

Shakespeare in Japanese Pop Culture

Focusing on *manga* as an intercultural collaboration genre¹

Yukari Yoshihara
University of Tsukuba
yoshihara.yukari.fp@u.tsukuba.ac.jp

ABSTRACT: Adapting Shakespeare’s literary works for incorporation into Japanese popular culture has been an act of intercultural translation. Shakespeare and Japanese popular culture, particularly *manga* (Japanese graphic novels), could be seen as cultural polarities: the West vs. the East, as represented by Japan, a contrast between high culture and pop culture, the canonical vs. the lowbrow. Yet Shakespeare’s works as adapted in *manga* format do, as this article argues, problematize such hierarchical distinctions. Shakespeare found in *manga* can be both a challenge and a tribute to his authority, giving him a global and intercultural after-life. The first group of Japanese *manga* with Shakespearean motifs dates back to the early 20th century. Similar efforts have since continued through to the early 21st century, making *manga* with Shakespearean motifs a conspicuous, widespread phenomenon as part of Japanese pop culture. The greatest recent contribution in this regard is the *Manga Shakespeare Series*. Published by a British publishing house, it helped to turn *manga* into an important vehicle for the intercultural translation of Shakespeare.

This article aims at placing into perspective Shakespeare and his presence in Japanese pop culture in general and in Japanese *manga* in particular. Specifically, efforts will be made to introduce Japanese *manga* with Shakespearean motifs as a genre and show how it has become a representative intercultural art collaboration form. Western graphic novels with Shakespeare

1 Translation provided by the Editorial Team (Translator: Lim Hyun-kyung).

incorporated will be contrasted with Japanese *manga*, including *Classics Illustrated*, to see different levels of faithfulness to one of the world's greatest writers.

The findings indicate that while Western graphic novels tend to show a higher levels of faithfulness to the original works, Japanese *manga* takes greater liberty with Shakespeare. This suggests that *manga* with Shakespearean motifs should be viewed not as debasement of his literary authority but as creative innovation. Rather than trying to remain strictly faithful to Shakespeare's original works, efforts should be made to identify previously overlooked aspects of Shakespeare's works and expand the possibility of making the most of his legacy in enriching the human culture through hybridization and glocalization.

KEYWORDS: Shakespeare, Japan, *manga*, animation, popular

論文抄録: 日本大衆文化にシェイクスピアを翻案することはインターカルチュラルな翻訳行為である。シェイクスピアと日本大衆文化(とくにマンガ)といえば、文化的に正反対(西洋と日本に代表されるアジア、高級文化とポップ・カルチャー、正典的なものと低俗なもの)であるとも見えるかもしれない。しかしながら本論文が主張するように、日本マンガに翻案されたシェイクスピアとは、そのような序列化された区分そのものを問題化する。マンガに翻案されたシェイクスピアは、シェイクスピアの権威に対する挑戦であると同時に、シェイクスピアにグローバルかつインターカルチュラルな死後の生を与えるものであるという意味で、彼に賛歌を捧げるものである。シェイクスピア的要素をもつ日本マンガの初期のものは19世紀後半に登場している。それ以来21世紀初期にいたるまで、シェイクスピアを日本ポップ・カルチャーの一部に取り込む努力が、広く継続的に続けられている。この点で大きな貢献をなしたのが、イギリスの出版社により刊行され、マンガをシェイクスピアのインターカルチュラル翻訳の重要な媒体とした『マンガ・シェイクスピア・シリーズ』である。

本論文はシェイクスピアを日本ポップ・カルチャー、とくにマンガとの諸関係において文脈化することを試みるものである。さらに具体的にいえば、シェイクスピア要素を含むマンガをひとつのジャンルとして捉え、それがインターカルチュラルなコラボレーションの成果であると論じる。シェイクスピア要素を取り入れた西洋のグラフィック・ノベル(『イラストつき古典文学』など)と日本マンガにおけるシェイクスピアとを比較し、世界最高の作家のひとりによる作品への、忠実さの程度の違いを明らかにする。

西洋のグラフィック・ノベルが原作に忠実であるのに対し、日本マン

がはより自由にシェイクスピアを用いていることを証明し、シェイクスピア要素を含んだマンガは、シェイクスピアの文学的権威を貶めるものではなく、それをクリエイティブに更新させるものであると主張する。シェイクスピア原作への忠実のみに拘泥するのではなく、シェイクスピア原作で見逃されてきた側面に光をあて、シェイクスピアが遺したものを最大限に活用、文化混淆とグローカリゼーションを通して人類文化をさらに豊かなものにすることが目指されるべきである。

キーワード: シェイクスピア、日本、マンガ、ジェンダー、大衆文化

1. Introduction

Widely considered one of the greatest writers in history, William Shakespeare has had a tremendous impact on a wide range of cultural products all across the globe. While his works are now viewed as canons and key elements of high culture, the English playwright, after all, was a talented popular artist in his time.

Efforts have been active in *manga* and graphic novels to introduce Shakespeare into contemporary pop culture. Some of them remained close to the originals while others dared to be wildly deviant from them. To some people, making *manga* with Shakespearean motifs is seen as an insult to the writer, but I believe that the blending of Shakespeare and *manga* will open up new possibilities of encounter between classical culture and contemporary culture, high art and popular culture, and the global and the local.

Adapting Shakespeare's works for introduction into popular culture phenomena such as comics, graphic novels and animations is an act of intercultural translation between the West and the East, as represented by Japan, and of blending high culture and pop culture, the canonical and the lowbrow. This article has been rewritten, based on the author's two related articles published in Japanese.² The focus of this English article is on showing the possibility of connecting Shakespeare and his literary works, as representation of high Western culture, to lowbrow Japanese pop culture in

2 See Yoshihara (2015) and Yoshihara (2016).

an effort to open a new window for intercultural studies.

In this article, I will briefly introduce Shakespearean motifs in Western graphic novels before analyzing Shakespeare in Japanese *manga*, so that we can see the different attitudes toward Shakespeare's cultural authority between the West and Japan. I will discuss Shakespeare in Japanese pop culture in general since the late 19th century, move on to discuss how Shakespeare has been incorporated into Japanese *manga*, then show how *manga* has become a part of global cultural capital. It shall be shown that Japanese female *manga* were greatly inspired by the Shakespearean convention of crossdressing to address gender issues in Japan. Then finally I will elaborate on the *Manga Shakespeare Series* by the British publisher, SelfMadeHero. It is hoped that this article could show that the combination of Shakespeare and *manga* is a productive example for intercultural approaches to different cultural heritages developed in different parts of the globe.

2. Shakespeare in Western Graphic Novels

The first example of Shakespeare's works appearing in American comics/graphic novel format was *Stories by Famous Authors Illustrated* in the 1950s. *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Macbeth* were published as part of the series, which used Shakespeare's lines without changing the content but rewrote them in 1950s American English. *Hamlet* appeared in 1952 in the *Classics Illustrated* series, which began publication in 1941. This one uses the original language of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Richard Burt, a leader in the study of Shakespeare in the context of popular culture, compiled a two-volume Shakespeares after Shakespeare: Encyclopedia of *Shakespeare in Mass Media and Popular Culture* (Burt, 2007). The first major entry is devoted to "Shakespeare in Cartoons and Comic Books," which includes 297 comics/graphic novels with Shakespearean motifs and related works published in the English-speaking world (ranging from educational comics/graphic novels to Shakespearean parodies and works using random and fragmentary quotations from Shakespeare's works). Surprisingly, these comics/graphic novel versions of Shakespeare tended to be more conservative in terms of trying to be faithful to Shakespeare's original works compared to other media (i.e. movies, novels, radio and pop music) where bold parodies

and adaptations were often made. The costumes and settings in comics/graphic novels were often in the style of period dramas, with men wearing ballet tights and pumpkin-shaped bloomers, and the story taking place in a medieval-style castle.

However, there are a few examples of comics/graphic novels creatively adapting Shakespeare, rather than being faithful to him. An excellent example of this is the *Sandman* series (DC Comics, 1989-1996) by British science fiction and graphic novel writer Neil Gaiman (Gaiman, 1995a, 1995b). In his series, Shakespeare, who became a genius playwright through the magic of the Sandman, dedicates *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest* (the last of his solo works) to the *Sandman*. The final play in the *Sandman* series juxtaposes Gaiman's attempt to end the series with Prospero breaking the magic wand at the end of *The Tempest*, and with Shakespeare's attempt to end his career as a theatrical artist.

Another example of comics/graphic novel/*manga* adaptations of Shakespeare (with a science fiction space opera setting) is *Macbeth* by Japanese-American author/illustrator Tony Leonard Tamai (Tamai et al., 2005). In his work, the three witches are Darth Vader-like robots, the warlords' horses are flying monsters, and the story is set in space, but the majority of the dialogue is in Shakespeare's original English (not changed to modern English).

3. Shakespeare in Japanese Pop Culture since the Early 20th Century to the Early 21st Century

Japan took more liberties with Shakespeare. Parodying his works in Japanese pop culture dates back to the early 20th century and is continuing in the 21st century. The earliest example of such parodies in graphic forms is found on *The Japan Punch* (1874), where Hamlet appears as a samurai who cannot decide whether "to be, or not to be." On stage, Shakespeare's works first appeared in the form of adaptations, setting the stories and the characters in Japan. For example, the first adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* (1885) is set in Japan in the early 19th century. What follows will be some examples of transculturing Shakespeare into Japanese popular culture.

Tarokaja Masuda recreated *Othello* as a light-hearted comedy (*Shin Osero* (New Othello; 1906)) of a stupidly jealous, middle-aged Japanese man.

Takataro Kimura published “The Oriental Materials of Hamlet” (1915), in which he argued that *Hamlet* was an imitation of Eastern mythological and historical stories.

One example of creatively parodying/remaking Shakespeare in Japan in the 21st century is the TV drama series called *Mirai seiki sheikusupia* (Future Century Shakespeare; 2008). By remaking Shakespearean stories as set in today’s Japan, it tries to make Shakespearean stories more relatable and meaningful to the 21st century youth. The basic format of the TV series is that the characters from Shakespeare’s works go through a time warp to present-day Japan, where they meet other people in similar situations. The series may seem flirtatious, but it is actually a profound story addressing serious issues such as the aging society, the deadlock of advanced capitalism and gender inequalities. At the same time, *Future Century Shakespeare* proudly proclaims itself to be “Shakespeare that even an idiot can understand”—fast, cheap, easy, but relatable. To list some examples, it has a Shakespearean robot wearing hip-hop style cap, reciting Shakespearean lyrics in rap: In the *Romeo and Juliet* episode, Juliet dumps Romeo just because he farted. The series is both serious and intentionally parodic in adapting Shakespeare.

Another instance of creatively remaking Shakespeare is the animation *Romeo x Juliet* (GONZO, 2007), a science fiction set in the floating city of Neo Verona. Juliet, dressed as a man, leads the remnants of the Capulets trying to revolutionize Neo Verona and free it from the rule of the oppressive Lord Montague. This animation makes the full use of the cross-dressing convention found both in Shakespeare (a girl dresses as a boy, as in *As You Like It*) and Japanese *manga* (as discussed in the following section).

4. Shakespeare in Japanese *Manga*

4.1 The 1960s and 1970s

In the English-speaking world, Shakespeare is considered the pinnacle of poetic language, so fidelity to the original text is highly important. Japanese *manga*, on the other hand, has been far more unrestrained as to how it experiments with Shakespearean elements.

Since the 1960s, there are numerous examples of Japanese *manga* that

are based on, show references to, or take some elements from Shakespeare's works. Osamu Tezuka's *Astro Boy* episode "Robio and Robiette" (Tezuka, 2002) is a tragic love story between robots Robio and Robiette, and *Vampire* is based on *Macbeth* and *Richard III*. Taro Minamoto parodied *Hamlet* as a gag piece (Minamoto, 2006). Among works by female artists, mainly aimed at female readers, is Yasuko Aoike's *Ibu no musuko tachi* (The Sons of Eve) (Aoike, 1978), where Shakespeare and his characters (Hamlet, Romeo, and King Lear) appear as family members and the role of Juliet is played by a drag queen. The girlish Romeo tries to swear his eternal love "by the light of that beautiful moon," but the drag queen Juliet rebukes him, saying it is bad luck to swear love to the "unfaithful moon." These examples of daring parodies are found in the 1960s and 1970s.

4.2 Feminism in Japanese *Manga*

Meanwhile, Japanese female artists since the 1990s and the 2000s have successfully recycled elements of Shakespeare's works to address gender issues. They have adapted the Western male writer's key plots and characters into what works in their girls' *manga*.

One such example is Matsuri Akino's *Okini mesu mama* (As You Like It) (Akino, 1998). The protagonist, Jacqueline, joins "Her Majesty's Glove Troupe," a touring troupe (actually an intelligence agency) led by Shakespeare. Prince Celia (referring to Celia in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*), who lives in the mansion where the troupe is staying, is troubled by his love for a squire (a man). In order to break the love, Prince Celia dresses up as a woman for one night and dances with the squire at a ball. It turns out that the squire is also troubled by his love for the prince, and they both suffer from the fact that love between men is unacceptable. Will it be a tragedy with no way out? Celia later turns out to be a woman who was raised as a man in order to secure her inheritance.

In Shakespearean works such as *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*, a girl disguises herself as a boy. Moreover, in his time, the role of the girl was played by a boy actor before his voice changed. The girl who disguises herself as a boy on stage actually is a boy actor playing a girl who disguises herself as a boy. Behind the shaping of Celia in Akino's works is the tradition of Japanese girls' *manga* (see Oshiyama, 2007) of a girl dressing as a boy. In Riyoko Ikeda's

Berusaiyu no bara (The Roses of Versailles; 1974-76), Oscar, a girl raised as a boy to be a military officer, puts on a dress and dances with Fersen—her crush who happens to be the lover of Queen Marie Antoinette that she loyally serves—for one night only. Sapphire in Osamu Tezuka's *Ribon no kishi* (Princess Knight; 2011) is raised as a prince in order to resist the national law that does not allow princesses to inherit the throne. In girls' *manga*, the device of cross-dressing is used to raise dissident voices against patriarchy.

Illustration 1: Harumo Masaki, *Romeo and Juliet* (Futabasha, 2003, pp. 119-120)



Harumo Sanazaki rewrites Shakespeare's works into *manga*, with a clear awareness of gender hierarchy and patriarchy based on heterosexual norms in his world (Sanazaki, 2003). She targets female readers of a generation older than the usual audience for girls' *manga* and features many sexual scenes that are difficult to depict in girls' *manga*, bringing out the character of heterosexuality as an arena of struggle between the sexes.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the story is told from the perspective of Juliet's mother (see Illustration 1). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, the story focuses on Amazonian queen Hippolyta, who was defeated by Athenian king Theseus and forced into sexual submission. When we look at Shakespearean stories (of senseless youth, warlords, and the subjugation of different peoples) as adapted by Sanazaki from the viewpoint of those excluded from the center of the original stories—women who are no longer young, who are no longer in a frenzy of love, who live in a post-love reality, who are forbidden to fight, and who are

treated as trophies—we see a different kind of world that we cannot see from the perspective of Shakespeare’s protagonists.

5. Shakespeare and *Manga* both as Global Capital: MSS

Shakespeare in his lifetime was a local popular writer for the theatre, but his works are now performed, adapted and localized in various places of the world. Likewise, *manga* originated in Japan but has become a global art form that is enjoyed by local and international audiences alike; *manga* artists today are no longer exclusively Japanese. It was a British publisher, SelfMadeHero (SMH), that made the combination of Shakespeare and *manga* globally current. In 2007, the publisher began publishing the *Manga Shakespeare Series* (MSS) with texts edited by Richard Appignanesi. *Romeo and Juliet* was illustrated by Sonia Leong, and *Hamlet* by Emma Vieceli (see *Manga Shakespeare*, 2009). The MSS hybridizes two global cultural capitals: *manga* and Shakespeare.

Appignanesi, who is also the editor of Icon Books’ introductory series (*Introduction to Postmodernism*, *Introduction to Freud*, etc.), effectively uses the *manga* format to make Shakespeare’s English easier to understand. He abbreviates some parts but otherwise uses the original dialogues, not translating them into modern English. In addition to the two works mentioned above, 14 more comic books had been published by 2009, including *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Twelfth Night*.

Shakespeare’s original English can be quite difficult for today’s English-speaking youth to understand. A case in point is the famous phrase, “O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?” The word “wherefore” means “why” in Shakespeare’s English, but many people from English-speaking countries today mistake it as “where.”

The period when MSS was published (2007-2009) coincides with the height of the Cool Japan cultural content policy, so let me share a brief overview. In 2002, American journalist Douglas McGray published “Japan’s Gross National Cool” in *Foreign Policy* magazine. He wrote that Japan was no longer a superpower in terms of GNP but was one in terms of soft power such as *manga*, *anime*, games, and fashion (McGray, 2003). The expression that he used as an index here for measuring cultural power is Gross National Cool, a

play on Gross National Product (GNP). The Japanese government made Cool Japan a national policy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed young fashion leaders wearing Lolita fashion, Harajuku fashion, and brand uniforms as pop culture ambassadors (also known as “Kawaii Ambassadors”) in 2008. The Cool Japan Office was established in the Manufacturing Industries Bureau of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in 2010, and the “Minister of Cool Japan” was appointed in 2013. However, from around 2010, the claim that Japan is no longer cool began to emerge (Newsweek, 2012).

The Cool Japan Movement, which MSS has been following, is modeled after the Cool Britannia movement of the 1990s in the United Kingdom. According to Hiroko Maezawa, Cool Britannia, a cultural policy launched by Tony Blair’s government in 1997, had two pillars: “cultural democracy” and “economic value” (Maezawa, 2012). The former aimed to “democratize” culture by giving everyone—regardless of class, ethnic group or gender—access to both high culture and popular culture. Prime Minister Blair invited Oasis, a leading Britpop band, to his residence; a few days later, Blair went to the National Theatre to watch Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. This is seen as a great example of the nature of Cool Britannia, which considers both high culture and popular culture as cool culture from Britain.

The basic stance of Cool Britannia was that culture should be valued for its “economic value.” Culture is an industry, and jobs are created out of it. Therefore, it was often argued that the public and private sectors should work together to promote creative industries. Under this policy that brings together cultural and economic values, Shakespeare is viewed as something “cool,” but at the same time it has become a cultural product that can be discarded immediately if it fails to generate profits.

MSS has emerged as a result of the Cool Britannia and Cool Japan trends. Outside of Japan, *manga* used to be a marginal product sold only in specialty stores. Thanks to the Cool Japan effect, however, it became available in major bookstores around 2007, when SMH launched MSS. Hayley and the MSS team started the series despite concerns over the legitimacy of non-Japanese *manga* works and acceptability of Shakespearean themes for different audience groups (Hayley, 2010).³

3 They were concerned that any *manga* created by a non-Japanese artist may not be recognized as a classic work, and that that classic *manga* fans would shy away from Shakespeare-based *manga* while

All MSSs are drawn by *manga* artists based in the United Kingdom (the origin of these artists and their ancestors spans Malaysia, Italy, Japan and many others). The possibility of collaboration between a Japanese *manga* artist and a British editor was initially considered, but by hiring a British artist who self-identifies as a *manga* artist (*mangaka*), it is hoped that British publishers would be able to nurture talented local *manga* artists. In other words, the aim was to leverage the global cultural capital of Shakespeare and *manga* to nurture young local talent. The *manga* format and techniques in MSS are flexible, partly following the “authentic” Japanese way and modifying the *manga* format of reading from right to left into that of the Western comics which read from left to right.

Set in contemporary Shibuya, *Romeo and Juliet* in MSS is told as a tragic tale of young people coming from two yakuza mafia families. The model for Romeo is YOSHIKI of X-JAPAN, and Juliet is in Harajuku fashion. The creator of this work, Leong, said that the word “manga” had become understandable even in England without explanation in the mid-2000s. Leong was born in Malaysia, educated in Thailand and England, and lives in Cambridge, England. She is the artist and president of Sweatdrop Studios, the first group of artists in the UK to produce original English-language *manga*. Leong’s *Romeo and Juliet* was selected as one of the “85 Good Books for Young Adults” by the Young Adult Library Services Coalition.

Hamlet, illustrated by Vieceli, is set in a near-future dystopia devastated by climate change and war where cybernetics are highly developed and surveillance cameras monitor and record everyone’s activities. Vieceli describes Hamlet as a typical beautiful boy (*bishonen*), struggling with the question of whether to be or not to be in the world.⁴ *Bishonen* has attracted a great deal of attention among foreign *manga* fans as the epitome of Japanese *manga* culture and often appears in MSS.

The initial reaction to the MSS was not universally favorable. For example, an article by Tom Deveson, posted on TES magazine, an Internet site for language educators, in May 2008, argued that the replacement of

lovers of the writer’s works might look down on the *manga* version.

4 Vieceli’s remarks when Haley, Vieceli and Leon visited Japan in 2007 and gave lectures and workshops at the Kyoto International Manga Museum, the University of Tsukuba and Sugiyama Jogakuen University.

the setting with the Shibuya yakuza war was understandable, but that the “butchering of Shakespeare’s poetic language” was inexcusable (Deveson, 2007). The fact that 80% of Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” monologue has been erased, for example is objectionable to some readers. The MSS team is also keen to enhance the educational impact of the book, in part to counter these perceptions. SMH’s website has a glossary of Shakespeare’s lines that are difficult for modern boys and girls to understand (the lines are accompanied by the face of the person who says them for a better visual understanding).

Let us take *Twelfth Night*, which is created in the style of girls’ *manga*, as a prime example of MSS’s technique of combining conventions in Shakespeare and *manga*. I would like to discuss how the motifs of *bishonen* and twins, which frequently appear in girls’ *manga*, are expressed there, and how something difficult to express on stage is portrayed by taking advantage of *manga* as a paper medium.

In the original Shakespearean version, the twins, Viola and Sebastian, are separated. Viola disguises herself as a man and takes the name Cesario to serve Duke Orsino. Olivia thinks Viola/Cesario is a boy and becomes infatuated with “him,” while Viola/Cesario is unable to confide her feelings to Lord Orsino because she is dressed as a man.

Nana Li, the illustrator of MSS’s *Twelfth Night*, was born in China and grew up in Sweden. She is a fan of the Japanese female *manga* artist group CLAMP. This is a clear example of the glocalization of *manga*. At first glance, Viola and Sebastian appear to be symmetrically aligned (see Illustration 2). However, the reflective lines of the mirror in the background suggest that this is a scene in which Viola (or her

Illustration 2: Nana Li, *Twelfth Night*, MSS (SMH, 2009)



male disguise, Cesario) is reflecting herself in the mirror. In other words, it is difficult to tell which is Viola and which is Sebastian, which is the girl and which is the boy, and the reader is led into a delightful confusion. This is an expression that is possible only in two-dimensional *manga*.

Orsino, Viola's employer as Cesario, is a beautiful young man, and Cesario is a small *bishonen* (for "bishonen," see McLelland, 2010; as cited in Myklebost, 2013). Cesario/Viola, a *bishonen*, dazzles the beautiful Olivia, and Orsino, a beautiful young man, dazzles the *bishonen*. Shakespeare's original work, of course, has its own gender-bending, but it is amplified by the gender play of cross-dressing and the *bishonen* trope that is the signature of girls' *manga*.

MSS is not the only company that has attempted to adapt Shakespeare's works into graphic novels using *manga* techniques. *Classical Manga*, which aims to bring the classics back to life, published *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Henry V* from 2008 to 2011. They are available in three versions: Original text, plain text, and quick text (Classical Comics, 2022). More recently, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* appeared in 2019-2020 in *Manga Classics*, adapted and illustrated by Asian artists (Manga Classics, 2018).

Due in part to the overwhelming success of MSS, it would be safe to say that intercultural "translation" of the world's masterpieces through graphic art, including *manga*, has gained a certain level of acceptance. Debates will likely continue on the advantages and disadvantages of *manga* adaptations of Shakespeare's high culture. For Shakespeare maniacs, creating *manga* with Shakespearean motifs may forever be seen as a disservice to the great poet. If we focus on *manga*, on the other hand, we may criticize the mangaization of Shakespeare as an act of plunder. Here the style of *manga* as a globally popular cultural product is adopted simply because Shakespeare's works as cultural products are no longer selling well to young people.

6. Conclusion

This article was an attempt to examine Shakespeare in *manga* format as an act of intercultural translation between the West and the East, as represented by Japan, and between high culture and pop culture, and between the

canonical and the lowbrow. Efforts have been made to show some Western graphic novels adapting Shakespeare's works to that format in addition to examples of Japanese pop culture incorporating Shakespearean motifs since the 19th century. The discussion that followed dealt with how Shakespeare has been incorporated into Japanese *manga* from the 1960s to the 2000s. The MSS, published by the British publisher SMH, was discussed as a significant showcase in terms of intercultural glocalization of both Shakespeare and *manga*.

Both *manga* and Shakespeare have become huge cultural capitals to be globalized and localized. Should we then focus only on faithfulness to original works or on the tradition of *manga*? Would it not be more important for us to discover previously overlooked aspects of Shakespeare and *manga* and find new possibilities through hybridization and glocalization? The adaptation of Shakespeare into *manga* is a creative act in itself, based on deep knowledge of the cultural codes of original works, and such adaptations are nothing less than an act of love for the originals.⁵ The present article has been an endeavor in this regard to point out the possibility of broadening the understanding and love of Shakespeare through collaborations between Western high culture and Japanese pop culture.

References

- Akino, Matsuri. (1998). *Okinimesu mama* [As you like it]. Kadokawa Shoten.
 Aoike, Yasuko. (1978). *Ibu no musukotachi* [The sons of eve]. Akita Shoten.
 Burt, Richard (Ed.). (2007). *Shakespeares after Shakespeare: An Encyclopedia of the Bard in Mass*

5 For more recent academic works on Shakespeare and Japanese pop culture, see (a) Yoshihara, Yukari. (2021). Bardolators and Bardoclasts: Shakespeare in manga/anime and cosplay. In Poonam Trivedi, Paromita Chakravarti & Ted Motohashi (Eds.), *Asian Interventions in Global Shakespeare* (pp. 146-159). Routledge; (b) Yoshihara, Yukari. (2020). Toward "reciprocal legitimation" between Shakespeare's works and manga. In Masami Toku & Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollarse (Eds.), *Manga!: Visual Pop-Culture in ARTS Education* (pp. 119-126). INSEA Publications; (c) Yoshihara, Yukari. (2020). Ophelia and her magical daughters: The afterlives of Ophelia in Japanese pop culture. In Victoria Bladen & Yan Brailowsky (Eds.), *Shakespeare and the Supernatural* (Vol. 262-275). Manchester University Press; (d) Yoshihara, Yukari. (2019). Manga and Shakespeare. In Fusami Ogi, Rebecca Suter, Kazumi Nagaike & John A. Lent (Eds.), *Women's Manga in Asia and Beyond* (pp. 161-180). Palgrave Macmillan; (e) Minami, Ryuta. (2019). What's in a name? Shakespeare and Japanese pop culture. In Christy Desmet, Sujata Iyengar & Miriam Jacobson (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Shakespeare and Global Appropriation* (pp. 290-303). Routledge.

- Media and Popular Culture* (Vol. 2). Greenwood Press.
- Classical Comics. (2022). *classicalcomics.com*. Retrieved April 8, 2015 from <http://www.classicalcomics.com/product/romeo-and-juliet-graphic-novel-uk/>
- Deveson, Tom. (2007, May). But, soft! What light.... 'clash!', 'raargh!'. *TES Magazine*. <http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=2348175>
- Gaiman, Neil. (1995a). *The Sandman: Dream Country*. DC Comics.
- Gaiman, Neil. (1995b). *The Sandman: The Doll's House*. DC Comics.
- Hayley, Emma. (2010). *Manga Shakespeare*. In Toni Johnson-Woods (Ed.), *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives* (pp. 267-280). Continuum.
- Maewawa, Hiroko. (2012). Media-crossed lovers: Bunka shohin to shite no sheikusupia [Media-crossed lovers: Shakespeare as cultural capital]. *Dokkyo University English Research*, 70, 47-64.
- Manga Classics. (2018). *Manga Classics: Titles*. Retrieved March 15, 2022 from <https://www.mangaclassics.com/titles>
- Manga Shakespeare. (2009). *mangashakespeare.com*. Retrieved April 8, 2015 from <http://www.mangashakespeare.com/>
- McGray, Douglas. (2003). Nasional kuuru to iu arata na kokuryoku [National cool as a new national power]. *Central Review*, 118(5), 130-140.
- McLelland, Mark. (2010). The 'beautiful boy' in Japanese girls' manga. In Toni Johnson-Woods (Ed.), *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives* (pp. 77-92). Continuum.
- Minamoto, Taro. (2006). *Hamuretto* [Hamlet: Taro Minamoto's world masterpiece theater]. Magajin Faibu Seiunsha.
- Myklebost, Svann-Arve. (2013). Shakespeare manga: Early-or post-modern? *ImageText: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*, 6(3). <https://imagetextjournal.com/shakespeare-manga-early-or-post-modern/>
- Newsweek. (2012, June 13). Ikigire cool Japan [Cool Japan out of breath]. *Newsweek Japanese Edition*.
- Oshiyama, Michiko. (2007). Gender representation in girls' manga: The modeling and identity of 'girls in men's clothing'. *Journal of the Senshu University Research Society*, 79, 79-87.
- Sanazaki, Harumo. (2003). *Romio to jurietto* [Romeo and Juliet: Shakespeare - The flowers of evil in sorrowful love]. Futabasha.
- Tamai, Tony Leonard, Arthur Byron Cover and William Shakespeare. (2005). *William Shakespeare's Macbeth: The Graphic Novel*. Puffin Books.
- Tezuka, Osamu. (2002). *Tetsuwan atomu* [Astro boy]. Kodansha.
- Yoshihara, Yukari. (2016). Kore, sheikusupia, majide? [Is this Shakespeare, really?]. In Sachiko Matsuda, Keisuke Sasayama & Yao Hong (Eds.), *Ibunka rikai to pafomance* (pp. 392-412).

Shunpu-sha.

Yoshihara, Yukari. (2015). Docchi datte gurokaru [Either way, it is glocal]. In Fusami Ogi (Ed.), *Josei manga kenkyu* (pp. 48-61). Seikyū-sha.

Professional Profile

Yukari Yoshihara is Professor at the University of Tsukuba, Japan. Having received her doctoral degree with a dissertation on the Japanese adaptation of Shakespeare's *Othello* set in Taiwan under Japanese occupation, she teaches Shakespeare, popular culture and Japanese literature. Her publications include 'Bardolators and Bardoclasts: Shakespeare in manga/anime and cosplay' (2020, Routledge) and 'Manga and Shakespeare' (2019, Palgrave Macmillan). Her research interests include gender studies, postcolonial theory, and Cold War cultural diplomacy.