

Dramatic Text Messages: A Study of Multimodal Translations of the Bard in *OMG Shakespeare*

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INTRODUCTION

The works of William Shakespeare have been translated, rewritten, adapted et cetera throughout history. The resulting products can be considered the reason we are still in contact with his craft even after over 400 years. From the turn of the Elizabethan era until the Jacobean reign in England, to the 21st-century, we have been presented a large number of movies, books and different works of art that have kept the Bard's creations alive to us. These materials can be considered translations, in one way or another, as we will discuss in this paper. Walter Benjamin (1997, p. 154), for instance, argues that

in [translations] the original's life achieves its constantly renewed, latest and most comprehensive unfolding. As the unfolding of a special, high form of life, this unfolding is determined by a special, high purposefulness. Life and purposefulness — the connection between them seems easily accessible but nevertheless almost escapes knowledge, disclosing itself only where that purpose, toward which all the particular purposes of life tend, ceases to be sought in its own sphere, and is sought instead in a higher one.

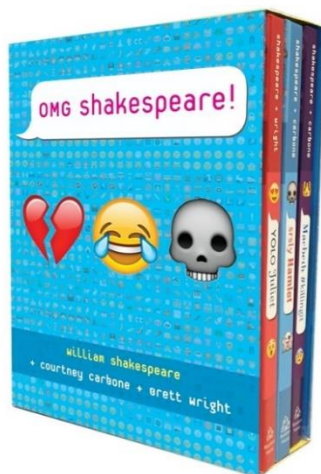
It is, therefore, only through translations that an original work can achieve its afterlife – it can be lived throughout different periods, and, especially, it may outlive its author. This afterlife, (or survival, as Steven Rendall also calls the idea of '*Überleben*' in his 2007 translation of Benjamin

* Unicamp

between German and English quoted above), as we can argue, may come in different formats. With Shakespeare's works, we are particularly offered an abundance of adaptations aiming at the younger audiences – from the Lamb siblings' *Tales from Shakespeare* (which restructures the plot of the plays into short stories) to graphic novels.

Along these lines of making Shakespeare more palatable to 21st century children and teens, starting in 2015, *Penguin Random House* began publishing a series of books in the United States with the intent of reenacting the stories of William Shakespeare's plays using the characteristics of the Digital Era. In *OMG Shakespeare*, we are introduced to a Romeo and a Juliet who flirt through text messages; a Hamlet who monologues into a notepad app¹ for smartphones most commonly used for groceries lists; three witches that talk about Macbeth's rise and fall in a group chat; and four Athenian teenagers who get lost in the woods and update their midsummer endeavors onto social media. The series is, then, composed by four volumes: *YOLO Juliet* (2015) and *A Midsummer Night #nofilter* (2016), by Brett Wright, and *Srsly, Hamlet* (2015) and *Macbeth #killingit* (2016), by Courtney Carbone – to the dramatic counterparts of the English Renaissance: *Romeo & Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

¹ Macmillan Dictionary defines Notepad as "a simple word-processing program, used for writing notes." Available on <https://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/notepad>. Access on March 20 2021.



Picture 1: The OMG Shakespeare box set commercialized by Amazon Brazil², which includes *YOLO Juliet* (WRIGHT, 2015), *Srsly Hamlet* (CARBONE, 2015), and *Macbeth #killingit* (CARBONE, 2016).

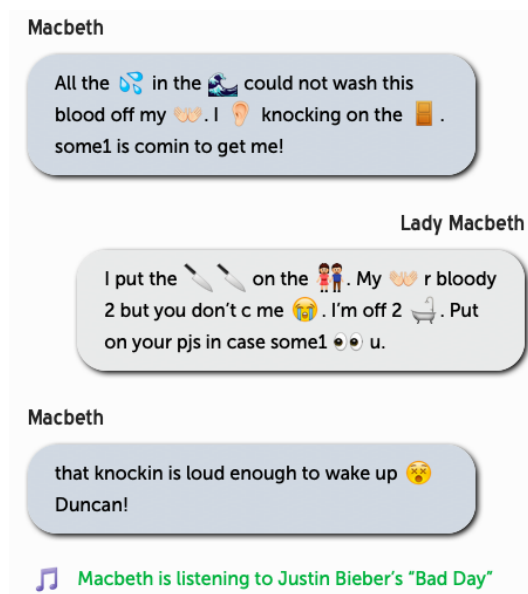
These books promote a more contemporary English, with slangs, abbreviations, hashtags and emojis. Through the lens of the translation studies, we can discuss the OMG Shakespeare's approach to the Bard's work as translation processes. In this article, at first, we will discuss theories that help us align Wright and Carbone's approach to this academic field. Afterwards, we will discuss excerpts from the original plays in comparison to their multimodal translations in the series. These examples will also help us examine the digital resources used in these books. For this study, we will take into consideration the volumes of OMG Shakespeare regarding two of the tragedies: *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSIONS

² Available on: <https://www.amazon.com.br/OMG-Shakespeare-Boxed-Set-Various/dp/0399557377/>. Access on: March 17, 2021.

To open our discussions with a more canonical theory on translation studies, we will analyze the OMG Shakespeare series through the definitions proposed by Roman Jakobson ([1959] 2012). The Russian author classified three distinct types of translations: interlingual, intralingual, and intersemiotic. The first one, the interlingual, is what represents the common sense of what a translation is – a text between two different languages. The intralingual translation, on the other hand, would be the translation of a text to the same language it was written in – for instance, Lambs' retellings of Shakespeare as short stories, as mentioned before. Finally, the intersemiotic translation consists of a process that has an impact on the set of signs of a text – for instance, the verbal description of a picture, which is non-verbal.

The point about Jakobson's definitions is that, at the time, they were deemed to be set-in-stone classifications that did not allow much flexibility. Nowadays, the translation studies can be more bendable to these supposed rules, because they find that their subjects are hardly ever just one of these things. OMG Shakespeare, for instance, is designed as two simultaneous processes: the intralingual and the intersemiotic translations. Even though these books are originally published in English – as were Shakespeare's playscripts back in his time – they are not only verbally English, but also multimodal with the interface of cellphones, and especially with the use of emojis, as the picture below shows:



Picture 2: An excerpt from *Macbeth #killingit* (p. 30; Act 2, Scene 2).

In 2005, Gunther Kress and Diane Mavericks were already discussing the concept of multimodality in the rise of the Digital Era:

language alone can no longer give us full access to the meanings of most contemporary messages, which are now constituted in several modes: on pages in the mode of writing and of image; on screens [...] on the Web; in speech, music, image – moving or still; in gesture, colour and soundtrack. In such texts each mode, language included, is a partial bearer of meaning only (KRESS and MAVERS; 2005, p. 173).

These elements in the OMG Shakespeare series are crucial to the story – they help tell the story in a way the Bard himself could not, because they are nothing if not symptomatic to the 21st-century communication practices. These visual resources also highlight a shift in purpose within such translations. While Shakespeare's plays were intended to be performed for the broad European audience in the turn of the Elizabethan Era to the Jacobean Period, the volumes in OMG Shakespeare are aimed at younger audiences who are to some extent involved in the contemporary social practices of online interaction.

The idea of purpose in translations can be found in several studies by authors who align with the functionalism trend. Hans Vermeer (2012), for example, came up with the *Skopos* theory, which represents the possibility of

a translation having a different purpose than the source text. If, from one culture to another, a text is supposed to have a different effect, the translator must have that goal in mind throughout her process. This purpose is often proposed by the client, the publishing house – it rarely comes from the translator herself. There are ethical implications to this theory which may not concern us in this paper. We rely on functionalism to show how, in works like *OMG Shakespeare*, there are contextual factors that underlie the translation processes.

These contrasting purposes necessarily have an impact on the final text. In *OMG Shakespeare*, it is the very features of the digital environment that try to seem captivating for kids and teenagers, which combines the shift in terms of form (from playscript to book), language (from strictly verbal to multimodal), and target-audience (from the lowest to the highest ranks of European society to younger audiences in the 21st-century). The already mentioned Kress and Mavers (2005) also discuss the idea of multimodal texts and their purpose to reach a specific reader: “multimodally constituted texts rest on design, with its question: what resource is best to achieve that which I wish to communicate now, for this audience?” (p. 174).

All the changes in canonical Shakespeare presented by this series might make it difficult for the publishing house to market them as translations, as we have discussed earlier, especially because – digital components aside –, just like Shakespeare’s works, these books are still in English. As Jakobson himself agrees, the common sense of translations is the interlingual process – the reason why he calls it ‘translation proper’ ([1959] 2012, p. 233). The idea of this undeniable common sense can be related to Pierre Bourdieu’s definition of *doxa*, which represents the pre-conceived ideas that belong to a social imaginary and are hardly ever resisted or defied:

tout l’ensemble de ce qui est admis comme allant de soi, et en particulier les systèmes de classement déterminant ce qui est jugé intéressant et sans intérêt, ce dont personne ne pense que ça mérite d’être raconté, parce qu’il n’y a pas de demande³ (BOURDIEU, 1984, p. 83; author’s mark).

³ “[it is] everything that is considered self-evident, particularly the classification systems that define what is, or not, interesting – what nobody thinks it is worth saying, because there is no reason to question it”.

Theories like Jakobson's help us understand a greater deal of products as translations, whereas socially and commercially, the idea of translation is often more limited. That might be why there are so many other labels to what we could understand as translations, through the lens of Jakobson's definitions. For instance, the intersemiotic translation of a book into a movie (also often preceded by the intralingual translation of turning prose into a movie script) is usually called an adaptation.

For Linda Hutcheon ([2006] 2013), adaptations are derivative projects, but they are not less than their originals. They are parallels in relevance and they coexist as two equally valid creations. One might experience an adaptation before its original (or they might never even get to know the original), so it should not be considered inferior or secondary, for there is no hierarchy between these products. An adaptation is a "repetition without replication" (p. 7), because it is innovative, and it brings something new to the original. Thus, if we try and trace Hutcheon's theory back to Jakobson's definitions, adaptations in this broader sense can be classified as interlingual, intralingual or intersemiotic translations – or as a combination of them, such as *OMG Shakespeare*.

In addition to the idea of adaptations, the impulse of creating alternative names for what could be academically considered translations is not only a matter of marketing for books, movies and so on. The very field of translation studies has also come up with other concepts. André Lefevere (1992), for instance, talks about the process of literary translation as, also, a process of rewriting, which is itself a process of manipulation:

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of the original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation [...] (p. vii).

Translations are, therefore, inevitably a work of rewriting that has a strong ideologic effect on the original and final texts, as well as on their cultures. As the author points out, rewriting can bring new aspects to an already-known literary work by innovating it. This innovation can be closely linked to the idea of purpose that we discussed above, because this introduction of elements to a text will be what differentiates them in that particular culture.

Through this perspective, Lefevere's studies, along with Hutcheon's, align with Benjamin's concept of afterlife. These alterations and contributions to an original text make them new and keep them alive. They are not the same, because they bring something new to the originals; and they cannot be new, per se, because they are essentially manipulative and transformative, but they are not less than the original creation at all. Even though the OMG Shakespeare series does not claim a marketing title – not adaptation, nor translation, nor rewriting – we see how their approach to Shakespeare's works is flexible enough to be called either or all of these.

We now turn to exploring these transformations in Shakespeare's texts to the digital environment. In the following section, we will discuss three quotes from *Hamlet*⁴ and three quotes from *Macbeth*⁵ concerning their reinterpretations in the OMG Shakespeare translations, both by Courtney Carbone.

A STUDY OF TRANSLATIONS

The first example from *Hamlet* (1600) is in Act 1 Scene 3, when Laertes is about to go abroad and his father, Polonius, advises him as to what he should and should not do. Whereas in the play this series of advice follows no indication of reading, but of spontaneous speech, in *Srsly Hamlet*, this part of the dialogue is presented as a list that Polonius had previously typed into the notepad app:

⁴ All the quotes from *Hamlet* (1600) are selected from the play's full text available on <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/hamlet/full.html>. Access on March 18 2021.

⁵ All the quotes from *Macbeth* (1606) are selected from the play's full text available on <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/macbeth/full.html>. Access on March 18 2021.



LORD POLONIUS

Yet here, Laertes!
 aboard, aboard, for
 shame!
 The wind sits in the
 shoulder of your sail,
 And you are stay'd for.
 There; my blessing
 with thee!
 And these few precepts
 in thy memory
 See thou character.
 Give thy thoughts no
 tongue,
 Nor any
 unproportioned
 thought his act.
 Be thou familiar, but by
 no means vulgar.
 Those friends thou
 hast, and their
 adoption tried,
 Grapple them to thy
 soul with hoops of
 steel;
 But do not dull thy
 palm with
 entertainment
 Of each new-hatch'd,
 unfledged comrade.
 Beware / Of entrance to
 a quarrel, but being in,
 / Bear't that the

opposed may beware
 of thee.
 Give every man thy
 ear, but few thy voice;
 Take each man's
 censure, but reserve
 thy judgment.
 Costly thy habit as thy
 purse can buy,
 But not express'd in
 fancy; rich, not gaudy;
 For the apparel oft
 proclaims the man,
 And they in France of
 the best rank and
 station
 Are of a most select
 and generous chief in
 that.
 Neither a borrower nor
 a lender be;
 For loan oft loses both
 itself and friend,
 And borrowing dulls
 the edge of husbandry.
 This above all: to thine
 ownself be true,
 And it must follow, as
 the night the day,
 Thou canst not then be
 false to any man. [...]



Picture 3: An excerpt from *Srsly Hamlet* (2015, p. 18-19).

Visually speaking, *OMG Shakespeare's* text consists of a written list. In that manner, Polonius's original speech does sound like the numbering of a sequence of suggestions. In terms of language, Courtney Carbone's writing is much more economic verbally. Many of the abbreviations used in this excerpt are rebuses, meaning that "the sound value of the letter or numeral acts as a syllable of a word" (CRYSTAL, 2006, p. 90). Some examples of that are '2' (to; too), '4' (for), 'B4' (before), 'every1' (everyone) and 'any1' (anyone).

The emojis, like the rebuses, are also used with considerable frequency – either for illustrative purposes or for syntactic purposes. Marcel Danesi (2017), in *The Semiotics of Emojis*, thinks these two distinct uses of emojis, in context, as adjunctive and substitutive. In the adjunctive use, emojis are used to illustrate an idea that has already been proposed verbally, like in Polonius' first advice: "B[e] careful what you say", followed by the emojis of a watch and a mouth – meaning "watch your mouth".

On the other hand, the substitutive use is the placement of an emoji instead of a word, like Polonius' second advice: "💡 b4 u act", which could

be read as the light bulb emoji⁶ functioning, syntactically, as the word 'think'. Another example is the flag of France emoji being used instead of typing the country's name, and one more frequent use of emojis as substitutes is the money bag⁷ 💰.

One last thing to be pointed out in this excerpt is that Carbone used asterisks in the expression 'kick some [ass]', again considering that *OMG Shakespeare* is directed at a younger audience. That is a common device in digital interactions to imply curse words.

Continuing, the following example from *Hamlet* is from Act 3 Scene I – the "To be or not to be" soliloquy given by the eponym character. This is also presented in *Srsly Hamlet* (2015) as an insertion of text into the notepad app.

HAMLET

To be, or not to be, that is
the question,

Whether 'tis nobler in the
mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of
outrageous fortune,

Or to take arms against a
sea of troubles,

And by opposing end
them? To die: to sleep;

No more; and by a sleep
to say we end

The heart-ache and the
thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to, 'tis a
consummation

Devoutly to be wish'd. To
die, to sleep;

The oppressor's wrong, the proud
man's contumely,

The pangs of despised love, the
law's delay,

The insolence of office and the
spurns

That patient merit of the
unworthy takes,

When he himself might his
quietus make

With a bare bodkin? who would
fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a
weary life,

But that the dread of something
after death,

The undiscover'd country from
whose bourn

No traveller returns, puzzles the
will

⁶ "Light bulb". Image available on <https://emojipedia.org/light-bulb/>. Access on March 20 2021.

⁷ "Money bag". Image available on <https://emojipedia.org/money-bag/>. Access on March 20 2021.



To sleep: perchance to
dream: ay, there's the
rub;

For in that sleep of death
what dreams may come

When we have shuffled
off this mortal coil,

Must give us pause:
there's the respect

That makes calamity of
so long life;

For who would bear the
whips and scorns of time,

And makes us rather bear those
ills we have

Than fly to others that we know
not of?

Thus conscience does make
cowards of us all;

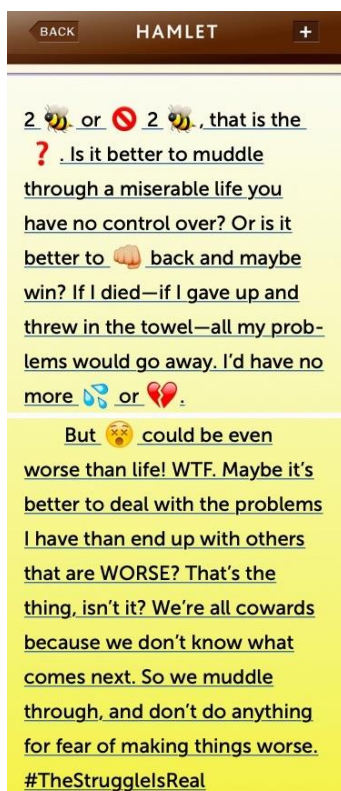
And thus the native hue of
resolution

Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast
of thought,

And enterprises of great pith and
moment

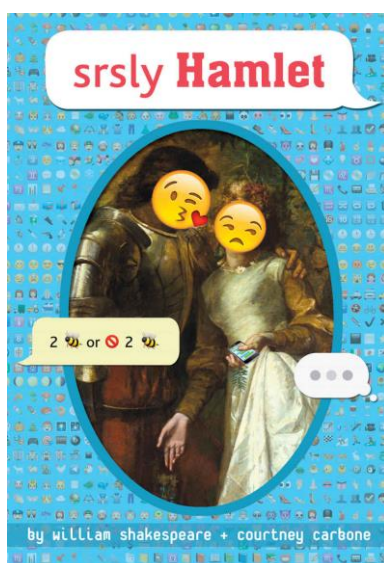
With this regard their currents
turn awry,

And lose the name of action.



Picture 4: An excerpt from *Srsly Hamlet* (2015, p. 42)

In this excerpt, we have again the use of rebuses and substitute function of emojis right at the beginning. “To be or not to be” becomes a multimodal phrase with letters, numbers and emojis. Considering this is probably Shakespeare’s most widely known line, this play on words is used as a marketing strategy when presented on the very cover of *Srsly Hamlet*:



Picture 5: The cover for *Srsly Hamlet* (2015).

These language resources mitigate the strongly dramatic tone of the speech. Even though Hamlet is still talking about death and, frankly, considering suicide, the reader can hardly take his reflections seriously with so many emojis. By this, we do not mean that the reader should discredit the character, but the dark themes are played lightly in this work, considering its aim at a younger audience.

The informality of the text also comes through abbreviations such as WTF (what the fuck, which insinuates vulgarity but does not use it explicitly) and the illustration of phrasal verbs such as ‘[fight] back’ with the substitutive use of emojis. Finally, Hamlet closes the speech with a hashtag: #TheStruggleIsReal. Eduardo Salazar (2017) explains the implications of hashtags on social media:

In practice, [...] their function is to ease the task of finding messages having a specific theme or content. For the most part they are un-moderated (created by the users themselves) and when adopted by enough people within a social network they help attract more individuals to the content it references (SALAZAR, 2017, p. 19).

The notepad app for smartphones is a simple text editor and it does not need internet to function. It is also not a social medium, so Hamlet's soliloquy wouldn't be read by anyone unless he sent it – thus, in this scenario, the hashtag wouldn't have the impact Salazar (2017) suggests, but it works in *Srsly Hamlet* as another hint at online trends in communication.

The final *Hamlet* example is from Act 3 Scene 4. The main character confronts his mother, Gertrude, about her relationship with Claudius, Hamlet's uncle, so soon after her husband's death. The ghost of Hamlet's father, then, appears to try and appease Hamlet. It follows:

HAMLET

A murderer and a villain;
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!

QUEEN GERTRUDE

No more!

HAMLET

A king of shreds and patches, —

Enter Ghost

Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings,
You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?

QUEEN GERTRUDE

Alas, he's mad!

HAMLET

Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That, lapsed in time and passion, lets go by
The important acting of your dread command? O, say!

Ghost

Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But, look, amazement on thy mother sits:
O, step between her and her fighting soul:
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works:
Speak to her, Hamlet.



Picture 6: An excerpt from *Srsly Hamlet* (2015, p. 61-62)

This scene is played out as two separate chats: Hamlet and Gertrude, and Hamlet and his father's Ghost. The black color on Ghost's conversation balloons, which are also shadowed in red, was probably chosen as a resource to make it visually clear that this character is, in fact, dead. Another typically digital device used by Carbone is the capital letters in Gertrude's second message – in online contexts, it usually indicates shouting, as explained, for instance, by David Crystal (2006, p. 37).

In Hamlet's first input, he bickers: "if there was an emoji for vomit, I'd send it to you". This is a mark of dating in *OMG Shakespeare*. Given *Srsly Hamlet* was published in 2015, the emoji database used by its authors was fairly simplistic compared to nowadays in 2020. In addition to the "face with medical mask", used in this excerpt, there are two other pictures with similar meanings of disgust: nauseated face 🤢⁸ and face vomiting 🤮⁹.

Many emojis have been added to the code throughout the years. Some have been changed in a few aspects. The first emoji in Gertrude's first message, for instance, was changed to 🙋.¹⁰ At first, the emojis representing people featured a light skin color as their only version. In the current code, the standard version depicts this yellow skin-tone, and there are five other variations available: medium-light skin tone 🙋¹¹, dark skin tone 🙋¹², light skin tone 🙋¹³, medium skin tone 🙋¹⁴, and medium-dark skin tone 🙋¹⁵.

The following example is from *Macbeth*'s Act 1 Scene 1 and it features the three witches. In *Macbeth #killingit*, Courtney Carbone made it out to be as if they were interacting through a group chat.

⁸ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/nauseated-face/>. Access on March 20 2021.

⁹ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/face-vomiting/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹⁰ "Woman gesturing no". Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹¹ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no-medium-light-skin-tone/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹² Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no-dark-skin-tone/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹³ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no-light-skin-tone/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹⁴ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no-medium-skin-tone/>. Access on March 20 2021.

¹⁵ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/woman-gesturing-no-medium-dark-skin-tone/>. Access on March 20 2021.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch

When shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch

When the hurlyburly's done,
When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch

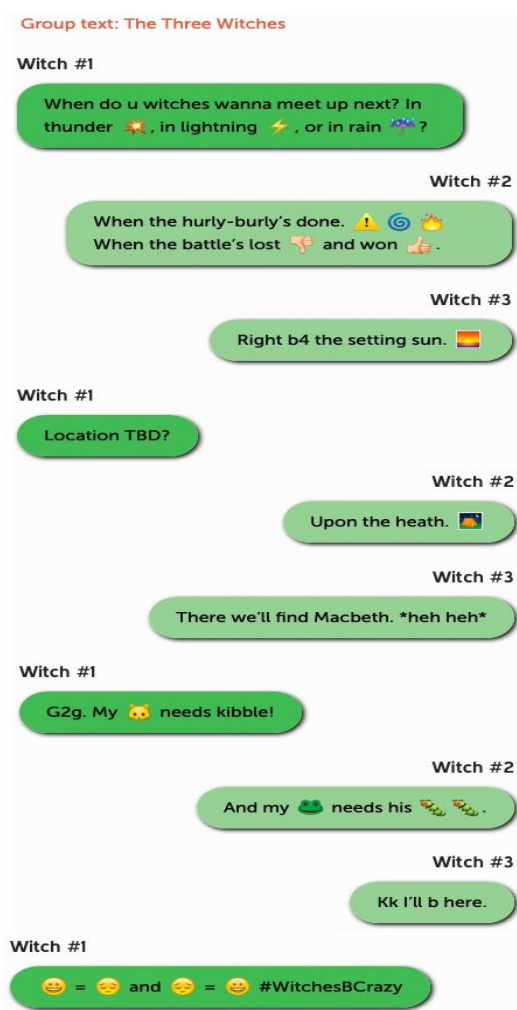
Paddock calls.

Third Witch

Anon.

ALL

Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

Picture 7: An excerpt from *Macbeth #killingit* (2016, p. 3-4)

In *Macbeth #killingit*, the first input is considerably close, verbally, to Shakespeare's text. Again, if contemplated through Danesi's (2017) theory, the emojis are used in an adjunctive mode: to illustrate what has already been said with words. The second input is also even closer to its original, apart from a few differences in punctuation and the adjunctive use of emojis. On the other hand, the eerie mood of the first scene in this tragedy is toned down in *OMG Shakespeare* by the play on the words 'bitches' and 'witches', in both the first message of the excerpt and the last. The hashtag 'WitchesB[e]Crazy' is, then, a pun with the colloquial phrase 'bitches be crazy', which is also used with cursing words.

Once more, we are faced again with the rebus 'b4' (before) in the third message. Following, the fourth features the abbreviation TBD, which stands for 'to be determined', and on the fifth message, there is a hint of a laugh as '*heh heh*'. In both the sixth and the seventh messages, we have an

amplification of the first witch's line "I come, Graymalkin!" and the second witch's line "Paddock calls". As Courtney Carbone made them out to be, Graymalkin is illustrated by a cat emoji, and Paddock is illustrated by a frog emoji – with yet the addition that it is hungry for worms.

Our next example is in Act 1 Scene 5 in *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth is trying to convince her husband to kill King Duncan in order to become king himself and advises him toward wickedness.

LADY MACBETH

O, never
 Shall sun that morrow see!
 Your face, my thane, is as a book where men
 May read strange matters. To beguile the time,
 Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
 Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent flower,
 But be the serpent under't. He that's coming
 Must be provided for: and you shall put
 This night's great business into my dispatch;
 Which shall to all our nights and days to come
 Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.



Picture 8: An excerpt from *Macbeth #killingit* (2016, p. 18).

In this excerpt, nearly all of the first half of Lady Macbeth's lines are ignored, to be started firstly with the metaphor of the serpent hidden under a flower. In *OMG Shakespeare*, it is played out as "look like an [angel] but be a [serpent]". The latter emoji is another example of the changes in the emoji code, for now it is depicted as such: 🐍¹⁶. The following lines in

¹⁶ "Snake". Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/snake/>. Access on March 20 2021.

Shakespeare's text are somewhat included in Carbone's rewriting, but switched around to come before the metaphor: the character is taking control and telling her husband to leave the preparations for Duncan's killing to herself.

At last, our final example is in Act 5 Scene 5 in *Macbeth*. After all the killing and blood left on his hands, which took their toll on his now dead wife, the main character reflects about life and death:

MACBETH

She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word.
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.


Macbeth

FML. I guess she would have 🙄 eventually.
Every 📅 turns in2 the next and there is nothing we can do 2 stop ⌚. Poof! 💨 Like a short-lived candle 🔥. Life is just a walking shadow 🎭, like 🗣️ onstage, reciting memorized lines that sound important @ the time, but ultimately have 🚫 meaning.

Picture 9: An excerpt from *Macbeth #killingit* (2016, p. 73).

This message starts with the abbreviation FML (fuck my life, which again insinuates a curse word without using it explicitly). There is a considerable number of emojis used in this input, most of used in a substitutive manner (DANESI, 2017). Some of them can even be considered problematic when reading: the 'performing arts' emoji 🎭¹⁷ might especially

¹⁷ Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/performing-arts/>. Access on March 20 2021.

be hard to read in context, unless the reader is familiar with the original text and in the expectation of a line comparing life to “a poor player”. Other examples as ¹⁸ are more obvious in their meaning within their syntactic function.

Furthermore, the rebus ‘2’ (to) is used again, along with the variation ‘in2’ (into). The symbol @ is used, in the second-to-last line of the message, as a substitution for the word ‘at’. Once again, this example is arguably toned down in seriousness by the multimodality and how visually dynamic it is.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Overall, despite representing all bullet points of each story, neither *Srsly Hamlet* (2015) nor *Macbeth #killingit* (2016) depict a tone of tragedy. The approach in OMG Shakespeare might go hand in hand with comedies such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, in *A Midsummer Night #nofilter*, but one may argue that the tragedies’ translations are not strongly dramatic – which might be the intention of the publishing house, considering *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, as plays themselves, would not exactly be recommended for the target audience of OMG Shakespeare.

This idea allows us to revisit the previous functionalist discussions: the shift in purpose of the translations regarding their originals also bears a change in audience. We can find, in OMG Shakespeare, a way of making emotionally heavy stories available for children and teens. These books might not give readers a feel of the actual tragedy, but the turn to a new medium with a specific audience in mind can captivate new readers and, perhaps, even lead them to consider Shakespeare’s original works subsequently.

The eventual downfall of characters and the plot itself are translated into a more informal communication manner, which help keep these stories alive and fresh for new audiences. The series works as an appealing approach to Shakespeare’s plots that make use of contemporary social practices in communication by placing the dialogues between characters in

¹⁸ “Prohibited”. Available on: <https://emojipedia.org/prohibited/>. Access on March 20 2021.



a cyber setting – an interaction that is, in fact, typically more informal because of its very means.

The contemporary set of resources imported from the digital environment changes the the dynamic between the characters, and informality is key. The language in the series does not take itself seriously, by breaking grammar rules left and right in a way to seem more familiar to the contemporary reader than Shakespeare's intricate English. And as for the use of emojis, if we consider Danesi's theory (2017), we will find that the series varies use of icons according to the syntax of verbal English – at times, emojis replace a word, and at other times, they illustrate a previously verbalized idea. However, the dating of the text is inevitably evident. The emojis used by Carbone reflect a much older source when taking current 2020's data into account.

As a process, *OMG Shakespeare* translates, adapts, rewrites, and manipulates its originals in order to function socially and commercially in a different manner than the Bard's plays. Its approach is comprehensive enough for the series to be able to be called a variation of names, both in the academic field and on the market. With these numerous translations, adaptations, rewritings et cetera, William Shakespeare (as well as other canonical authors) are kept alive through his works throughout history, and we can choose however we want to read him – as we like it.

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Abstract

This article discusses, through Translation Studies, the *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* installments in the OMG Shakespeare series, which features the Bard's plays in a digital environment. We consider the studies from Benjamin (1997) and Jakobson (2012) and relate their definitions to the concepts of adaptation (HUTCHEON, 2013) and rewriting (LEFEVERE, 1992). The use of digital aspects is discussed through Crystal (2006) and Danesi (2017). We found that OMG Shakespeare mitigates the tragic tones of the plays, but its digital aspects make these stories more accessible to contemporary children and teens.

Keywords: William Shakespeare; translation; Comparison; Digital Environment; Youth Literature.

Resumo

Este artigo discute, à luz dos Estudos da Tradução, os volumes de *Hamlet* e *Macbeth* da coleção OMG Shakespeare, que traz enredos do Bardo para o ambiente digital. Consideramos os trabalhos de Benjamin (1997) e Jakobson (2012) e relacionamos suas definições aos conceitos de adaptação (HUTCHEON, 2013) e reescrita (LEFEVERE, 1992). Com base em Crystal (2006) e Danesi (2017), foram discutidas características de recursos digitais. Concluimos que a OMG Shakespeare atenua os tons de tragédia das peças, mas os aspectos digitais tornam essas histórias mais acessíveis ao público infantojuvenil contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: William Shakespeare; Tradução; Ambiente digital; Mensagens de texto; Literatura infanto-juvenil.