



# Rewriting Shakespeare: Bengali Novelisations of *Macbeth* and the Politics of Cultural Translation

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**Abstract:** This paper will explore how the interlingual translations of Shakespeare's plays into novelised texts reflects the subtle modified balance of cultural politics, as these translations are sites of shifting hegemonic relationships between two languages and cultures. In the process of translation, each novelised text validates the subaltern culture and language as a dominant one, because, it is through these culturally transformative assimilated novelised texts that a common Bengali reader experiences the Shakespearean world. Shakespeare's plays get reworked in the light of Bengali culture, but the dominance is not definitely one-way, Shakespeare's text also influences the narrative texts in a certain way, which is an unrealised dominance, where it shaped the Bengali thought process through its specific cultural dominance. In this paper I have considered the novelised texts of *Macbeth* by Haran Chandra Rakshit and Sudhindranath Raha to analyse how the translation and novelisation between two languages and cultures establishes their hegemonic relationship, as any translation is plotted against the play of cultural politics, and how the translation reflects the shifting balance of relationships between the two languages or cultures.

**Keywords - Culture, Interlingual, Translation, Hegemony, Shakespeare, Novelisation, Macbeth.**

## INTRODUCTION

With the beginning of the colonial occupation of Bengal, the spread of English education in the province became necessary for the colonizers, and we all know that Shakespeare became an important tool in the process of cultural colonization. Along with the spread of English education, Shakespeare's plays were translated into Bengali plays. Another method of interlingual translation that gained popularity concurrently with the process of translating Shakespeare's plays into Bengali dramas, is the theatrical translation rendered as novels or paraphrases. This paper will explore how the interlingual translations of Shakespeare's plays into novelised texts reflects the subtle modified balance of cultural politics, as these translations are sites of shifting hegemonic relationships between two languages and cultures. In the process of translation, each novelised text validates the subaltern culture and language as a dominant one, because, it is through these culturally transformative assimilated novelised texts that a common Bengali reader experiences the Shakespearean world. Shakespeare's plays get reworked in the light of Bengali culture, but the dominance is not definitely one-way, Shakespeare's text also influences the narrative texts in a certain way, which is an unrealised dominance, where it shaped the Bengali thought process through its specific cultural dominance. In this paper I have considered the novelised texts of *Macbeth* by Haran Chandra Rakshit and Sudhindranath Raha to analyse how the translation and novelisation between two languages and cultures establishes their hegemonic relationship, as any translation is plotted against the play of cultural politics, and how the translation reflects the shifting balance of relationships between the two languages or cultures.

*Macbeth*, Sudhindranath Raha, Dev Sahitya Kutir (2013)

Sudhindranath Raha's *Macbeth* was published with the other narrative texts of Shakespeare's tragedies in the book titled "*Shakespeare-er Tragedy*" [Tragedies of Shakespeare] by Deb Sahitya Kutir Pvt. Ltd. in 1959. Later this book was reprinted and published in 2013 with some of the comedies and history plays of Shakespeare with the title "*Dramas of Shakespeare*". The novelised text begins with the geographical and political description of Scotland and England, *Engrej-er desh-er uttor-e bash kore scotch jati. Matro sho-tinek bochor dhore ei dui jati ek-e rajar odhin-e bash korche. Tar aage oder alada rajyo*

*chilo, raja-o chilo prithok* [The Scot race live in the north of English country. For only somewhat three hundred years or so, these two races are living under the same king. Before that they had separate kingdoms, and separate kings.] (Raha 2013, 1) followed by mentioning the name of Edward as the king of England and his Scottish counterpart Duncan. The narrator indulges in the characterization of Duncan by stating *Jamon chilo tar misti byabohar, tamon chilo doya. Proja-der tini bhalobasten tini nijer sontan-er moto. Kiske tara santi-sukhe thakbe, kamon kore tader obostha bhalo hobe kromosho, echara onyo chinta chilo na tar.* [As his behaviour was sweet, so was his kindness. He loved his subjects like his sons. He had no thought other than being always concerned about their wellbeing] (Raha 2013, 1). The play *Macbeth* never mentions the name of the English king, neither the characterization of Duncan was presented likewise. Sudhindranath Raha through his simplified presentation of Duncan's character is building up the binary opposite of good vs evil in his narration for making it easily comprehensible to the readers. To reinforce his idea of binary opposites, Raha attributes the ultimate colloquial Hinduistic reference of good governance by asserting the province of Duncan as *ram-rajya* [Kingdom of Ram/ Ideal nation] (Raha 2013, 1). In the Indian subcontinent, the term *ram-rajya* as a reference to good governance is potent and popular across religious and cultural barriers. This Hinduistic Indianization of expression is an attempt by the narrator to engage the readers with the foreignness of the story. The narrator has a strong connection with the readers, through his numerous and insistent interventions in the narration where we get a feeling that as if he is liable to explain everything foreign to the Bengali readers. He undertakes the role of a storyteller, who is narrating the story and giving details addressing the unknown reader. He describes the term *thane* by using the Bengali term *jomidar* [large landlord] and goes on to briefly present the socio-political history of Europe, *tokhon-kar din e Europe-r sob desh-ei chilo boro boro jomidar. Eder Khomota chilo oshim. Rajar nijer onek khomota thakle tobei era raja k manto.* [In those times, in all countries of Europe there were big landlords. They had immense power. If the king had enough power, only then these landlords use to obey the king.] (Raha 2013, 1). He narrates the story assuming that the reader is completely unaware of the cultural, social, political and geographical conditions of England and Scotland. It appears that the storyteller is focusing on a wide range of age groups, but the simple narrative style would also help the younger age group to understand. To children the places may appear foreign but with detailed lucid description, the interpretation becomes easily comprehensible. It is clearly visible that the narrator himself is rooted in his indigenized cultural perspective and is presenting the story through an indigenized powered glass. Moreover, the narrator through his process of indigenization adds different layers of characteristics to the character which are not part of Shakespeare's characters. As it is evident in Raha describing King Duncan as an old man who likes to spend his days in religious affairs *dhormo-kormo niye din katate parley tini khushi thaken* [He would be happy if he remains involved in religious affairs] (Raha 2013, 2). This aligning of character traits of being religious with an old person is visibly indigenized and is incorporated in the prose narrative by Raha to familiarize the foreign.

The narrator not just takes liberty in bringing in analogies from the readers' indigenous culture, he also dominates the narrative pattern through his engaging narration. The development of the plot in the play depends on constant interactions between the characters, in spite of the fact that there are certain breaks that a reader experiences while reading, due to the change in scenes. Raha's narration fills these gaps by adding certain descriptions within the story, which are not present in the play in the same manner, to create a sense of continuity and present the story as an organic whole. In this process the domination of the narrator's text becomes clearly evident. It is through his narration that Malcolm's captivity and freedom is stated and not through the interaction with the bleeding captain presented in Act I, scene ii. Similarly, Raha goes on to describe the battle between Macbeth and Macdonwald, which is actually a part of the bleeding captain's speech to Duncan. The narrator supersedes the role of the captain and of all the characters in the first section of the narrative as we can perceive that no speech is included. There are some erroneous descriptions like that of several messengers bringing reports from the battle field, *Duth-er por duth aste thaklo juddho-khetro theke* [Messenger came one after the other from the battle field] (Raha 2013, 2) while actually only one captain brought the report and the religious portrayal of Duncan as stated earlier. But I consider these to be parts of Raha's attempt to make the narrative appear continuously united, stimulating and accessible. In the process of making the narration easily relatable to the readers, Raha does not focus on including the images used in the play to describe Macbeth's valour, his fighting spirit and his character as a whole, like, "Valour's minion", "as sparrows eagles, or hare the lion" and "Bellona's bridegroom lapped in proof" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.2.19,35,55). These images are important in the play because Shakespeare is focused on the development of the character of Macbeth and those images are instrumental in

highlighting the transition in Macbeth's character from a brave thane to a tyrant regaining his valorous self when challenged by Macduff by the end of the play. Raha is not focused towards the journey of the titular character but more fixated on describing the story that is surrounding Macbeth. Thus, he considered making the story relatable to the readers more important than including Shakespearean imageries in his narrative. Thus, it becomes evident from the first section itself that there is a constant tussle in the process of appropriating two different cultures in the narrative text. The narrators' presentation of both the cultures in translated novelised text reflects the shifting balance of relationships between the two languages or cultures. The Bengali culture which is considered a subaltern one in comparison with the European culture, establishes the hegemonic position, as the European cultural instances are dependent of the Bengali colloquial references to be deciphered and it is through these culturally transformative assimilated novelised texts a common Bengali reader experiences the Shakespearean world.

Another aspect of the narrative text is the presence of two kinds of texts within it. First, is the "narrator's text"<sup>1</sup> which deals with the descriptions by the narrator, and second, is the "actor's text"<sup>2</sup> or character's text where the plot develops through direct speeches and action of the characters. In the following section Raha begins with the description of the witches. If compared with the play, he describes Act I, scene iii in this section. For the first time the character's text is visible, as the three witches are provided with direct speeches in the narrative. It is interesting to note that the witches' speeches are poetical with rhyming lines *Tumi chile kothai bon? / sunbi jodi tobe shon* [Where were you sister? / If you want to listen then listen] (Raha 2013, 3). I consider this to be an attempt by the narrator to create an otherworldliness of the witches within the prosaic world of his narrative. The gender inversion in the play is emblematic of the feminine identity being symbolically transformed into its masculine opposite, of gender and moral inversion and confusion. Whereas Raha limits the inversion of the witches to mere physical attributes of appearing to be female but having beards *narir moto akriti tader, kintu mukhe dari* [Their figure is like women, but they have beards in their face] (Raha 2013, 3). The characters' text develops within the narrator's text, and through the former text and his description of the witches' actions, he attempts to present to the readers the rising significance of the witches' address towards Macbeth. The narrator's overarching presence is evident in the narrator observing and stating certain facts which were actually done by other characters in the play. As is seen in the narrator describing the absent mindedness of Macbeth after hearing the prophecies, which was originally observed by Banquo in the play. Through this interpolation of the characters' text firstly, the dominance of the narrator's text becomes clear and secondly, the novelised text turns out in a concise form. Some sections like the interaction between Duncan and Macbeth after his return from the battle field are omitted from the narrated text. Even if we consider that the abridging was done keeping in mind the target of retaining the attention of younger readers, one drawback of the narratorial comments still remains. At times these comments are entirely incorrect. For instance, the narrator comments that Macbeth had never thought of these prophecies in his dreams, *e-shob tini toh kono-din swopne-o bhaben-ni* [He had never thought of these even in his dreams] (Raha 2013, 4). This narratorial comment completely changes the psychological perspective that is there within the character. Bradley observes that "there is no sign whatever in the play that Shakespeare meant the actions of Macbeth to be forced on him by an external power."<sup>3</sup>, but by mentioning that Macbeth had never thought of that, the narrator presents Macbeth as a more unpretentious character, and who becomes influenced by "external power" of the witches' prophecies. The narrator's dominance over the text is visible in his moralistic comments like *lobh-er bosh-e manush ektu ektu kore paap-er pothe pa barai*. [Out of greed people gradually steps onto the path of sin] (Raha 2013, 5), which is ideally a recreation of Banquo's address to Macbeth where he says "Win us with honest trifles, to betray's in deepest consequence-" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.3.125-126); and also, is seen, in the narrator's mention of the emotions expressed by the characters, as in *porihash-er sur-e jobab dilen...* [replied in a sarcastic tone] (Raha 2013, 5).

The narrator goes on to describe the character traits, rather than those being made understood through the actions. Raha describes Lady Macbeth as a person whose overambition is limitless and who have immense belief in mental strength,

<sup>1</sup> Mieke Bal and Christine Van Boheemen, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>2</sup> Bal and Van Boheemen, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, 2009, 14.

<sup>3</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth* (Penguin UK, 1991), 343.

*Macbeth-er ei stree-tir ucchashar shima nei... nijer mono-bol-er upor tar ogad biswas.* [Macbeth's wife's ambition knows no bound... she has immense faith over her mental strength] (Raha 2013, 6). These could have been easily expressed through her speeches, but it is a general technique of most narratives where the narrator presents his viewpoint that later gets attested through the speeches. In the process of adaptation there is change of genre, from play to novel, also it has re-interpretation of the source text from the perspective of creation. This process of adaptation leads to the appropriation of the balance between the narrator's text and the character's text where the dominance of the former is found to be obvious as there is a narrator involved due to the change in genre. Though the narrator through direct speeches adheres to replicating significant lines from the play which are impactful from the narrative's perspective, the narrator also goes on to add dramatic action through his comment in order to bring in the dramatic effect. This whole technique of using direct speech and adding dramatic effect through the narrator's comment is visible in replication of Lady Macbeth's speech "O! never/ Shall sun that morrow see!" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.5.59,60) as *a-ratri tar sesh hobe na tahole* [Then this night will not end] (Raha 2013, 6), which is followed by narrator's comment *potnir mukhe sei kotha kholakhuli uccharito hote sune bhoite ek pa pichiye elen Macbeth.* [Macbeth took a step back in fear upon hearing those words spoken openly from his wife.] (Raha 2013, 6).

The atmosphere of the play is that of dominating darkness or blackness and the dialogues are an integral part of creating this atmosphere of darkness. But, when we look into the dialogues incorporated by the narrator, it becomes clearly visible that even the verbatim translated dialogues are devoid of the power of rhetoric, which is present in the play. Especially this is reflected, in presenting Lady Macbeth, the narrator showcases the significant character traits, of a person who has no trace of pity, does not have any scruples about treachery, is full of courage and inflexible will, and rouses his husband to the occasion of Duncan's murder through taunts and chastisement; but the dialogues which corroborate these traits are either missing from the narrative or are made weaker in rhetorical power when replicated. Raha's text does not include her invocation to the spirits asking them to devoid her of any womanly characteristics, neither does he mention "look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it." (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.5.63-64). Though Raha uses the taunting of Macbeth's manliness, the way it is used does not portray Lady Macbeth dominating over her husband in that scene through her words. Her speech in the narrative is a question to her husband *kamon dhara purush tumi – onthore ja chao, ta paowar chesta korte bhoite pao?* [What kind of a man are you- what you desire from within, is afraid to try to get it?] (Raha 2013, 7). This speech restructures and represents the position of women. The readers of the original play are aware of the dominant and manipulative nature of Lady Macbeth but here the narrator represents her through the colonial lens. Considering the time and social condition of women at that time, in which he is writing, it would be almost blasphemous to present a woman chastising her husband, even though the narrator had already set the narrative in its original time and setting. He might have believed this outrageous taunt might not be well accepted by his target audience.

In Shakespeare's play there is no dramatic representation of Lady Macbeth visiting Duncan's chamber in an attempt to murder him before Macbeth actually does. She only states that if Duncan had not looked like her father in his sleep, she would have killed him, "Had he not resembled / My father as he slept, I had done't" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.2.12-13). Shakespeare does not directly present Lady Macbeth visiting the chamber of sleeping Duncan and finding his face to resemble her own father, Shakespeare just presents it through the dialogue and leaves it for the audience to imagine the scene. But Raha takes the liberty to dramatize the speech into a scene of action. Raha's narration *Ghore dhuklen Lady Macbeth, kintu tokon-e beriye elen kapte kapte* [Lady Macbeth entered the room but then and there left the room shivering] and the direct speech of Lady Macbeth addressing Macbeth, *churi tulechilam tar golai bosiyte dewar jonno, kintu hotat kamon jano mone holo – rajar mukhta jano amar swargiyo baba-r moto. Amar hath kepe galo, bukh-o kepe uthlo. Churi ar hath e tulte parlam na.* [I had picked up the knife to put it on his neck, but suddenly felt something – King's face appeared to be like by dead father. My hands trembled; my heart also shivered. I could not take the knife in my hands anymore.] (Raha 2013, 8) which leaves hardly anything for the reader's imagination. Moreover, the same process is applied in the "air-drawn dagger" scene. The poetic qualities of the scene got lost under the dominance of the prosaic manner of the narration. The imagery associated with the bell calling Macbeth and the aligned soliloquy of the air- drawn dagger, "Is this a dagger, which I see before me," (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.1.33) which provided an insight into Macbeth's character are all submerged under the overpowering prosaic narration. Thus, the narration does not provide any rich scope for imagination, which could have been there if the focus was on

the imageries or the intricacies of the character, but that was not done, as the narration is solely focused on the presentation of the story.

The soliloquy of the drunk porter is not included in the narration as it is more crucial in commenting on the action that has happened rather than progress of the plot. The *fabula* with respect to the drama is a bit altered and the syuzhet is fast paced, minimizing the process of character development of Malcolm and Donalbain, allowing the narrator's text to be dominant. As is seen in the description of the reason behind the flight of Duncan's sons and in the narrator presenting the inner turmoil within Macbeth regarding the prophecy made to Banquo. Raha omits the Act II, scene iv, which describes the old man and Ross describing the supernatural events after the discovery of Duncan's dead body, followed by their interaction with Macduff. Raha condenses the whole section by deleting the interactions between Macbeth and Banquo, before the latter's murder, and also between Macbeth and Banquo's murderers in Act III, scene i. Shakespeare dealt at length in showcasing Macbeth instigating the murderers against Banquo but Raha presents the whole situation as Macbeth appointed two murderers and they waited on the way for their target. *E-dikh-e Macbeth dujon hotyakari nijukto korlen. Tara poth-e oth pete roilo ratri belai* [On this side, Macbeth appointed two assassins. They lay in wait by the way at night.] (Raha 2013, 9). In the same breath the narrator describes that Banquo is murdered but Fleance escapes. Raha uses reported speeches like this to state the basic facts of the original scenes and as a result it minimizes the actions of the characters involved leading to a concise narrative. Raha takes the liberty in modifying the banquet scene in the narrative text. He dilutes the sombre atmosphere associated with Shakespeare's Banquet scene and modifies it according to his own interpretation. The modification happens in providing a visual representation of the hall. Raha states *Aloke jholmol, nache-gane mukhor, sei bhojon-kokho. Durlobh rajbhog table-a table-a thor-e thor-e sajano. Table ghire bosechen desh-er shresto lok-era, bir o shommani joto purush, aar sera sundori salonkare joto romoni* [The banquet hall, with sparkling light, filled with dancing and singing. Rare royal delicacies are arranged on table after table. The best people of the country are seated around the table, all the brave and honorable men, and the most beautiful women have gathered with eminence in the company.] (Raha 2013, 10). What Raha does over here is termed as "domestication" (Munday 2016, 228) in the book *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, by Jeremy Munday, Sara Ramos Pinto and Jacob Blakesley, that is conforming to target language cultural values. Moreover, Raha omits the interaction between Macbeth and Banquo's murderer through which Macbeth actually came to know about the death of Banquo. Raha modifies the scene by providing the knowledge of the death through the presentation of the ghost of Banquo sitting on Macbeth's *singhasan* [throne] (Raha 2013, 10). It can be speculated that, as Raha already mentioned the death of Banquo to the readers, he diluted the scene and made the readers believe that somehow Macbeth came to know about the murder of Banquo in spite of no direct transfer of that information. This can be stated because in the first reaction of Macbeth in the actor's text is if the dead return from their graves, then it is a danger *kobor theke mrito-ra jodi phire aste thake tahole toh bipod...* [If the dead comes back from graves, then that is problematic] (Raha 2013, 10), thus, the narrative text establishes that Macbeth is aware of the murder without the interaction with the murderer. If we look into the modified scene minutely, it is visible that while modifying the scene Raha made a mistake in the coinage of the term "*Macbeth's place*" mentioned in the stage direction of Act III, scene iv. "Enter the Ghost of Banquo, and sits in Macbeth's place." (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 3.4. 41) and made it *singhasan* [throne]. The scene is set in a banquet hall where the presence of the throne is very unlikely, Raha should have ideally used Macbeth's chair instead of the throne. In the play, the ghost does not appear until it is remembered, but here it appears on its own. This is due to shifting to the narrator's text. Previously, actions such as the coming of the ghost depended on the churning within Macbeth's mind. It depended on his active thought process. However, it has changed to the narrator's description at this point, which causes a variation in how Banquo's ghost arrives. The narration then shifts to Macbeth visiting the witches to consult his doubts. Here, the narrator omits the conversation between Hecate and the three weird sisters, this section of the drama clearly shows that they were planning to bring about Macbeth's downfall from the beginning. Raha makes the supernatural presentation his primary focus by omitting Hecate's conversation, presenting a vivid visual representation, and following it with the actor's text taking the lead in presenting the spectacles created by the witches. Raha's novelisation is targeted at entertaining the readers rather than delving into the critical underlying aspects of the play. That is why, to create a long-lasting impact on the readers, especially the child readers, he presents the spectacle of the witches as it is. This translation and recategorization into the novelised form release an alternative, subversive potential of a text, turning it

inside out and thus bringing a deconstructive factor to the fore. The subversive potential is establishing the subaltern culture and language as a dominant one, thus shifting the balance of cultural hegemonic relationship towards the Bengali culture.

Raha omits Act IV, scene ii and iii of the play from the narrative. These scenes present through minor characters how ferocious Macbeth has become in his killing spree and domination. Moreover, scene III focuses on the brewing opposition against Macbeth in England. Raha intentionally focuses on the scenes associated with the main characters, to concise the narrative and make it fast paced. Raha skips to the sleep-walking scene and takes on the role of the maid by commenting on the actions of Lady Macbeth. He comments on the situation, describes it *Ratre ghumonto obstai ghure beran*. [Roams around while sleeping at night] (Raha 2013, 12) and only uses a literal translation of the famous dialogue “All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand” (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 5.5.50-51) to keep the essence of the scene, nothing more. Thus, the scene in the narrative text lacks the developing tension as presented through Lady Macbeth's revelatory dialogues. Raha omits the interaction between the maid and the doctor as he does not present Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep, rather he condenses the whole situation by paraphrasing the whole situation through the narratorial modulation. Therefore, it can be easily conjectured that for Raha, the presentation of Lady Macbeth is unimportant, as in spite of being a dominant character in the play, Raha relegates her character to the margins of his narratorial space. Not only her character, other minor characters like Rosse and the old man who leave an image of brewing dissatisfaction within the common people are not mentioned. Raha completely takes control over the narration, by making the narrator's text solely dominant while narrating the situation and the actions like people fleeing Scotland to take shelter in England, the murder of Macduff's family, the entering of Malcolm and his companions in England for fighting against Macbeth, news of lady Macbeth's death and others. Direct speech is assigned in Macbeth's reaction to the news of his wife's death, Macbeth in Raha's text says *Morbar ar somoy pelo na?* [Didn't find another time to die?] (Raha 2013, 13). Though according to me, this dialogue does not match the original reaction of Macbeth “She should have died hereafter” (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 5.5.20) after hearing the news of Lady Macbeth's death. This dialogue is different in tone. The original tone was that of Macbeth being unmoved by the news, as if he had already distanced himself from Lady Macbeth and the news does not affect him, whereas the Bengali dialogue showcases Macbeth's disgust at the information. This is an instance of emotion lost in translation. The last section is curtailed and becomes completely a part of the narrator's text. Raha discloses the equivocal aspect of the prophecies made by the apparitions and closes the narration with a touch of Indianness added to it by saying *Dhormer joy holo, Macbeth holen nihoto* [Righteousness wins, Macbeth is killed.] (Raha 2013, 13).

To add to the interlingual translation there is a slight initiative of intersemiotic translation being used in the text, as there is a sketch (figure 1) of a man and a woman involved in a conversation, who are apparently Macbeth and Lady Macbeth at the very beginning of the text. The pictorial descriptions are useful in presentation of particular scenes in a more profound manner. Similar impactful pictorial description is found in page 17 of Raha's *Macbeth* where the drawing represents the arrival of the apparition which is an armed head.



Figure 1.

Page 1





একটা ছায়ামূর্তির আবির্ভাব হল ম্যাক্বেথের সম্মুখে.—লোহার শিরস্ত্রাণ-পরা একটা মাথা।

Figure 2. An armed head

Sudhindranath Raha's translation bears a subtle disguised didactic mission, to make the readers of the newly freed nation understand the need to broaden their narrow gaze and contextualize their cultural position amongst other cultures of different nations as is depicted in Shakespeare's plays. Yet, while doing so, he includes several instances of Bengali culture, which eases a Bengali reader to connect with the Shakespearean world. The translation into Bengali narrative becomes a privileged site of Bengali cultural dominance as everything foreign is explained or modified from a Bengali cultural perspective, but in spite of it being a reconstructed and translated text it does not enjoy the upper hand every time, as the narrative is dependent on Shakespeare's text, everything the narrator tries to present is negotiated based on the basis of the original text and there the culture of the Shakespearean text exerts the ascendancy, which is an unrealized dominance. Thus, there lies a constant shifting of hegemonic relationships and the dominance is not definitely unilateral.

#### **Macbeth, Haran Chandra Rakshit, Volume 2 (1901 C.E)**

Volume 2 of *Shakespeare* by Haran Chandra Rakshit was published in the Bengali month of Poush, 1307 (December 1900- January 1901). Rakshit published his novelised text of *Macbeth* in this book. The tone of reporting an incident is observed instead of narrating in a traditional way. The narrator uses short sentences and reports the facts in a most precise manner. This completely disrupts the *fabula* of the play. The play begins with the three weird sisters discussing their course of

action, whereas, in the first paragraph of Rakshit's text we are informed about the fact that Macbeth has already gained more reputation and influence by defeating the revolting group. There is no mention of the weird sisters in the first paragraphs. The narrator brings Act I scene ii to the forefront and provides the readers a very brief report on the war proceedings. *Macbeth sei bidhrohi-digoke domon koriya Rajar odhiktoro priyo patro hoilen* [By subduing the rebels, Macbeth became more favourite of the king] (Rakshit 1901, 1). The supernatural setting which sets the atmosphere of the play *Macbeth* through the first scene is being replaced by a tone of newspaper article. The continuous flow of the narrative text in alignment with the play actually begins from the point Macbeth and Banquo encounter the witches. There is identical similarity between the two texts in the choice of words. The phrasing is identical to the play. The dominance of the narrator's authorial voice is quite evident and that is clearly visible in the narrative. The narrator not only sets the tone of the narrative but also the point of stimulus of the narrative.

One of the innovative things about Haran Chandra Rakshit's text is that he includes a pictorial description of Macbeth and Banquo meeting the three weird sisters for the first time upon the heath. The scene in which Duncan is interacting with the bloody captain is missing from the narrative. Even the names of Ross and others are also missing. To bring in the anonymity the word 'dyut', is used over here when the messenger comes to inform Macbeth about his appointment as the Thane of Cawdor, *Macbeth aaji hoite Cawdor-er odhipoti hoilen...* [Macbeth from today becomes the thane of Cawdor.] (Rakshit 1901, 4). Unlike Raha, Rakshit does not go into explaining the word "thane" nor does he even localise the word with Bengali cultural reference. He uses the term *odhipati* to denote a person who is a ruler, irrespective of whether he is the king of Scotland *Scotland-odhipoti nikot hoite ek dyut ashiya...* [From the king of Scotland, a messenger came...] (Rakshit 1901, 4), or a ruler of a province within Scotland. Here, the word is used by Rakshit removing it from the hierarchy of the power structure, though in a following dialogue he uses *moharajadhiraj* [King of all kings] to designate Duncan. Bengali cultural references in depicting the social positions are evident. Rakshit's attempt to localise the foreign is a marker of shifting cultural hegemony towards Bengali culture.

Rakshit presents that when the second prophecy is fulfilled through the information brought by the messenger, slowly a farfetched ambition of becoming the king of Scotland is being sown into the heart of Macbeth, *Dhire, dhire, oti dhire, Macbeth-er hridoye durakhanka-r beej ropito hoilo* [Slowly, very slowly, the seed of farfetched ambition is sown in Macbeth's heart.] (Rakshit 1901, 5). Rakshit had presented beforehand that the desire was within Macbeth when, Rakshit being true to Shakespeare's text mentioned that Macbeth was rapped after hearing the prophecies, but here the narrator's commentaries like the above mentioned one and *Dhire dhire hotyar kolpona mone jagitechilo* [slowly the idea of murdering was arising in his mind] (Rakshit 1901, 5) this one, is added to emphasize the gradual transformation transpiring within Macbeth. Rakshit's, time and again comments describes and channelises the actions, especially the psychological ones, of Macbeth for the readers. These comments leave nothing for readers' imagination or interpretation.

Moreover, it is seen that the narrator modifies the first few scenes and represents them in a new light. Like scene one ends with the witches' famous dialogue "Fair is foul and foul is fair" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.1.12) even before the witches meet Macbeth but here, Rakshit re-presented this dialogue much later at the end of the first section. Here this is presented in a manner of rumination and as a cause for the transpiring transformation of Macbeth. Rakshit says how the witches spread their illusionary magic spell through this song of "Fair is foul and foul is fair". This is followed by the narrator's comments like *bodh-hawa Macbeth k sporsho korilo aar shei hoite Macbeth jibone oti bhison natok-er oti bhishan obhinoy aarambh hoilo* [bad-air touched Macbeth, and from that moment began the most terrible drama in Macbeth's life - the most terrible performance.] (Rakshit 1901, 6). Rakshit's narrative comment, particularly this one, acts as a guiding tool for the readers. Through this they can anticipate the course of action in the following passages of the text.

Haran Chandra Rakshit merges and creates scenes according to his comfortability. He demarcates the scenes by numbering them. The second scene or section according to Rakshit's narrative begins with Macbeth coming in front of king Duncan. Rakshit translates famous speeches like "Let not light see my black and deep desires. / The eye wink at the hand, yet let that be / Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see." (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 1.4.58-60), but uses them in different circumstances and scenes. Section three of the narrative uses indirect and direct speeches in a mixed way, oscillating between Macbeth's speech through the letter informing Lady Macbeth about the developments, followed by Lady Macbeth's speech in

response and the narrator's description of both these characters through his commentaries. The information of Malcolm being appointed as the prince of Cumberland, that is, the heir apparent which would instigate Macbeth more about taking the heinous step of murdering Duncan is missing in section two by Rakshit. Section three of the narrative begins with Lady Macbeth reading Macbeth's letter informing her about the developments. Rakshit does provide Lady Macbeth with direct speeches to express her views about Macbeth's nature, but he uses narratorial interventions in presenting her character to the readers. Rakshit translates the speeches almost verbatim. The verbatim use of direct speeches actually occupies the same space within the narrative as in the play, thus providing the characters, especially the important ones, the same importance in the narrative as it is in the play. Section four of this narrative is dominated by narration and as a result, it takes the essence of novelisation to the fullest. This section describes the arrival of Duncan with others to the castle of Macbeth. The narrative voice of Rakshit goes on to describe the calm, temple-like purity of the castle using the same symbols used by Shakespeare in the play.

In section 5 too, Rakshit uses narration and direct speeches in presenting the development of the plot and more specifically Macbeth and his wife's character in the similar way as it has been done by Shakespeare in Act I, scene vii of Macbeth. As Rakshit is not summarising the sections in the process of novelisation, it is visible that he is truer to the original in re-presentation of the plot and characters. Section 6 is dominated by the dagger scene. Rakshit translates the dagger scene soliloquy and is presented through direct speech of Macbeth as it is in the play. To make it more poignant to the readers he uses a sketch of Macbeth entering sleeping Duncan's room with a dagger, while the chamberlains are sleeping outside the door and figures of three witches above as if releasing a spell on Macbeth. The visual representation covers almost the full page. These sketches are instances of intersemiotic translations added to interlingual translation. The constant use of sketches, that is the intersemiotic translation while presenting important scenes, reflects the narrator's all-round attempt to leave a deep and clear impression of the scenes in the mind of the readers. It needed two kinds of translations, interlingual and intersemiotic, to present the powerful, evocative images and symbolisms of Shakespearean world in the narrative text. Thus, the power needed to deconstruct the existing hegemonic structure of the Shakespearean language and culture and to reestablish the similar hegemony in a new culture and language is self-explanatory from the use of two kinds of translations in order to tackle one. The section lacks the conversation between Macbeth and Banquo regarding the witches' prophecies and his discreet attempt to make Banquo aligned with his future plans, "If you shall cleave to my consent, when 'tis, / It shall make honor for you." (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.1.25-26). Rakshit also repositions some dialogues, like, Lady Macbeth's dialogue where she says that she would have killed Duncan if he would not have looked like her father in his sleep, is used by Rakshit even before the dagger scene, but in the original, this was said after Duncan's murder, "Had he not resembled/ My father as he slept, I had done't." (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.2.12-13). In section 7 the Christian reference of Macbeth's inability to utter "Amen" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.2.31) is localised with a rather secular term *Shanti* (Rakshit 1901, 15). that is peace. The Western Christian worldview is absorbed within the narration of the text but as it is a non-Hindu religious belief system, at first it is contextualized then absorbed accordingly. Thus, the balance of cultural politics is undoubtedly palpable. The rest of the section is presented as it is presented in the play with plot and character development, but the character building lacks the nuances used by Shakespeare in the play. For instance, Rakshit does not use imagery like "knocking" (Shakespeare 2001, *Macbeth* 2.2.56), which affected Macbeth and Lady Macbeth according to their respective natures. For Macbeth the knocking acts as a psychological churning, an ultimate reminder of the boldness of his action, and for his wife, it acts as an alarm to remove traces that would bring any kind of suspicion on the m. Rakshit does not mention "knocking", and therefore withdraws himself from indulging in character development from a philosophical point of view.

Rakshit entirely omits the porter episode and begins narration by mentioning the murder was revealed in the morning. As dark humour and irony are ingrained in the porter episode, it can be stated that it was a conscious decision on the part of Rakshit as he did not want to problematize the horror and tension of Duncan's murder. Moreover, it is visible in the narration that the heightened tension after the revelation of the murder of Duncan is also diluted by Rakshit most importantly by not including Macduff in this section and oversimplifying the reaction of the characters involved in the scene.

In section 9, Rakshit jumps to the commencement of the Banquet scene after eliminating a detailed description of comparatively less important scenes from the narrative. He narrates the appointment of the murderers by Macbeth, the waiting of the murderers for Banquo and Fleance, on their way to the Banquet Hall, the murder of Banquo and the escape of Fleance

with only two sentences. He concises the scenes but also does something unique. He brings in historical facts within the narration of the story. He comments that the descendants of Banquo ascended the throne of Scotland, and the last king of Scotland, James VI, later ascended the throne of England as James I, thereby uniting both the kingdoms. The section goes on to describe the Banquet Scene following the nuances and tribulations happening within Macbeth as has been described in the play. Rakshit is not much concerned in presenting minor characters from the play. Still, he mentions the invited guests to the banquet, though anonymously, as lords, only for including the storyline of the appearance of the ghost of Banquo and the resulting psychological changes within Macbeth. In the following two sections the narrator focuses on dissemination of the facts for rapid progress of the narrative. He describes at length the apparition scene but condenses the scene of Lady Macduff into a paragraph of two lines, just by mentioning, Macbeth after learning that Macduff had joined with Malcolm, vengefully attacked Macduff's house and killed his wife and son. Similarly, section eleven mentions Malcolm and Macduff returning from England after accumulating soldiers, while on the other hand, afraid of Macbeth's torture, his soldiers are leaving his side and joining his opponents. Rakshit does not delve into describing the conversation between Macduff and Malcolm. In section twelve Rakshit elaborately presents the sleepwalking scene through direct speeches of the doctor, the gentlewoman and Lady Macbeth, keeping the meanings, imagery and dialogues verbatim. He even adds a sketch of the scene for a better portrayal. Thus, it becomes evident again that the primary focus of Rakshit is presenting the main part of the story, while character building is secondary. He narrates in detail the scenes which include Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and relegates the minor characters and scenes to the margin and brings them to the focus only when it aids his purpose of presenting the main plot.

Having said that, all the direct speeches help in presenting the characters in front of the readers. As most of the speeches are translated keeping the tone and words intact, it automatically reflects the characteristics of the characters, similar to that of the play. The unrealised dominance of the Shakespearean's text is obvious as even within the hegemonic structure of Bengali text the hegemony of the original text exists in a subtle manner. Thus, though the translation validates the subaltern Bengali culture and language as a dominant one, as this culturally transformative assimilated novelised text is used as the glass through which the Shakespearean world is viewed, the dominance is not certainly one way.

The last three sections of the narrative are presented through descriptive narration with minimum direct speeches. Section thirteen dealt with interaction between the doctor and Macbeth, where the doctor mentions his inability to cure her, thus hinting at her death. Rakshit concises the following sections by limiting direct speeches and concentrating on narration of the opposing forces marching, Lady Macbeth's death news and her husband's subsequent reaction, ultimately Macbeth's battle with Macduff, realizing the equivocation of the prophecies and ultimately his death. Throughout this narration is directed towards important portions, and subsequently Macbeth's character also gets presented. Each of these last sections ended with a narratorial comment on the development of the plot. I consider that these comments form an integral part of the narrative because these comments help to develop the trajectory of emotions within the readers. At the end of section thirteen, on the mention of the inability of Lady Macbeth's curability and the subsequent reaction of her husband, Rakshit says *Mohapapi-r Jibon-natok-er ki bhishon Porisomapti!* [What a terrible ending to the life drama of the great sinner!] (Rakshit 1901, 28). This comment attempts to bring about a cathartic effect within the readers. In a similar way at the end of section fourteen after the soldiers of Malcolm approach with branches from Birnam wood, Rakshit goes on to explain the prophecy of the witches through the comment *Dakini-der bhobitshot banir ek ongsho ei bhabe-e sofol holo* [This is how a part of the witches' prediction came true.] (Rakshit 1901, 30). Rakshit takes an extra step to explain the ambiguity of the witches' prophecy to the readers. At the end of the last section Rakshit directly addresses the readers by asking them to remember the witches' song and mentions that according to their prophecy, Banquo's successors go on to enjoy this throne but it is not included in this narrative. Through novelisation and translation, Rakshit appropriated and transformed one culture into another. Rakshit's text becomes a creation of the classical text in a different age but almost in its original image. The basic process throughout is the transformative assimilation of culture where the hegemony lies within the subaltern Bengali culture and language but it also shifts depending upon the balance of cultural politics.

## Conclusion

The Bengali novelised texts by Sudhindranath Raha and Haran Chandra Rakshit reflects how the translation and novelisation between two languages and cultures establishes their hegemonic relationship, as any translation is plotted against the play of cultural politics, and how the translation reflects the shifting balance of relationships between the two languages or cultures. It is not only the target language and culture that gets dominated by the theme and plot of the source text, but the source text in its adapted version also gets modified and recreated in according to the Bengali cultural milieu. The writers use interlingual and inter-semiotic translations strategies to explore and express the foreign subject within the Bengali cultural sphere leaving a lasting imprint on the minds of the Bengali readers, especially on those readers, who have not read Shakespeare's text in English and experiencing the same text in a novelised form for the first time. The translation and adaptation intermesh with the whole process of considering the source text, as a site for reading followed by absorption, interpretation and interpolation as process of creating a new site of translated cum adapted literature.

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