

When Shakespeare Gets Graphic: Revisiting Shakespearean Tragedy through Manga Lenses

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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*

INTRODUCING MANGA SHAKESPEARE

Manga¹ – a type of Japanese comic – has become a focal point in western popular culture and, as most types of comic books, manga is primarily consumed by adolescents. The interest in engaging with canonical texts, be they novels, poems, or plays, has decreased exponentially in the past decades among young consumers of entertainment. In consequence, manga proposes a more attractive alternative since the media consumed nowadays are mostly visual. This new line of Shakespeare’s plays may be meant for high school and young adult students, and it may be intended to make a play’s action and meaning more accessible and enjoyable than ever. They are, however, much more than merely instructional tools, and they are far from being “dumbed-down.” Adam Sexton is one of the writers who have ventured into the adaptation of Shakespearean theatre into Japanese comics. He has successfully developed complete adaptations of Shakespeare’s work —adaptations that succeed not just as pedagogical tools, intended to appeal to students, but also

¹ “Manga” is Japanese for “whimsical pictures.”

as sophisticated and even controversial readings of these canonical writings. His whimsical adaptation of *Hamlet* supports theater critic Jan Knott's argument that Shakespeare is indeed "our contemporary."² Therefore, Sexton's rewriting of *Hamlet* resembles manga in size, style, and art skills, but the text is entirely Shakespeare's. The characters illustrated are indeed youthful and classic manga characters, who seem to be created to appeal to a younger audience. Horatio's appearance, for instance, has been changed in such a way that he looks like a contemporary version of a teenager.

Hamlet, Shakespeare's tragedy about the eponymous character Hamlet, prince of Denmark, who is told by the ghost of his father, King Hamlet, to murder his uncle Claudius, is the best play for the manga technique because of its dense action and heavy soliloquies. Since killing Hamlet's father, Claudius has become king of Denmark and married Queen Gertrude, Hamlet's mother. Ophelia, Hamlet's love interest, is the daughter of Claudius's most trusted adviser, Polonius, and the sister of Laertes, Hamlet's rival. Throughout the play, Hamlet is visited by his closest friend, Horatio, and two college friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. *Hamlet* features the most interior material—thoughts, emotions, hopes, fears, and ideas—of all of Shakespeare's plays. Hamlet himself delivers five soliloquies during the course of the tragedy that bears his name, and each is a poetic, rhetorical, philosophical, and wordplay masterpiece. Even though *Hamlet: The Manga Edition* does not explain the soliloquies, it allows the reader to experience them in the context of the previously mentioned visually-presented action. Shakespeare's timeless tragedy is reinvented through the medium of manga, a lively new art form.

A closer examination then reveals that the volume has been handled with remarkable skill and care. Sexton retains Shakespeare's original language, with characters speaking lines from the original tragedies. Moreover, these are not just abbreviated versions; in fact, the manga rendition of *Hamlet* features all five soliloquies, which is a rare thing even in staged versions of the play. Sexton skillfully interweaves episodes, for example combining Ophelia's burial with a fictitious funeral for Polonius. He devotes ample time to the soliloquies, splitting the majority of them over multiple spreads with lyrical explanations of essential imagery and ingenious theatrical interventions (such as giving over part of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy to the Ghost).

The comics are laid out in a succession of square panels, following one another block by block, with narrative boxes moving from one sequence of events to another. Sexton's adaptations do away with the requirement for narrative renderings by relying on the predilection of manga for visuals — both text and graphics — bursting out of frames in unexpected ways that add as much to the plot as the conversation in any other narrative text. When the

² This is a reference to Jan Knott's study, entitled *Shakespeare, Our Contemporary*.

young people vow upon Hamlet's sword, the prop pierces multiple frames, rendering the Ghost's kingdom as an inky expanse of anguish. As a result, the visual representations aid young readers by eliminating the need for narrative explanations. Thus, the manga series encourages consumers to read by removing narrative explanations and focusing on the words and actions of Shakespeare's characters. The graphics may also add to the understanding of the text, since *Hamlet* is a heavy literary piece, which requires considerable attention from the reader. Furthermore, just like comical additions in plays, the manga also includes some scenes which may appeal to the younger audiences. For instance, Horatio playfully tussles with Hamlet, whom he attempts to soothe and calm down during the famous ghost scene in the first act. Furthermore, in the first act, when Hamlet sees the Ghost, he hits Horatio in a frenzy of movement and his eyeglasses fly off his face and shatter into shards of glass — these fragments then transform into the very panels through which the reader witnesses the events on the next page. This aspect in particular is reminiscent of Piggy's eyeglasses in *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding — a postmodern work. In the novel, the eyeglasses are a symbol of civilization and knowledge and when they break the detail foreshadows the tragic ending awaiting the characters, marking the beginning of chaos. Thus, this manga adaptation of *Hamlet* may also be considered a postmodern reading of a Shakespearean play. Moreover, the imaginative aesthetic decision visually communicates to readers that they are reading a drama in which interpretation — literally, how one sees events — is a crucial theme and, of course, the postmodern quality of the text is also given by the multiple layers of intertextuality — transforming the original text into something contemporary and adding elements that have punctuated literature across the centuries, from the original staging of *Hamlet* up until now.

MANGA AND CLASSICS

Literary writings are therefore reflections of both the cultures that make them and the societies that receive them, once the contemporary worldview, ideas, and values serve as interpretive boundaries for historical texts. In improvised writings, the lack of sign keys may enhance the reader's difficulties in comprehending the language choices, implicit allusions, and grammatical structure of the text as intended by the author. During their school years, students generally resist reading canonical texts or “universal literature” because they appear removed from their experience. Educators recommend a number of strategic ways to reach young readers, yet many of them prove inadequate. In order to entice readers, the first literary adaptations were created in comic book style. Since the first half of the 20th century, when such pioneering works in literary adaptation appeared, these adaptations of classical works have entered the school sphere at an accelerated rate, amidst heated

debates about their aesthetic quality and their effectiveness in achieving their goals.

The adaptations continue to inspire mistrust in individuals who feel they seek to operate as a facilitator for the original text, therefore preventing the reading of the original story. Others, however, assert that the adaptation is an invitation to the literary work, an introduction to its reading, or even a supplement to it. Faced with an abundance of copies as a consequence of adaptations, one has a version that is loyal to the original as well as versions that have nothing to do with the literary work. The purpose is to make the text as appealing as possible, especially to school-aged children and adolescents. Among the alterations are changes to the storyline and the choice of language, in order to make it more appropriate to a certain type of consumer, as well as condensation. The reality is that the understanding of a work in as many forms as possible enhances the reader's ability to read and analyze it. A text may provide insights into the social landscape of the period in which the text was written or adapted; therefore, when students read a literary work in comic book format, they not only get glimpses of the present-day trends in reading, but they also familiarize themselves with classical texts and the correspondent time when they were created.

The graphic novel adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy, for instance, may highlight the effect of temporal distance on the interpretation of a work; manga may establish the circumstances for this in particular. Manga is a Japanese art genre where the expressiveness of shapes is emphasized. Even the most attentive reader cannot always keep up with the velocity at which information is spread in our society. The variety of texts that circulate and are easily accessible extends from printed to digital, verbal to visual, fixed form to the use of the notion of mobility. Despite the fact that many people are ignorant of the variety of languages and writings that surround them, they constantly read what is all around them. However, depending on its unique characteristics, each textual medium demands certain interpretive abilities and capacities. Because literary compositions communicate information that is "always more than the reader can perceive at the time of reading" (283), according to the critic Wolfgang Iser, the texts must be excavated and their components explored so that the whole may be appreciated. School, which is critical in developing good readers and instilling the reading habit, must also adapt to the new language patterns. As a consequence, music and visual information, in addition to textual resources, have acquired added importance in the attempt to make students' learning more enjoyable and meaningful.

READING AND MEANINGS

The study of hybrid texts, which blend verbal and visual languages in their development, such as videos, cinematographic works, and comics, is a

particularly difficult endeavor. This research attempts to evaluate the language of comics since intersemiotic translations have increased not just the length or broadness of a text but also its target audience in recent years. If comics were originally designed for children, now teenagers as well as adults discover more than entertainment in its topical depth. The diversity of a comic's readers may be attributed to the versatility of the genre and the writers' ability to re-create the standard style of story-telling while seeking to widen their output and fulfill new demands. This presents readers with more appealing forms through its attractive visual rendering. In addition to comic producers, researchers and education critics have contributed to the dissemination of comics in social and academic spheres. Several lectures condemned its use in a scholastic setting decades ago, but now its use is not only tolerated but actively encouraged.

Establishing incentive programs for the inclusion of comics in school libraries was a critical step in introducing comics into schools. In addition to an endeavor to expand the collection, the selection of this kind of work was motivated by a desire to produce works that students would find acceptable. A series of adaptations of canonical texts seems to be the natural response to the increase in media consumption through the use of the Internet. Youth would not consume print as much as pixels and all Manga Shakespeare editions are available online, which makes it attainable for anyone. Furthermore, a part of the attractiveness of creating or reading comics resides in its rich language – a simple and appealing appearance characterizes its tales, combining verbal and graphical information, requiring the reader to use several skills in order to understand the meaning of the reading material, but still being aided by the visuals. The genre elicits in the reader a variety of reading skills, such as the capacity to grasp layered images and text or to gain a global perspective that can extract spatiotemporal concepts from static images. This is only possible because of the mastery a proficient reader gains. The reading techniques necessary for textual and visual codes make comics an interdisciplinary form.

Reading, as a process of constructing and establishing meanings, is a necessary skill not only for those who wish to master the content of written documents, but also for those who wish to establish relationships, critique, and form opinions based on the observation of their social, historical, and cultural context. Human reason may be described by its capacity to decode, that is, to recognize its state and, based on this understanding, to represent the experience of human existence. Therefore, the communication underlying the symbolic function facilitates contact through the exchange of ideas among individuals of the same social group through codes such as written and spoken language and the arts. The critic emphasizes the significance of verbal and non-verbal codes for human communication, in written and spoken forms, as well as via visuals and sounds, and highlights the variety of techniques available for conveying a message. Consequently, it is crucial to underline that the various modes of

communication ensure many textual modalities and, consequently, varied interpretations.

According to the philosopher Paulo Freire, the reading of the world is the earliest activity of the human sphere, a naturally acquired skill in preliterate civilizations, and it precedes verbal reading. Understanding the clues given by nature is significant, being necessary for human survival. Then, one must understand the weather and the seasons in order to grow and harvest crops; the therapeutic characteristics of plants in order to restore the health of patients; and the behavior of some animals that enables them to perform guarding, loading, mobility, and even provisioning jobs. Additionally, the postures, gestures, and grunts of other humans had to be read, comprehended, and responded to, particularly at a period when people were not entirely communicating through speech. What many interpret as primitive creative products carved or painted on the walls of caves, pottery, wood, and their own bodies, stemmed from man's interpretation of his environment, even if partially codified by the group into which it was introduced and only understood by that group (Freire 6). Reading may be regarded as a natural and spontaneous human capacity, and even if there were some specific cultural elements associated with it, this would initially have no direct link with a visual alphabet, for instance.

Thus, the notion that literate society created the concept of reading as if it were limited to the process of decoding the written form is incorrect. Although writing has undeniable significance as the foundation for the development of civilization's literature and grammar, it is wrong to assume that only the written code can be understood. One of the reception theorists, Wolfgang Iser, defines reading as "a process of dynamic interaction between the text and its reader" (279). Reading occurs only when the reader engages actively with a text – that is, a codified message – to construct the meaning of the conveyed material, and never passively. Therefore, reading involves engaging with a message while decoding it.

On the other hand, in his study, *Reading: Identity and Social Insertion* (2007), Camelo Ponte stresses reading as an intellectual activity whose meaning is determined by contextual variables, the author's intentions in writing a text, and the reader's relationship with the text. Therefore, reading may be seen as "an interactive process between author and reader, mediated by the text, in a particular historical and social context" (Ponte 38). Thus, texts become meaningful, comprehensible, and coherent – or not – based on the readers' expectations, their degree of familiarity with the subject matter, their ability to infer information, and their ability to relate the content to other personal references that he has accumulated over time. In this sense, "reading" is regarded as polysemous; that is, it may have several meanings for various readers, each with their own cultural background. Due to the fact that "reading

possibilities in a given moment, for certain readers, in relation to certain texts can vary historically” (Ponte 35), the same individual, even at different life stages or situated in different contexts, can perform a different reading of the same object, as “reading possibilities in a given moment, for certain readers, in relation to certain texts can vary historically” (Ponte 35-8). In this sense, reading a Shakespearean play rendered through the manga format in the 21st century will vary in interpretation, compared to its reading from a classical edition in the same period of time. History, in this instance, only preserves the text, but the visual dimension, as primordial as it would appear at a first glance, is provided in order to sustain a deeper interpretation of the text itself.

CULTURE SHARING AND REPRESENTATION

Reading words and reading pictures are neither random nor simple actions. According to image theories, understanding a picture entails more than just identifying what is visually conveyed. Its attentive reading adds to the understanding of the topic. The observation of the method used, the support that delivers the picture, as well as the period, society, culture, and historical events that permeated the production of the work, allow us to comprehend much more than the author intentionally attempted to impart to the reader.

Art historian Erwin Panofsky identifies three degrees of picture understanding that may be used to image read in his work, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (1955). The author refers to the initial study of the picture as primary, or pre-iconographic description, which relates to the capacity to perceive and describe the depicted shapes. Following that, there is the secondary or the iconographic analysis, which, although regarded as a simple level of interpretation, consists in discovering the meaning of the depicted item. The author’s third and final level of interpretation, the inherent meaning, refers to the deeper level of interpretation. It challenges the reader to pose questions based on the previous levels of recognition and interpretation. To do this, it claims the reader’s knowledge gathered through experience, seeing the work as a product of historical, cultural, and social reality. Importantly, the meaning is expanded in order to develop connections.

Furthermore, a study of culture sharing could greatly enhance a more conventional understanding of the play. In the case of literary pieces, culture sharing refers to how one culture appropriates another’s tales and storytelling styles. Indeed, such an approach might expose some of Shakespeare’s own borrowings from ancient civilizations in order to fulfill the demands of Renaissance audiences. However, in the present culture sharing exposes the rapidity of borrowing information and changing it in order to fit other demands from groups of consumers. In his article “The Sharing Turn: Why we are generally nice and have a good chance to cooperate our way out of the mess we have gotten ourselves into,” Volker Grassmuck argues that sharing, be it

cultural or ideological, is what makes us human and is the main factor behind connections of any kind between people:

We make tools and signs. Signs enable us to share our thoughts and feelings with each other. Music, language, images, writing, moving images – in short: media – links us together. It lets us communicate in real time, and with storage media-like images and writing: also across time, even thousands of years, which allows us to undergo a cumulative cultural evolution. We became the media-making animal for a purpose. (Grassmuck 17)

One of the most fruitful aspects of the manga renditions may be their capacity to arouse interest in Shakespeare's plays while simultaneously stimulating analysis of other media and their diverse attributes. As previously argued, a manga adaptation of *Hamlet* may make interpretative gestures that other media—the original text and even a cinematic version—cannot. Shakespeare's works are well-suited for the visual book form known as manga.

Manga is, of course, primarily visual, much like Shakespeare's dramas, comedies, histories, and romances, which, when well presented, are enthrallingly dynamic. In fact, a manga may be more visually engaging than a theatrical staging of one of Shakespeare's plays. Unrestricted by the physical constraints of the stage, the graphic novel is free to show any scene, regardless of how imaginative or horrific, that its authors are able to sketch, ink, and shade. For instance, the drowning of Ophelia is a moment that cannot be represented on stage as it is described in the play, whereas such constraints are not to be mentioned when it comes to graphic renditions of a text. Furthermore, comics have the potential to be just as convoluted as Shakespeare's famously dense plays, with one essential difference: in a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays, we hear the words but do not see them. Shakespeare is never simple, but reading helps, an element that manga adaptations of plays make possible. The Shakespeare manga adaptation allows the reader to linger on speeches, revisiting them in their entirety or partially. Especially in the case of the lengthy and detailed soliloquies characteristic of Shakespearean tragedy, this enables one to appreciate the playwright's artistry in a way that is difficult or impossible during a live performance. Overall, reading a manga adaptation of one of Shakespeare's plays is similar to reading the play's text while witnessing a performance, but at one's own pace. Manga is not only a new medium for William Shakespeare's plays; it is one that is distinctively separate from all others and which can be taken into consideration as a separate means of adaptation.

As a result, considering these manga versions alongside other readings and renderings of Shakespeare's work may spark lively discussions about

media and media literacy³, since this is a main 21st-century approach to education. Therefore, using manga, which is a very approachable medium for youth readers and rendering literature, can represent a very useful pedagogical tool, a way through which students do not only familiarize themselves with Shakespeare but also develop critical thinking in regard to what a canonical text is. Moreover, this method may also pique the interest of compositionists and other literacy experts seeking compelling ways to examine media ecologies and the alteration of text, story, narrative, and information across media. Furthermore, this new medium of adaptation can aid the development of new interpretative methods in what concerns the characters of a text. Sketches can help in regard to imagining the way a character looks, which only lets the reader focus on the lines in order to obtain an insight into their psychological portrait.

IDENTITY CRISIS AND TRAGEDY

Wiley was not the first publisher to release a manga version of Shakespeare. In 2007, Self-Made Hero, a specialized manga company, released adaptations of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Unlike Wiley's series, Self-Made Hero has a more futuristic approach, with Verona becoming Tokyo and Elsinore becoming the Internet. However, when discussing *Hamlet*, both manga adaptations preserve one key aspect of the original text, that is, Hamlet's identity crisis in searching for his sense of self. In his volume, *Poetics*, Aristotle defines a tragic hero as a noble-born with heroic traits whose fate alters as a consequence of a tragic fault (usually coming from the character's own heroic attributes) that finally causes the tragic hero's terrible demise. Based on these criteria, the character Hamlet unquestionably conforms to the notion of a tragic hero, as Hamlet's tragic flaw is his inability to act or his indecisiveness (Aristotle 4).

In his lectures on Shakespearean tragedies, A. C. Bradley argues that, even while Hamlet is sometimes condemned for his "tragic flaw" of uncertainty and passivity, he is a very dynamic figure, continually altering in his connection to his own sense of self (130). In the play's first scene, Hamlet takes a distinctively current stance on himself. In Act 1, Scene 1, Hamlet says: "O, that this too too solid flesh would melt, Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!" Thus, Hamlet asks to be freed from his "solid flesh" (body) and transformed into "dew," which is clean, uncorrupted, and ethereal. His physique restricts him, however. His "deep and personal feeling" is what he desires to become.

³ Media literacy is the ability to critically analyze and evaluate the messages conveyed through media. (Kress 1)

Primarily, the terrible fault in Hamlet's character is that he thinks and feels too much. He is even concerned by his own tendency to "self-analyze." He is always going within himself, diving into his own character to find a reason for every behavior and expressing his own ideas in soliloquies. These traits are artistically rendered in the comic panels, highlighted by sharp lines and darkened corners. Bradley explains that Hamlet's delay and indecision are a result of melancholia – a psychiatric condition just short of insanity (135). His thoughts are afflicted. What is expected of Hamlet is rapid action, but he broods on moral idealism, which causes him to hesitate. When he has the chance to murder Claudius, he sets it aside since he cannot strike an enemy while praying. He permits himself to be carried to England time and time again, despite the fact that he is fully aware that this scheme is part of Claudius' wicked agenda. However, as stated before, Hamlet is well aware of his own indecisiveness.

Furthermore, Hamlet's inaction may be attributed to a number of factors. He is predisposed to ponder rather than act by nature. His moral idealism is shaken when his mother remarries Claudius following his father's death. An important symbol underlying Hamlet's characteristic as a tragic hero is fate since it actually has an impact on his personality. Fate throws him in a situation where he is powerless to act. He is depressed by his state of being and remarks that "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite, that ever I was born to set it right!" (I.5.197-8) He also becomes inconsistent and no longer arrives at a decision just by means of logic. He is unable to act swiftly because he cannot embrace the position that fate or nature has assigned to him—that of a revenger.

Hamlet, like other tragic heroes, must deal with both internal and external struggles. On the one hand, the internal tension is between his moral principles and the act of vengeance that he is required to conduct. His father's love, his mother's disgrace, and his uncle's villainy drive him to vengeance, despite his nobility, moral idealism, and other oppositions set by his faith to such a heinous deed. As a consequence of his internal struggle, he experiences mental anguish. Thus, Hamlet's inner struggle is between his ethical standards and his vengeful duty. On the other hand, Claudius represents the external struggle or conflict. Hamlet strongly believes that Claudius is his father's murderer, a seducer who married Hamlet's mother, and a usurper of Denmark's crown. Hence, for all of these reasons, Hamlet wishes to exact vengeance on his uncle. The other external dispute is with Laertes, Ophelia's brother. Indeed, Hamlet triumphs over his enemies, but at a terrible cost – his own death.

Nevertheless, it might be claimed that Hamlet's personality is not the sole cause for his downfall; external circumstances are also to blame for shaping Hamlet into a tragic hero. The appearance and revelation of the Ghost in the shape of Hamlet's father could be considered a stroke of luck. Furthermore, in most tragedies, the hero discovers a reality about which he was

previously clueless and uneducated. Without a doubt, Hamlet experiences a transformation in perspective and self-realization. However, Hamlet's metamorphosis comes too late to avoid his doom.

In the manga adaptation, all these aspects are rendered unto Hamlet's figure. His eye is darkened and the background is mostly black. The eye, especially, is a symbol of foreshadowing for the outcome set for the end of the play. Furthermore, in the scene where he kills Polonius, his face seems troubled by psychological warfare. The drawings add to the dynamic of the scenes and the manner in which Hamlet is on the verge of madness. The black patch over Hamlet's eye is getting bigger and bigger with each scene, up until the closing part, when he dies. In one of the final panels, when Horatio delivers his final lines in regard to Hamlet, the drawing receives a most abstract look, with figures of birds showing through what seems a multitude of black dots, which leaves it up to the reader's perception as to whether they are representations of blood or a multitude of flies – thus underlying the madness that overtook Hamlet's mind. Therefore, the medium also assists in the rendering of themes, metaphors, and symbols, such as that of death or mental troubles. The birds that were mentioned earlier may be a representation of transcendence and immortality, as well as death and the afterlife.

CONCLUSIONS

In the end, such rewritings offer fresh interpretative paths that may have educational use. The Folger Library, for instance, took the Wiley manga very seriously indeed and hosted a public discussion with author Adam Sexton and artist Yali Lin. Regardless of how these books are used, they are likely to intrigue — and possibly even please. They establish a fundamental truth — their fidelity to the original texts demonstrates that, indeed, the play is the object. They demonstrate what a textual play may be by embracing the contextual cues and possibilities of their medium.

Regarding the protagonist himself, it could be said that the tragedy of Hamlet is caused by more than just character traits. External factors are partly to blame for Hamlet's tragic hero status. Shakespeare conveys the impression that there is a hidden force in this world that is accountable for every seemingly little event. The apparition and unveiling of the Ghost is a manifestation of Fate. Many events in Hamlet's life happen by chance, yet none are unlikely, but the idea of inevitability is never so strong that it overshadows the character. Furthermore, Hamlet is not recognized for his courage and kindness; he is a hero who wants to do the right thing but continues making mistakes sequentially. His aims and achievements are balanced with losses and wrongdoing. Hamlet is a figure that embodies both goodness and wickedness.

The comic book adaptation of Shakespeare's work indicates that alterations are essential not just due to the archaic elements of his text, but also

to make the play suitable for the manga medium. By linking visuals with the original text and enhancing the vocal language, it increases the appeal of a classic to younger audiences. Despite the passage of time between the production processes and the moment of reading, the narrative may be read and understood in the present owing to the historical adaptation of the play and its everlasting global topic. As a strong ally in the formation of complex thought, one of the tenets of interdisciplinary, multimodal texts, which are an integral part of the lives of modern readers, must also be present in the classroom environment. So that, via them, our children would have access to those works regarded as classics and, in the future, to the tales that served as their inspiration.

In the end, tragedy evolves from human error, as Iseult Gillespie puts it, even if our mistake is to leave things undecided. And the real question regarding Hamlet's identity is in regard to his humanity and whether he is a noble son avenging his father or a mad prince creating courtly chaos. Should he act or observe? Doubt or trust? As for the rendering of the play in manga format, I believe that Adam Sexton has succeeded in transforming the external form of the play without altering its inherent ability to shock and appeal to even the pickiest of readers nowadays.

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