

## **When Shakespeare Gets Graphic: Revisiting Shakespearean Tragedy through Manga Lenses**

Elena - Ancuța ȘTEFAN  
Ovidius University of Constanța

**Abstract:** *Manga – a type of Japanese comic – has become a focal point in western popular culture and, like any type of comic book, it is primarily associated with adolescence. The interest in engaging with canonical texts has decreased exponentially in the past decades among young consumers of entertainment. In consequence, manga proposes a more attractive alternative since the preferred form of media nowadays is visual. The questions that further my research refer to manga adaptations of canonical texts – precisely The Manga Editions, by Adam Sexton, which focus on some of Shakespeare’s tragedies – and the extent to which they represent a better way of engaging with Shakespearean plays than reading or watching the original text – thus, how is theater changed by contemporary means of storytelling? Is graphic literature appropriate enough to keep canonical texts relevant? Can manga preserve and render the same impactful metaphors and discourses? I argue that manga adaptations of Shakespeare make the writings available to a new generation of readers who add to the value of the original texts. Moreover, critical approaches such as theories of adaptation are enabling a profound reading of what can be considered frivolous or unsophisticated at a first glance.*

**Keywords:** *adaptations, manga, theatre, reading, representation, tragedy*