



A Comparative Study of Shakespeare's Macbeth and Graphic Adaptation.

Naafiah K ^{1*}, Dr. M. John Suganya ²

Department of English

^{1*, 2} PSG College of arts and Science, Coimbatore.

^{1*} naafiahnaafi1405@gmail.com

² suganyajohn@gmail.com +91 9994924381

Abstract:

The surging popularity of Graphic Novel have doubled the reading population of 21st century. The advanced development of traditional text named as Graphic Adaptation, serves as an effective tool to enhance the reading ability and the comprehension skills among the readers. Graphic Novels are easy to consume as it's illustrated stories have the complexity, depth and variety of traditional novels. This paper analyses and compares the classic works with its graphic version. The selected plays for this research is Shakespeare's Macbeth which is considered to be his shortest play. The work is selected for its universal and timeless quality. His plays deal with all aspects of common life that appeals to all ages. Writing style, historical settings, structure and symbolism contains universal truth that are expressed in exquisite language and inventive actions by highly developed characters. The graphic development of his plays paves a way for children and triggers the reading skills in classic works. The comparison of traditional text with its graphic version will provide a good insight on which is the best and advisable for children and teen readers.

Keywords: Classic, Universal, Symbols, Language, Actions.

Introduction:

The turn of 21st century could be known as golden period for graphic novels. Sales of adult graphic novels have doubled in 2021 and has made their way back to the young readers. That subgenre of graphic novel saw a growth of 172% in 2021 compared to 2020 (Casey Mendoza). Young adult and children are drawn towards graphic novel and comics as it is more appealing than the traditional text novel. Adult and children are excited on the growing variety of titles in graphic novels results in the growth in reading population. In this technological era, young readers are expecting more than a normal text format. Graphic novel, comics and other genre serves this purpose. Adult readers attention is pulled towards graphic novel as it possesses more depth with its combination of text and illustrations. Popularity of Japanese comics leads to the bloom of graphic novel in last 10 years.

The selected classic work and its graphic adaptation is Shakespeare's tragic play. Widely recognised, greatest and universal writer in the English language is William Shakespeare and was born on 1564 at Stratford-upon-Avon England. His works continue to be studied and reinterpreted in various ways. It is the most translated work into major living language. Shakespeare's play in comedies and histories were regarded as the best in these genres. Then he focused on tragedies, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth

which were considered as the finest work in English language. Next he wrote tragicomedies and collaborated with other playwrights in his last phase of his life.

Graphic adaptation:

Graphic novel is a book combined with words and illustrations. The graphic adaptation of a classic works might rework, paraphrase or re image the original text but it's essence will remain same. According to Oxford English Dictionary an adaptation is defined as "the action or process of altering or amending or modifying something especially something that has been created for a particular purpose, so that it is suitable for a new use"(Web). There is a growing market for adaptation of all the classic works from medieval poetry to Shakespeare and contemporary works as well.

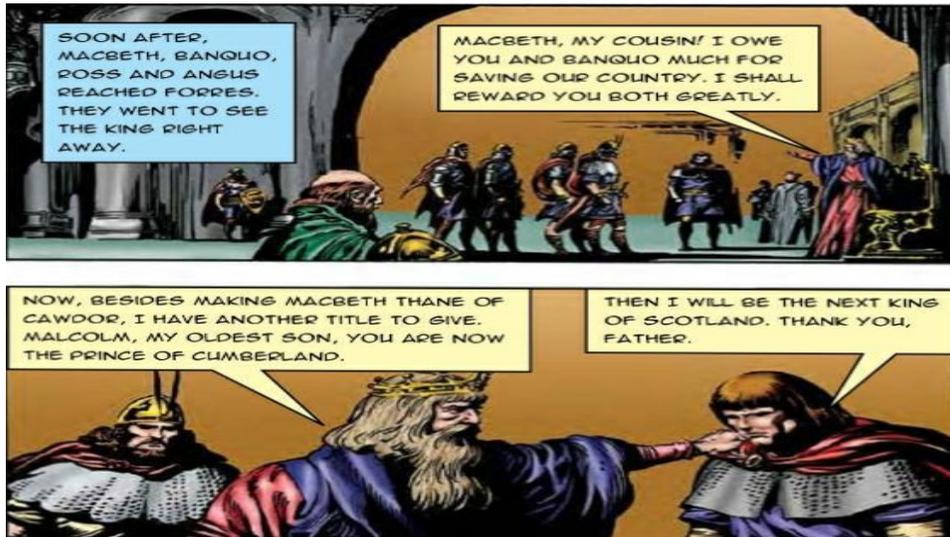
Foundation of education is reading. Reading practice improve reader's vocabulary, empathy, self-confidence. According to new research, children of this generation read less than previous generation. Teachers state that students have the capacity of reading between 15minutes to 20minutes per day but most of the students are reading less than 15minutes. If they are interested and enjoying what they are reading, then they will be engaged in reading more then that. Here graphic novels plays major role. Understanding Shakespeare's work is more hard then a normal works. His writing style, settings, structure, vocabulary need another source to comprehend. But its graphic adaptation provides children and teen readers to enjoy reading classic works.

Language:

Shakespeare's language cannot be understood in a single reading. He accepted new words from various language and was reflected in his works. He is a prominent write who has contributed numerous words to the English language. Language used by Shakespeare in his tragedy need reference to grasp the meaning of dialogue. But in it's graphic adaptation, language is modified into simple conversational language. In original text, dialogues of nobles are in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter), witches in rhymed couplet. In Macbeth, act 1 Scene 4 Duncan's lengthiest dialogue is converted into conversational language where every reader could understand it's meaning. Dialogue from original text and graphic adaptation is given below,

Duncan: My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fullness, seek to hide themselves
In drop of sorrow. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon as
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Price of Cumberland; which honour must
Not unaccompanied invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. From hence to Inverness,
And blind us further to you.

(Act- 1, Scene -4, line- 40)

**Plot:**

A plot is said to be a series of events in a story. The plot of a novel is addressed to the readers. In drama it is presented to the audience. A play is more effective when the plot is made simpler. When compared to other literary kinds, plot of a drama is simpler. A plot is divided into Introduction, the rising action, climax, falling and catastrophe. In the original text of Macbeth, introduction is explained in first 2 acts of the play by setting up mystical atmosphere and describing bravery of Macbeth and it is followed till catastrophe where Lady Macbeth breaks down, Macbeth is defeated by Macduff and Malcolm is announced to be the king of Scotland. In graphic adaptation there is no such division of acts but the story line is clear to the reader. Five acts of Macbeth is adapted into graphic format with clear beginning, middle and the end.

Illustrations:

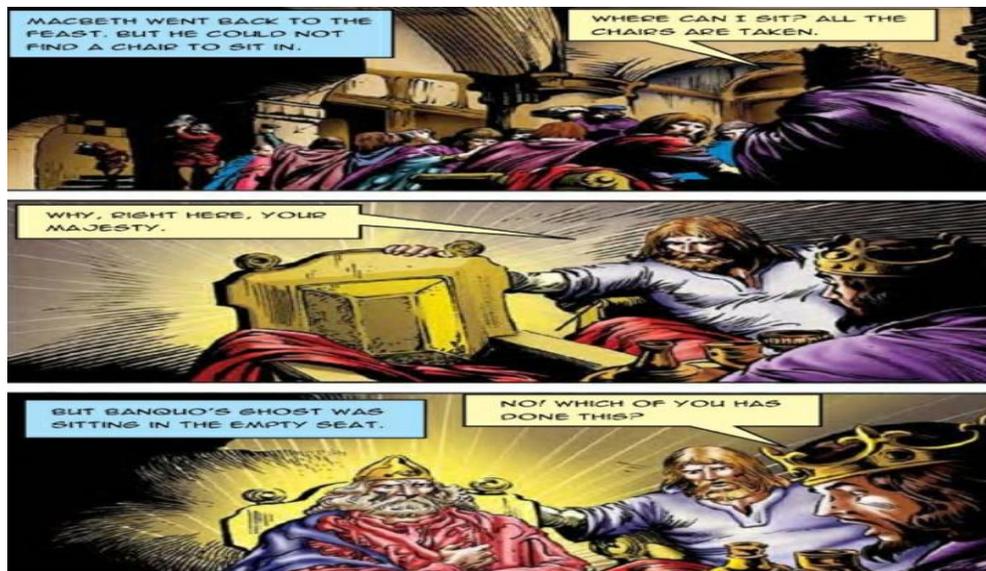
Illustrations makes the reader to visualise every scene of the play. A complete scene in an act is explained through the combination of few images and text. In Macbeth, act- 4 scene- 2 which is about Macbeth's visit to dark cavern where he finds witches and asks about the truth of their prophecies. In return they invited horrible apparitions to predict his fate. This scene is completely explain in the images given below.



Characters:

It is hard for children to decipher the Shakespeare’s characters. In contrast graphic adaptation has made it simpler using images. Pictures of noble character’s authentic attire attract readers and made them engage in the scene. In original text of Macbeth, appearance of ghost (Banquo) and Macbeth’s reaction in return is described in a dialogue format. On the other hand, images in the graphic adaptation of Banquo’s ghost and Macbeth’s fear is clearly portrayed in the graphic adaptation.

Character’s emotions, feeling, mood, thought, action are expressed through facial expressions, body depiction and other components to give children and young readers a sense of characters personality.



Narration:

Narrator in a play is considered to be the major participant who conveys the information or comments of the scene. Narrator in Shakespeare’s play are not generally a feature of play as there is no narrator

in any of his play. He has used characters action and dialogue to describe the story. One of elements used in Graphic Adaptation is Caption – a section of text that gives description on the background of the scene. Captions are used to narrate the scene which cannot be described through dialogue or characters. In original text of Macbeth Act – 4 scene – 2, which is about the murder of Lady Macduff and her son is explained through captions in the Graphic Adaptation given below.



Conclusion:

Shakespeare's most famous tragedy Macbeth in original and Graphic Adaptation are compared and analysed regarding language, plot, illustrations, characters and narration. These comparative study indicates that the essence of classical works may remain same in it's adapted graphic format. Traditional text can be hard to get through for children and young readers. Graphic Adaptation of any classic works are not with dense text to make it tough. Rather it looks more appealing as it contains pictures and text to explain the story or message. Graphic Novel or Adaptation are of modern literature that creates an opportunity for all children to develop reading skills. Major difference between traditional novel and graphic adaptation is that they don't rely on text but uses various graphic elements like captions, gutter, frame, speech bubble with illustrations and text to make it more effective on children and young readers.

References:

- Crandall, Jessie. *Analysing elements of Graphic Novels*, Prezi, 26 Nov. 2013 <https://prezi.com/hwzollmg9id-/analyzing-elements-of-graphic-novels/>
- Ensor-Bennet, Lael. *Transforming summer reading: Graphic Adaptations of literary classics*, The Seridan Library & University Museum Blog, 14 July 2016 <https://blogs.library.jhu.edu/2016/07/transforming-summer-reading-graphic-novel-adaptations-of-literary-classics/>
- Ferguson, Donna. *Children are reading less than ever before, research reveals*, The Guardian, 29 Feb. 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/feb/29/children-reading-less-says-new-research>
- Mendoza, Casey. *Graphic Novel, Comics books are growing in popularity*, Newsy, 21 Feb. 2022 <https://www.newsy.com/stories/graphic-novels-comic-books-are-growing-in-popularity/>
- Scholastic parents staff. *3 Ways of Graphic Novels benefit reading skills*, 12 Oct. 2020 <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/raise-a-reader-blog/3-reasons-graphic-novels-can-be-great-young-readers.html>
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Fingerprint Classics, Prakash books India pvt.ltd, 2019, India.
- Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*. Saddleback's educational publishing illustrated classics, 2006. <https://online.fliphtml5.com/ilypf/lmgp/#p=4>
- <https://www.ageoflearning.com/readingstudy/>