away from anyone he knows and begins to live the life of a hermit. After a decade of this he stumbles upon a job working in a prison school. He decides to help the inmates learn by putting on various Shakespearean plays and through these plays they learn the skills they need to live on the outside. All the while Felix is obsessed with getting revenge on the people that fired him years before and with the ghost of his daughter who lives with him in his hovel of a home. It takes 12 years, but he eventually reaps his revenge on his nemesis and finds relief. Atwood cleverly weaves the original The Tempest plot and characters in and out of her up-to-date characters in a way that provides for a darkly humorous story of loss, revenge, enchantment, illusion -ridden lives and surprises. It provided the basis for discussion around all of these things but most particularly, prison life and whether prisons should be places of punishment or rehabilitation. The discussion was lively and thought provoking and the book was rated 7.8/10. The next meeting will be on June 19, 2018. The books is March Forth by Trevor and Debbie Greene. We will be picking new books for the year at the September meeting.