

**TRANSLATIONS of SHAKESPEARE: HIS TEXTS AND
THEATRE IN BANGLADESH**

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ABSTRACT

Translation of Shakespeare has a long history in the region of Bengal. It began in 1809 when Charles Monckton, a student of Fort William College, translated a few excerpts from *Tempest* into Bangla. Since then, there have been many more attempts to translate Shakespeare into Bangla. Most translations were done either for stage performance out of the translators' passion for Shakespeare, who saw in such a venture a way of popularizing the great playwright among educated Bengalis. In this dissertation, I have discussed the background of the translations of Shakespeare done in this region, but focused on translations in the post- independent Bangladesh. The study is a comparative account of the translations of *Macbeth*- one by Syed Shamsul Haq and another by Mafize Choudhury- and *Othello* by Prof Munier chowdhury and Prof. Kabir Chowdhury. The theoretical framework of my study will be formed by the 'communicative' and 'semantic' theories of translation. The study also looks at the translated plays as theatre presentations undertaken by various theatre groups in Bangladesh with a brief discussion of the evolution of theatre activities in Bangladesh.

CHAPTER 1

Background of Shakespeare translations in Bangladesh

Although Shakespeare is dominating the English literary scene since the 16th century but it was not until the middle of the 18th century that people of this subcontinent were exposed to Shakespeare through the efforts of the British Imperialists. It is not known specifically from which date Shakespeare was included in the curriculum of schools or colleges in India but history says the efforts to translate Shakespeare into Bangla started from 1809 when Charles Monckton a student of Fort William College translated *Tempest*. Charles Monckton undertook the task as a part of his exercise of Bangla writing and did not translate the whole play but a few excerpts. Unfortunately the copy is not available today.

Prof. Shafi Ahmed, a professor of English Literature in Jahangirnagar university, wrote in his book on translations of Shakespeare into Bangla, *বঙ্গদেশে শেক্সপীয়র* (Shakespeare in Bengal) said that, to consider Monckton's translation as an initiative to enhance the quality or the number of Bangla translations of Shakespeare will not be justified, particularly in comparison with the realm of translations of Shakespeare into Bangla done by the Bengali translators in this region since 1848. He also informs us that *রোমিও এবং জুলিয়েটের মনোহর উপাখ্যান* (*Romeo and Juliet*) by Gurudas Hajra in 1848, is considered to be the first initiative to translate Shakespeare into Bangla. From that time to this date we have many more translations of Shakespeare into Bangla but in my dissertation, translations of Shakespeare done by Bangladeshi translators will be the focus.

Let's take a closer look at what translation actually is. Translation is simply the process of shifting something that is written or spoken in one language into another. If we quote from *Introducing Translation Studies* by Jerney Munday to answer the question, then we find that, "The process of translation between two different written languages involves the translator changing an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language or TL)." (p 5)

In Bangladesh, there have been many translations of books in other languages but in the case of Shakespeare, the number of translations is rather small. The reason behind this is perhaps that Shakespeare's translation in Bangla has always been very difficult mainly because of the style and the structure that he maintained through the use of blank verse, vocabulary and idioms. Most of the times many of these components are not used or found in Bangla exactly the way they were used in Elizabethan English. Considering all the cultural differences that we had and still have between the Elizabethan period and this Post- Modern Bangladesh, for a translator in order to make Shakespeare easily accessible to a person who does not know English but has heard of Shakespeare, translating Shakespeare is obviously a huge challenge.

After 1971 we have had only a few translations in Bangladesh. And even among these, most were translated either for stage shows or to make Shakespeare available in Bangla and make him more popular among the people especially for those who were not expert in English. Just before the independence in 1970, Prof. Munier Choudhury translated *The*

Taming of the Shrew (Mukhara Ramani Bashikoron), a narrative translation and when a TV serial was made on it, this got an immense popularity which set the platform for others, who were encouraged to translate Shakespeare's plays. After that we got *Hamlet* by Abu Shahriar and হামলেট বা প্রতিশোধ (*Hamlet*) by Syed Sajjad Hossain in 1974, then again *Antony and Cleopatra* (1978) from Abu Shahriar. Then we got *Othello* (1981) by Kabir Chowdhury, which Munier Chowdhury first started but couldn't finish as he passed away before completing the whole play. Syed Shamsul Huq translated *Macbeth* (1984) and *The Tempest* (1987), *Macbeth* also came on stage in 1984 jointly by the two renowned theatre groups in Bangladesh Nagorik and Theatre. Syed Shamsul Huq also translated *Troilus and Cressida* for Nagorik, one of the most popular theatre forums in Bangladesh and wrote *Gananayak* (1983) based on Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. We find a series of Shakespeare's translations by Mafize Choudhury; *Romeo and Juliet* (1985), *King Lear* (1988), *Macbeth* (1988), *Hamlet* (1993), *Merchant of Venice* (1995). Shamsur Rahman translated *Hamlet* in 1995 and Mannan Hira, a renowned dramatist translated *Coriolanus* (1991). Mainly these are the translations and many of them were translated for stage shows besides doing translation out of one's own passion for Shakespeare.

Translators are the illustrator of what they think and what they want to show to their target audience in their translation keeping the original text in their mind. Moreover, a play is something which is not only meant for reading or writing but which is also a direct mirror image of our daily life. So when a translator is mediating play between two

different cultures, he might find certain ways in certain situations or cultures, which may not be similar to the target culture.

The topic of my dissertation is, *Translations of Shakespeare: his texts and theatre in Bangladesh*, and in my paper I have chosen a few of the translated plays of Shakespeare into Bangla, vis-à-vis: *Macbeth* by Syed Shamsul Haq (1984), *Macbeth* by Mafize Chaudhuri(1988), *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury. Different theatre groups have also staged these translations at different times in Bangladesh.

Throughout the paper I will try to explore in depth how faithful the translators were while translating these plays into Bangla or how much liberty they took in order to bring equivalence between the two different languages and culture. And I will try to base my discussion on these plays in the light of semantic and communicative translation. Semantic translation belongs more in the realm of equivalence; it tries to supply an equivalent semantic content for words found in the source text, and it concentrates more on the meaning of the source text. Communicative translation, by contrast is more or less equivalent to a 'cultural adaptation' of the source text, so that readers in the target culture find it easier to read.

CHAPTER 2

Macbeth in Bangla translation: An analysis

In the first chapter it has already been mentioned that translations of Shakespeare into Bangla in this Indo- Bengal region have a long history. We see that *Macbeth*'s translation into Bangla has a long record as well. In 1874 Horo Lal Roy made a communicative translation of the play, which was a cultural adaptation of the source text mainly for stage performances for Bengali people. The title that he used for his translated version was *Rudro Pal*. After that we come across other translations of *Macbeth* into Bangla by other Indian translators like *Macbeth* (1875) by Taroknath Mukherjee, *Korno Beer* (1885) by Nagendranath Basu, *Macbeth* (1903) by Girish Chandra Ghosh, *Macbeth* (1923) by Upendranath Kaur, *Macbeth* (1952) by Nirendranath Roy and *Macbeth* (1956) by Manindra Dutta.

But in independent Bangladesh, Syed Shahmsul Haq translated *Macbeth* in 1984 and Mafize Chaudhuri in 1988. And this particular chapter will focus on a comparative study of the translations of *Macbeth*, translated by Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Chaudhuri in the light of semantic and communicative translation.

Macbeth was first staged at Globe Theatre in London on 20th April 1611 and the Bangla translation of Horo Lal's *Rudro Pal* was staged in Kolkata in 1874. After that in Minerva Theatre Hall in Kolkata, Girish Chandra Ghosh's translation of *Macbeth* was staged on 28th January 1903. After that there was a long gap of eighty one years and finally Syed Shamsul Haq took the initiative of translating Shakespeare's *Macbeth* into Bangla on the

request of The British Council. Syed Shamsul Haq made a short translation and the two renowned theatre groups in Bangladesh *Nagorik* and *Theatre*, staged it as a joint collaboration in The British Council Auditorium and Mahila Samiti in Dhaka in 1984. It is to be noted here that to direct *Macbeth*, an English play director Christopher Sanford came to Dhaka from England. The play was very well received by the masses. On the other hand Dr. Mafize Chaudhuri's translation of *Macbeth* in 1988 is mainly a poetic translation. He didn't translate it for any stage performance but did it out of his own passion for Shakespeare, as he states, “তবু যে জেনে শুনে দূরহ ও জটিল কাজটিতে হাত দিয়েছি, তার একমাত্র কারণ, শেক্সপিয়র আমার প্রিয় কবি।” (I know its a very difficult job but I undertook such initiative, translating this play only because, Shakespeare is my favorite poet) in the introduction of his translated text.

At the very beginning, if we look at the structure of *Macbeth* by Shakespeare, we will see that there are 2603 lines in the original text, whereas Syed Shamsul Haq completed his translation within 2231 lines while Dr. Mafize Chaudhuri took 2619 lines to write. This statistical detail shows that Syed Shamsul Haq's translation is comparatively shorter than that of Dr. Mafize Choudhuri. But as Syed Shamsul Haq translated *Macbeth* in order to have a shape that is required for a stage performance, he took some liberties while remaining faithful to the main text. Syed Shamsul Haq has completely eliminated the 5th Scene from Act 3, where the three witches had a meeting with Hecate. He particularly thinks of this scene as being inconsistent “প্রক্ষিপ্ত” with the other scenes, as he mentioned in the introduction of his text, উইলিয়াম শেক্সপিয়র এর তিনটি নাটক (Three plays by

Shakespeare). Under the same circumstance, Shamsul Haq also omitted a big portion from the 3rd Scene of Act 4, when Malcolm and Macduff are talking to each other before the King's Palace, and Macduff realizes that Macbeth is the murderer and loses all his hope:

Macduff: I have lost my hopes.

Malcolm: Perchance even there where I did find my doubts.
 Why in that rawness left you wife and child,
 Those precious motives, those strong knots of love,
 Without leave- taking? I pray you,
 Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
 But mine own safeties: you may be rightly just,
 Whatever I shall think.

Macduff: Bleed, bleed, poor country!
 Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
 For goodness dare not check thee: wear thou thy wrongs;
 The title is affeer'd ! Fare thee well lord;
 I would not be the villain that thou think'st
 For the space that's in the tyrants grasp,
 And the rich East to boot. (29- 44)

And from here until Ross enters, there are many dialogues (total 136 lines) which Shamsul Haq omitted. The appearance of the doctor in the source text is also missing in the translation. Syed Shamsul Haq divides Sc. 7 of Act 5 into two scenes. In the main text scene 7 starts with Macbeth's entrance and ends with Malcolm's speech when Macduff kills Macbeth and reasserts their position. But interestingly both Syed Shamsul Haq and Dr. Mafize Chaudhuri make Macbeth re-enter in a new scene (scene 8).

In the main text:

Malcolm: We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siward: Enter Sir, the Castle.

Exeunt. Alarms

Enter Macbeth

Macbeth: Why should I play Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword? Whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

(*Macbeth*, Sc. 7, Act. 5, L 43- 50)

In Syed Shamsul Haq's translation:

ম্যালকম: আমাদের সৈন্যরা লড়েছে চমৎকার।

সিওয়ার্ড: মুক্ত এই দুর্গের তোরণ

প্রস্থান

দৃশ্য : ৫ : ৮

ম্যাকবেথের প্রবেশ

ম্যাকবেথ: না আমি রোমান নই, রোমানদের মতো আমি নিজ
তরবারি দিয়ে প্রাণ নিবো না নিজের। যতক্ষণ
দেহে প্রাণ আছে, নেবো প্রাণ শত্রুরই কেবল।

(Haq, p 104)

In Dr. Mafize Choudhuri's translation:

ম্যালকম: শত্রু, সৈন্য, অনেকেই আমাদের সাথে লড়েছেন।

সিউয়ার্ড: এই যে দুর্গতোরণ, প্রভু প্রবেশ করুন।

প্রস্থান

দৃশ্য : ৫ : ৮

ম্যাকবেথের প্রবেশ

ম্যাকবেথ: রোমান যোদ্ধার মতো মরবোনা নিজের অসিতে
নির্বধের মতো। জীবিত দেখছি শত্রুদের;
অসির আঘাত তবে যোগ্যতর হবে ওদের বুকেই।

(Choudhuri, p 84)

Though Dr. Mafize Choudhuri ends the whole tragedy in this particular scene but Syed Shamsul Haq completes the last part of the last scene when Malcolm, old Siward, Ross, Thanes and the Soldiers re-enter in Scene 9, and he makes it very short by omitting the dialogues of Ross, Siward and Malcolm, when they were talking about the death of young Siward before Macduff re-enters with Macbeth's head;

Siward: Then he is dead?
Ross: Ay, and brought of the field. Your cause of sorrow
Must not be measured by his worth, for then
It hath no end.
Siward: Had he his hurts before?
Ross: Ay, on the front.
Siward: Why then God's soldier be he:
Had as I as many sons, as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death:
And so his knell is knoll'd.
Malcolm: He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.
Siward: He's worth no more,
They say he parted well, and paid his score,
And so God be with him. Here comes newer comfort.

(101- 115)

Which Dr. Mafize Choudhuri has translated:

ম্যাকবেথ:	রোমান যোদ্ধার মতো মরবোনা নিজের অসিতে নির্বধের মতো। জীবিত দেখছি শত্রুদের; অসির আঘাত তবে যোগ্যতর হবে ওদের বুকুই।
সিউয়ার্ড :	তাহলে সে মৃত?
রস:	প্রভু যুদ্ধ ক্ষেত্র থেকে তাঁকে আনা হল মৃত। আপনার শোকাবেগ যদি তাঁর যোগ্যতার পরিণামে হয়, তাহলে শোকের আর সমাপ্তি হবে না।
সিউয়ার্ড:	তার আঘাত কি সামনে বুকুর দিকেই ?
রস:	হ্যাঁ প্রভু, সামনে বুকুর দিকে।
সিউয়ার্ড:	বেশ, তাহলে সে ঈশ্বর এর প্রকৃত সৈনিক। আমার মাথায় যত চুল, ততজন পুত্র যদি হতো, কামনা হতো তবু এর চেয়ে মৃত্যু মহত্তর। মরণের ঘণ্টা বেজে গেলো তার!
ম্যাল:	গভীর শোকের যোগ্য তাঁর তিরোধান; যথা যোগ্য মূল্য দেব তার।
সিউয়ার্ড:	প্রয়োজন নেই তার। লোকে বলে, সে গেছে উত্তমরূপে জীবনের দেনা শোধ করে। মহান ঈশ্বর তাকে গ্রহন করুন। ওই দেখি আসে নব আনন্দ সংবাদ

(Choudhuri, p. 86)

And we see that so far Mafize Choudhuri has been very faithful to the main text as he tries to supply an equivalent semantic content for words found in the source text and to the meaning as well.

Now if we go through the translations along with the main text, we will see that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* in blank verse but his three witches' scenes are more lyrical

compared to his other scenes. In Syed Shamsul Haq's translation also, we see him to be more concerned about keeping a rhythm between the lines. But most interestingly in Dr. Mafize Choudhuri's translation we do not see his own translation rather he has used the translations of the three witches' scenes done by Rabindranath Tagore.

It can be mentioned here that in 1874 when Rabindranath Tagore was very young, his house tutor Gyan Chandra Bhattacharjee inspired him to translate *Macbeth* and he did that. Though the whole translation is not available today but the three witches' scenes were published in *Bharati* years ago in Kolkata.

As this paper is reviewing these two translations in the light of semantic and communicative translation, it shows that both Rabindranath Tagore and Syed Shamsul Haq have made a semantic translation of the three witches' scenes. But compared to Shamsul Haq, Rabindranath Tagore's one is less semantic and it tends to be communicative as he added a few extra lines or omitted few particular words that Shamsul Haq avoided. It is to be marked here that Rabindranath Tagore is famous for his rhymes and poems, which are unique and have a particular pattern, creating a different genre in Bengali literature. In the three witches' scenes Rabindranath Tagore also chose and arranged the words in a way, which sounds more rhythmic than that of Shamsul Haq. If we look at Scene 1 of Act 1 from the main text and compare it with the two translations, this will be clearer.

In the main text:

First Witch: When shall we thee meet again (a)

- In thunder, lightning, or in rain? (a)
 Second Witch: When the hurlyburly's done, (b)
 When the battle's lost and won. (c)
 Third Witch: That will be ere the set of sun. (b)
 First Witch: Where the place? (d)
 Second Witch: Upon the heath. (e)
 Third Witch: There to meet with Macbeth. (e)
 First Witch: I come, Graymalkin! (f)
 All: Paddock calls anon. (g)
 Fair is foul, and foul is fair: (h)
 Hover through the fog and filthy air. (h)

(1- 12)

Rabindranath Tagore's translation:

- প্রথম ডাকিনী: ঝড় বাদলে আবার কখন
 মিলব মোরা তিনটি জনে।
 দ্বিতীয় ডাকিনী: ঝগড়া ঝাটি থামবে যখন,
 হার জিত সব মিটেবে রণে।
 তৃতীয় ডাকিনী: সাঝের আগেই হবে সে ত,
 প্রথম ডাকিনী: মিলব কোথায় বলে দে ত ।
 দ্বিতীয় ডাকিনী: কাঁটা খোঁচা মাঠের মাঝ।
 তৃতীয় ডাকিনী: ম্যাক্কেত সেথা আসছে আজ।
 প্রথম ডাকিনী: কটা বেড়াল। যাচ্ছি ওরে।
 দ্বিতীয় ডাকিনী: ঐ বুঝি ব্যাং ডাকচে মোরে।
 তৃতীয় ডাকিনী: চল তবে ত্বরাকোরে।
 সকলে: মোদের কাছে ভালই মন্দ,
 মন্দ যাহা ভাল যে তাই,
 অন্ধকারে কুয়াসাতে
 ঘুরে ঘুরে বেড়াই।

(Choudhuri, p 15)

In Syed Shamsul Haq's translation:

- ১ম ডাকিনি: আবার কখন একসাথে হবো তিনজন?
বৃষ্টি, অথবা বজ্র ঝলক গর্জন?
- ২য় ডাকিনি: প্রবল তুমুল স্তব্ধ যখন সমুদয়,
যখন যুদ্ধে হয়ে যাবে জয় পরাজয়।
- ৩য় ডাকিনি: অর্থাৎ ঠিক সূর্যাস্তের আগে।
- ১ম ডাকিনি: এবং কোথায়?
- ২য় : প্রান্তরে।
- ৩য় : ম্যাকবেথ-
তাকে সাক্ষাৎ দেব সেই প্রান্তরে।
- ১ম : কালো সোনামনি এই তো এলাম।
- ২য় : ছাই মিশমিশে ডাক শুনলাম।
- ৩য় : এলাম, এলাম।
- সকলে : শুভ যা অশুভ, অশুভই শুভ।
কুয়াশা- ধোয়াশা- চললাম।

(Haq, P 104)

From these translations we see that, Rabindranath Tagore's rhymes between the lines are more consistent than Shamsul Haq's translation. Both of them have kept the mode and the meaning intact except few words. For example in the main text when the First Witch says, "I come, Graymalkin", Rabindranath Tagore's "কটা বেড়াল। যাচ্ছি ওরে" is more semantic than Shamsul Haq's "কালো সোনামনি এই তো এলাম" When Rabindranath Tagore is playing with the words, Shamsul Haq seems very direct and short. Last line of scene 1, where all the Witches are saying: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair: Hover through the fog and filthy air", Shamsul Haq makes it short while Rabindranath Tagore is more rhythmic. Rabindranath Tagore visualizes the whole atmosphere more elaborately than Shamsul

Haq. In reply to the third Witch in scene 1, when the second witch says, "Upon the heath", Shamsul Haq translates it in a word "প্রান্তরে"; where as Rabindranath Tagore is more expressive, "কাঁটা খোঁচা মাঠের মাঝ". Possibly Rabindranath Tagore concentrated more on creating rhymes between the lines besides keeping the meaning intact, that's why he sometimes added extra lines or omitted few particular words from the source text and made his translation a bit shorter. For example, in Scene 3 of Act 1 in reply to the Third Witch, the First Witch says:

First Witch: A sailor's wife had chestnuts in her lap,
And munch'd munch'd, and munch'd:
'Give me', quoth I:
'Aroint thee, witch!' the rump- fed ronyon cries.
Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o' th' *Tiger*:
But in sieve I'll thither sail,
And like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do. (4- 11)

Here Syed Shamsul Haq's translation seems more semantic than Rabindranath Tagore except words like *rump- fed ronyon*, even the "editors (sic) are not agreed whether 'rump- fed' means fed on the best, or on the scraps. Ronyon: scabby creature"(Penguin Popular Classics- *Macbeth* by Shakespeare, p. 109). We see both the translators picked different words and created the mood with a difference. The translation of 'Aroint thee, witch, the rump- fed ronyon cries' in scene 1:3:

পোড়ারমুখী বোলে রেগে

‘ডাকিনী মাগী যা’ তুই ভেগে!’

(Choudhuri, p 18)

তেড়ে ফুঁড়ে বেটি ধুমসি পাহাড়

বলে, ডুর হলি ডা’ন কোথাকার। আমাকে!

(Haq, p. 21)

Rabindranath Tagore didn’t mention the sailing, “Her husband’s to Aleppo gone, master o’ the tiger”; “আলাপোয় তার স্বামী গেছে”, whereas Shamsul Haq’s one is, “তার যে ভাতার, সারেং জাহাজে / সেই জাহাজের নাম ছিল টাইগার.” Rabindranath Tagore did omit a few words but as I have mentioned earlier that possibly he concentrated more on creating rhymes between the lines. We see that he even added extra lines to pull up the meaning more comprehensively from the source text into his translation and to have a consistent rhythm between the lines. If we compare the last few lines of the First Witch’s speech from this scene again, this will be more visible:

Act 1 Sc.3

*First. Witch: But in sieve
I’ll thither Sail,
And like a rat without a
tail,
I’ll do, I’ll do, and I’ll
do.*

(10- 12)

১ম: চালুনিতে চড়ে পিছু নেবো
তার,
যেমন ইদুর, লেজকাটা হয়, বোন।
আমি শোধ নেবো, শোধ নেবো
এর

[Haq. p. 21]

প্রথম ডাকিনী: বেড়ে একটা ইদুর হয়ে
চালুনিতে যাব বোয়ে-
যা বোলেছি কোরব আমি
কোরব আমি
নইক আমি এমন ময়ে!

(Choudhuri, 18)

(My under lining)

Here we see, in the end of the speech Rabindrnath Tagore adds another line “নইক আমি এমন ময়ে!” which is not there in the main text. But by adding this extra line the meaning or the mood has not been distanced from the source text, rather he reassures his readers about the statement made by the Witch. And his translation of “I’ll do, I’ll do, and I’ll do” is more semantic than that of Shamsul Haq’s, “আমি শোধ নেবো, শোধ নেবো এর”. But this transformation of the words brings out the same mood that Tagore brings when he adds the extra line, but Shamsul Haq does it within the lines. At this point, after a short while, when the Third Witch hears a drum just before Macbeth enters in the scene, there is a speech by all the three witches:

All: The wired sisters, hand in hand,
Posters of the sea and land,
Thus do go about, about:
Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
And thrice again, to make up nine.
Peace! the charm’s wound up. (34- 39)

This little segment is not there in Dr. Mafize Choudhuri’s translation. And after this in this particular scene, when Macbeth enters and starts talking to the witches, we find Dr. Mafize Choudhuri’s own translation. And we see, both of them tried to supply an equivalent semantic content for words except the word *Thane* found in the source text.

For example: -

Act 1; Scene 3

First Witch: All hail,
Macbeth! Hail to thee,
Thane of Glamis!
Second Witch: All hail,
Macbeth! Hail to thee,
Thane of Cawdor!
Third Witch: All hail,
Macbeth! That shalt be
king hereafter. (51-57)
[.....]

First Witch: Lesser than
Macbeth, and greater.
Second Witch: Not so
happy, yet much happier
Third Witch: Thou shalt
get kings, though thou be
done: so all hail Macbeth
and Banquo! (72- 76)

১ম: জয়, সর্বজয়, ম্যাকবেথ, হে
প্রধান গ্ল্যামিসের তুমি।
২য়: জয়, সর্বজয়, ম্যাকবেথ, হে
প্রধান কডোরের তুমি।
৩য়: জয়, সর্বজয়, ম্যাকবেথ,
অতঃপর যিনি রাজা, জয়।

[.....]

১ম: ম্যাকবেথ থেকে তুলনায় কম,
তুলনায় আরো বেশি।
২য়: অত খুশি নয়, যত খুশি তবে
তুলনায় আরো খুশি।
৩য়: তোমার বংশ রাজার
বংশ, নিজে তুমি নও রাজা।
অতএব জয়, জয় হোক, জয়
ম্যাকবেথ, জয় ব্যাস্কো

(Haq, p.23)

প্রথম ডাকিনী: জয়
ম্যাকবেথের জয়! জয়,
গ্ল্যামিসের থেন!
দ্বিতীয় ডাকিনী: জয়
ম্যাকবেথের জয়! জয়
কডোরের থেন!
তৃতীয় ডাকিনী: জয়
ম্যাকবেথের জয়! জয় ভাবি
রাজার জয়!
[.....]

প্র: ডা: ম্যাকবেথ থেকে ছোট,
তবে তাঁর চেয়ে বড়।
দ্বি: ডা: সুখী নয় তত, তবে
আরো বেশি সুখী।
তৃ: ডা: যদিও হবেন রাজ-
বংশের জনক,
কিন্তু রাজা হবেন না নিজে।
স্বাগত হে ম্যাকবেথ, স্বাগত হে
ব্যাস্কো!

(Choudhuri, p 19, 20)

Here we see that, both the translators Syed Sahmsul Haq and Mafize Choudhuri are very faithful to the source text, as they have made mostly a word-to-word translation. In the first segment, though Dr. Mafize Choudhuri keeps the word “Thane” in his translation, which Shamsul Haq translated as “প্রধান”, but this time his translation seems much more narrative and less rhythmic than Rabindranath Tagore. Mafize Choudhuri in his

translation used a few English terms and sometimes he also used quotations from the source text as well. For example, in Scene 2 of Act 2 when Macbeth enters after killing the King and says to Lady Macbeth:

Macbeth: There's one did laugh in's sleep,

And one cried Murder That they did wake each other:

I stood and heard them; but they did say their prayers,

And address'd them again to sleep

Lady Mac: There are two lodg'd together.

Mac: One cried God bless us, and Amen the other,

As they had seen me with these hangman's hands:

Listening their fear, I could not say Amen,

When they did say God bless us.

ম্যাকবেথ: একজন ঘুমঘোরে হেসে উঠেছিল,
আর একজন 'হত্যা বলে করলো চিৎকার;
দুজনেই উঠেছিল, তারপর জেগে;
দাড়িয়ে তাদের কথা শুনলাম,
তারা দোয়া টোয়া পড়ে,
আবার ঘুমের ঘোরে ঢলে পড়েছিল।
লেডী ম্যাকবেথ: দুজনেই শুয়ে আছে
একই বিছানায়।
ম্যাকবেথ: 'গড ব্রেস আস'।-বলে উঠলো
একজন,
আর জন বললো 'আমেন',
ওরা যেন দেখছিলো আমার এ জল্পাদের
হাত।
ওদের এমন ভয় দেখে আমি, 'আমেন'
ও বলতে পারি নি!
যখন বললো তারা, 'গড ব্রেস আস'।

ম্যাকবেথ: ঘুমের ভেতর একজন
হেসে উঠে, অন্যজন হঠাৎ চোঁচিয়ে উঠে, 'হত্যা'-
দুজনের কণ্ঠস্বরে দুজনের ঘুম ভাঙে। আমি
স্তব্ধ হয়ে দাঁড়িলাম, শুনলাম, শুনতে পেলাম-
দুজনেই ইস্টনাম স্বরণ করল, তারপর
ঘুমিয়ে পড়লো।
লেডী ম্যাকবেথ: দুজনেই একত্রে আছে, একঘরে।
ম্যাকবেথ: একজন আত্মস্বরে বলল, 'ঈশ্বর রক্ষা
করো'-
'তাই হোক', বললো আর এক জন,যেনো দুজনেই
জল্পাদের হাত দেখে ফেলেছিলো তখন আমার।
তাদের ভয়ানক স্বর- 'হে ঈশ্বর রক্ষা করো'। শুনে
উত্তরে আমার কণ্ঠ থেকে বেরলো না, 'তাই হোক'।

(Choudhuri, p. 34)

[My underlining]

(Haq p. 42)

Dr. Mafize Choudhuri in his translation used few words frequently from the source text. In this part very interestingly we notice that Dr. Mafize Choudhuri quotes, “God bless us” and “Amen” in his translation and here his translation seems more narrative than Syed Shamsul Haq. Even Mafize Choudhuri’s use of words like, “তারা দোয়া টোয়া পড়ে, আবার ঘুমের ঘোরে ঢলে পড়েছিল,” is more colloquial than Syed Shamsul Haq’s one, “দুজনেই ইস্টনাম স্বরণ করল, তারপর ঘুমিয়ে পড়লো,” we see that here he used a particular word “ইস্টনাম.” There are few foreign words, classical allusions which Mafize Choudhuri used in his translation very frankly from the source text, and thereby to some extent his translation seems more colloquial and informal than Syed Shamsul Haq’s one, who sometimes omitted or preferred other synonyms for those words like;

In Act: 1, Sc: 2 (Foreign word):

Duncan: [.....] go get him surgeons. (50), // ডানকান: যাও একে নিয়ে যাও চিকিৎসার জন্য (Haq, p 19), ডানকান:: একে নিয়ে যাও সার্জনের কাছে। (Choudhuri, p 17), [My underlining].

In Act: 1, Sc: 2 (Classical allusions):

Ross: [.....] The Thane of Cawdor, began a dismal conflict/ Till that Bellona’s bridegroom, lapp’d in proof, / Confronted him with self-comparisons (63- 64), [.....] রস: অর্থাৎ কডোর প্রধানের/ সমর্থনপুষ্ট হয়ে সুবিশাল; সৈন্যদল সহ/ রণ ক্ষেত্রে ঝাপিয়ে পড়েন- তারপর অচিরেই/ রণদেবী বরধন্য বীরবর অসিচর্ম পরে/ (Haq, p 19), // রস: বেলোনার বর, ম্যাকবেথ, ভূর্ভেদ্য বর্মে দেহ ঢেকে / সম্মুখীন হলো তার সমান বিক্রমে (Choudhuri, p 17) [My underlining].

In Act: 2, Sc: 3 (Classical allusions):

Macduff: Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight / With a new Gorgon.

[*Macbeth*, Shakespeare, P. 51], // ম্যাকডাফ: দৃষ্টিনাশ করে দেবে- যেন সেই রাক্ষসীর মতো /

যার দিকে তাকালেই মানুষ পাথর। (Haq, p 27), ম্যাকডাফ: ঘরে গিয়ে দেখো। নতুন গর্গন মূর্তি / দেখে

অন্ধ হও [.....] (Choudhuri, p 38). [My underlining]

In Act: 1, Sc: 3 (Name of persons):

Macbeth: [.....] By Sinel's death, I know I am Thane of Glamis (85- 86) // ম্যাক:

গ্লামিসের প্রধান যে আমি, মৃত পিতার শপথ (Haq, p 23) // ম্যাক: জানি সাইনেল মৃত, তাই আমি গ্লামিসের

থেন (Choudhuri, p 20). [My underlining]

In Act: 1, Sc: 6 (Foreign word):

Banquo: This guest of summer/ The temple- haunting martlet does approve (6- 7)

// ব্যাংকো: এখানে যে নন্দনের নিঃশ্বাস সুবাস বহে যায়/ জানে সেটা বসন্তের পাখি, তাই এখানে সে আসে/

বাসা বাধে, এ দুর্গের কর্নিশে অলিন্দে (Haq, p 33) // ব্যাংকো: এই মর্টলেড পাখি, গ্রীষ্মের অতিথি/ গির্জা-

দালান বিহারী [.....] (Choudhuri, p 27). [My underlining]

In Act: 2, Sc: 2 (Foreign word):

Lady Macbeth: [.....] Get your nightgown, lest occasion call us, (95) // লেডী ম্যাক:

পরে নাও রাতের পোশাক; যদি কেউ এসে যায় (Haq, p.44), // লেডী ম্যাক: নাইট গাউন পরো; যদি

প্রয়োজন হয়, যদি কেউ ডাকে (Choudhuri, p 35). [My underlining]

In Act: 4, Sc: 3 (Foreign word):

Macduff: The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace? (213), // ম্যাকডাফ: সেই

ঘোর স্বৈরাচারী শাস্তিনাশ করে নি তাদের? (Haq, p 88), // ম্যাকডাফ: টাইরান্ট কি অশান্তি করে নি

তাদের? (Choudhuri, p 72). [My underlining]

In Act: 5, Sc: 3 (Foreign word):

Macbeth: Bring me no reports [.... ..] (2), // ম্যাকবেথ: আর সংবাদ এনো না (Haq, p 95),

// ম্যাকবেথ: এসব রিপোর্ট আর এনো না এখানে [.....] (Choudhuri, p 77). [My underlining]

Here we see that M. Choudhuri used few foreign words and he also brings the classical allusions in his translation from the main text; “বেলোনা” according to Roman mythology who is the Goddess of War and “গর্গন”, who is the snake-headed monster, so terrible to look upon that a glance turned the beholder to stone according to Greek mythology. But Syed Shamsul Haq avoided such reference from the main text in his translation. Besides these, M. Choudhuri used words like “আল্লাহ”, “ফেরেস্টা”, “আজ্জাইল”, “কেয়ামত”, “তকলিফ” in his translation as well. And these Arabic words that we always use in our daily life conversations in Bangladesh, attains an impression that M. Choudhuri kept in mind that, he is translating the tragedy for a large audience who are Muslims and who are culturally very used to using such words in their daily lives. And thereby, to some extent his translation is likely to be a little more communicative than Syed Shamsul Haq’s translation, whom we always find being very selective in terms of using poetic words that possess a little more intensity and sound more lyrical than M. Choudhuri. For example in Scene 1, Act 3, when Macbeth is talking to the two murderers regarding Banquo’s presence in his life:

Macbeth: So is he mine: and in such bloody distance,

That every minute of his being thursts

Against my near’st of life: [.....] (142- 144)

ম্যাকবেথ: আমারও ত শত্রু সে। খারা হয়ে বুকে
যেনো।

সদ্য আজ্ঞাইল! ব্যাঙ্কো বেঁচে আছে যতক্ষণ
প্রাণের গভীর কেন্দ্র বিদ্ধ হয়ে প্রতিটি মুহূর্তে!

(Choudhuri, p 45) [My underlining]

ম্যাকবেথ: এবং আমারো বটে । এত রক্তপণ এ
শত্রুতা
যে প্রতি মুহূর্তে তার উপস্থিতি বিদ্ধ করে যেন
আমার পশ্জর।

(Haq, p 59)

As this paper is studying the transformations of the tragedy in the light of semantic and communicative translation, apart from these differences, these two versions of the tragedy mainly come under the form of a semantic translation rather than communicative. Communicative translation, which concentrates more or less on attaining an equivalence to a 'cultural adaptation' of the source text. In these two translations I didn't come across any such illustrations. If we go through a few famous speeches in *Macbeth* made by Lady Macbeth and Macbeth himself, we will see both the translators are different in their presentation but the translations are very faithful to the words and meaning of the source text.

For example,

Lady Macbeth: What beast was't then

That made you break this enterprise to me?

And to be more than what you were a man:

And to be more than what you were, you would

Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place

Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:

They have made themselves, and that their fitness now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have plucke'd my nipple from his boneless gums'

And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn

As you have done to this.

(Act.1, Sc. 7, L 58- 70)

লডি ম্যাকবেথ: তবে সেই পশুটি কে ছিল যে
তোমাকে পরোচনা
দিয়েছিল আমাকে জানাতে এই পরিকল্পনার
কথা? ধরেছিলে যখন সাহস, তখন পুরুষ
ছিলে, আর তুমি ততধিক পুরুষ নিশ্চয় হবে
যে- অধিক অতিক্রম করবে নিজেকে। স্থান-কাল
অনুকূল- তুমি দেখে ভীত ।
স্তন্যদান শিশু কী সুন্দর হ, স্নেহ কতখানি হয়,
তবু
সেই আমি সেই শিশুকেই দন্তহীন মাড়ি থেকে
স্তনবৃত্ত সবলে ছাড়িয়ে নিয়ে আছাড় দিতাম,
চূর্ণ করে দিতাম করোটি, যদি, আমি একবার
তোমার মতন কোনো প্রতিজ্ঞার পরে তা
ভাঙতাম ।

(Haq, p 29)

লেডী ম্যাকবেথ: তা হলে কি পশু ছিলে যখন
বলেছ
তোমার এ অভিসন্ধি আমার নিকটে। এই কাজে
যখন সাহসী ছিলে পুরুষই ছিলে সত্যিকার।
যদি হও আরো বেশি, মহত্তর পৌরুষের হবে
অধিকারী।
স্থান কাল অনুকূলে ছিলো না তখন ; তবু
রাজী ছিলে,
এ দুয়ের প্রতিকূলে । এখন দুটোই যদি তোমার
সপক্ষে,
তাদের প্রভুতি দেখে তুমি হতোদ্যম ।
আমিও দিয়েছি স্তন্য,
দিতে জানি ভালবাসা কোমল মধুর দুধের শিশুকে;
তবু প্রতিজ্ঞা করি যদি, তুমি করেছ যেমন,
আমার মুখের দিকের চেয়ে থাকা সহাস্য শিশুকে
তার দন্তহীন মাড়ী হতে স্তনাগ্র ছাড়ায়ে
আছড়ে মাথার ঘিলু ছড়িয়ে দিতাম ।

(Choudhuri, p 36)

Again, another famous speech by Macbeth from Act 5, Sc. 5, when he hears about Lady Macbeth's death and says-

Macbeth: She should have died hereafter:
 There would have been a time for such a word:
 To-morrow, 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.

ম্যাকবেথ: অন্য একদিন তার মৃত্যু হলে
 সময় সংগত হতো- কথাটি মানাতো ।
 ‘আজিকার পরে কাল, তার পরে কাল, আর
 কাল’-
 সময় গড়ায়ে চলে শব্দক গতিতে দিন হতে দিনে,
 ‘লিপিবদ্ধ সময়ের শেষ আক্ষর অবধি ।’
 অতীতের দিনগুলো পথ দেখিয়েছে মূর্খদের শুধু
 মাটির কবরে । নিভে যা, নিভে যা, ওরে মাটির
 প্রদীপ,-
 চলমান ছায়ামাত্র মানব জীবন; অপটু নায়ক এক
 লক্ষ্য বাম্প করে শুধু রঙ্গমঞ্চে আপনার ক্ষুদ্র
 আয়ুকালে
 তারপর সাড়াশব্দ নেই : এক অলীক কাহিনী,
 নির্বেধের মুখে শোনা, উচ্চকণ্ঠ

ম্যাকবেথ: তার মৃত্যু অন্য কোনো কালে হয় হতো ।
 তেমন সময় যদি হতো এই উচ্চারণ যাতে ।
 সমুখের দিনে পরে দিন পরে দিন, পায়ে পায়ে
 বড় দীন মিছিলের অগ্রসর দিন থেকে দিনে
 বহমান সময়ের শেষ বিন্দু বিপলের দিকে;
 আর আমাদের পেছনের দিনগুলো আলো ধোরে
 ধূসর মৃত্যুর দিকে বোকাদের পথ দেখিয়েছে ।
 যাও, নিভে যাও, নিভু নিভু দীপ, জীবন নিতান্ত
 এক চলমান ছায়া, হতবাগ্য এক অভিনেতা
 রঙ্গমঞ্চে কিছুকাল লাফায় ঝাপায়, তারপর
 আর শোনা যায় না সংবাদ। এ হলো কাহিনী

দস্তভরা, - তাৎপর্যবিহীন ।

(Choudhuri, p. 81)

এক নিবর্ধ কথিত, অলঙ্কারে অনুপ্রাসে ঠাসা

ইতি তাৎপর্যবিহীন।

(Haq, p100)

From the very beginning it has already been told that Mafize Choudhuri is little more narrative than Syed Shamsul Haq, who has made his translation shorter. But from these two segments, we see that both the translators are very faithful to the main source. And we also see that, M. Choudhuri's one is more narrative than S. Shamsul Haq's one, which didn't translate a few words but has kept the mood and the meaning of the source text intact.

CHAPTER 3

Translation of Othello in Bangladesh: A Study

In this chapter, translation of Shakespeare's *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury will be discussed which was published in January, 1981 and staged in Mahila Samiti in September 1981 by Theatre, one of the leading theatre groups in Bangladesh, directed by Abdullah Al Mamun. But even before this publication, we find that *Othello* was translated into Bangla, titled *ভীম সিংহ* (Bhim Shingho) by Tarinicharan Pal way back in 1875. But this was a communicative (ভাবানুবাদ) translation of *Othello* rather than semantic. All the characters were portrayed under a Bengali frame with Bengali names and culture. After twenty years of this translation, Kaliprashanya Chatterjee again translated *Othello* into Bangla in 1894. It is told that Kaliprashanya Chatterjee also changes the names of the characters in his translation and places the whole play in a Bengali context. But unlike Tarinicharan Pal, Kaliprashanya Chatterjee tried to be faithful to the source text. Again in 1905 we got another translation by Nanilal Banerjee Rudrasen and in 1919 by Debendranath Basu.

Now coming back to Bangladesh, in 1970 when Munier Chowdhury, who was the founding father of modern Bengali drama in Bangladesh published *মুখরা রমণী বশীকরণ*, the translation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of The Shrew*, it was such a great success that he was greatly encouraged to translate another Shakespearean tragedy, *Othello*. One thing can be mentioned here that one of his short plays *Ektala-Dotala* has made the mark of being the first ever Bengali drama telecast on TV in 1965.

Munier Chowdhury, who started translating *Othello* but unfortunately he was kidnapped and is believed to have been brutally killed by the notorious collaborators of the Pakistani occupation forces in 1971, could not translate the whole play and it remained incomplete. He had translated *Othello* up to 359 lines of Scene 3 of Act 3 and it was also published in *Theatre*, a magazine on theatre and its activities around Bangladesh, in 1972. Subsequently Ramendu Majumdar, the editor of *Theatre* and one of the renowned artists in the field of theatre in Bangladesh, requested Prof. Kabir Chowdhury to complete the partly translated *Othello*, which Kabir Chowdhury accomplished and received an immense response from the readers resulting in bringing up its second, third and fourth edition in 1984, 1990 and 1995 respectively. Talking to Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, he said that when Ramendu Majumdar asked him to complete the translation he was very sure that translating Shakespeare was never an easy task for him and he delayed translating the play thereby. But in the end he decided to take up the task of completing the translation of *Othello*. He did so for three reasons. Firstly, he says, to complete the text, secondly to grab the chance of placing his name beside Munier Chowdhury and thirdly, in this process paying a tribute to such a legend as Munier Chowdhury, who laid the path for others to translate Shakespeare.

To begin with, the configuration of *Othello* by Shakespeare is such that, it is a five Act play with fifteen scenes altogether, and it has been maintained chronologically all through the translation unlike Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Chaudhury, who divide a scene into more scenes in their translations of *Macbeth*.

The translation of *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury is different than that of Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury in terms of its writing style. Munier Chowdhury, who inspired and made a platform for the other translators in Bangladesh by translating his *Taming of the Shrew*, telecasted on Bangladesh Television as a TV serial on 26th September 1969, got immense popularity from the audience. He translated the play in prose rather than following the particular form that Shakespeare maintained, the blank verse. And again here in *Othello*, he started translating the play in the same manner, not rhythmical rather a narrative (prose) way unlike Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury's style in *Macbeth*, who kept the blank verse approach in their translations. For example, if we take a look at a segment from the translations of *Macbeth* by Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury side by side with *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury, the difference of their writing style of their translations are very obvious. For example in Scene 1, Act 3 of *Macbeth*, when Macbeth is talking to the two murderers regarding Banquo's presence in his life,

Macbeth: So is he mine: and in such bloody distance,

That every minute of his being thursts

Against my near'st of life (142- 144)

ম্যাকবেথ: আমারও ত শত্রু সে। খারা হয়ে বুকে
যেনো।

সদ্য আজ্জাইল! ব্যাঙ্কো বেঁচে আছে যতক্ষণ
পাণের গভীর কেন্দ্র বিদ্ধ হয়ে প্রতিটি মুহূর্তে!

(M. Choudhuri, p. 45)

ম্যাকবেথ: এবং আমরা বটে। এত রক্তপণ এ
শত্রুতা

যে প্রতি মুহূর্তে তার উপস্থিতি বিদ্ধ করে যেন
আমার পঙ্জর।

(S. Shamsul Haq, p.59)

And here a bit from the translation of *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury, the very first speech by Roderigo in Scene 1 of Act 1;

Roderigo: Thus! Never tell me; I take it
much unkindly
That thou, Iago, who hast had my purse
As if the strings were thine, shouldst know
Of this. (1-5)

রোডেরিগো : থাক । আপনার আর কোনো কথা
শুনতে চাইনা । যখন যেমন চেয়েছেন আপনাকে
অকাতরে আমার টাকা খরচ করতে দিয়েছি। আর
এত বড় একটা কথা জানা সত্ত্বেও আপনি আমার
কাছে তা প্রকাশ করেন নি ?

(Chowdhury. p 35)

Here we see that Munier Chowdhury didn't maintain any rhythm in his translation and he is very narrative and later Kabir Chowdhury also had to continue with the same style that differs from the manner we notice in Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury's translation of *Macbeth*. In *Macbeth*, both the translators were very keen to translate the play semantically but in *Othello* Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury seemed to be very keen to convey the meaning and the mode of the source text besides translating semantically and as Munier Chowdhury chose a narrative form to elaborate the meaning of the source text. Most of the time he has arranged the words in his translation in a way that comes up with a different look but with the same meaning and mode that the source text contains which the earlier example given here from Scene 1 of Act 1 of *Othello* illustrates so. The intensity of the meaning of every line of the source text in his translation elaborates, sometimes by adding few extra words or by using different phrases in place of exact words from the source text, and it makes the translation more readable. For example in Scene 1 of Act 2, when Iago is misrepresenting the relationship between

Desdemona and Cassio to Roderigo which Roderigo even doesn't want to believe, then Iago replies;

Iago: Blessed fig's end! the wine she drinks is made of grapes; if she had been blessed she would never have loved the Moor; blessed pudding! Didst thou not see her paddle with the palm of his hand? didst not mark that?

ইয়াগো : পবিত্র মন না ডুমুরের ফুল । কেন, যে পানীয় ও পান করে সেটা আঙ্গুরের রস থেকে তৈরি হয় না? যদি অত পবিত্র ও বিশুদ্ধই হবে তবে ঐ মুরকে ভালবাসতে যাবে কেন? পবিত্র না পবিত্রতার পিটুলি। কি করে ক্যাসিওর হাত চটকাচ্ছিল লক্ষ্য করেননি ?

(315- 319)

(Chowdhury, p 61)

Again, in Scene 3 of Act 2, when Cassio is asking Iago to be with him to have a walk through the city;

"Cassio: Welcome, Iago; we must to the watch." (19) // "ক্যাসিও : এই যে ইয়াগো । আপনি এসে পড়েছেন ভালোই হয়েছে । চলুন একবার নাগররক্ষীদের তদারক করে আসি ।" [My underlining]

(Chowdhury, p.65)

In the same scene, when Cassio was drunk and claiming not to be, others are replying;

"All: Excellent well." (132) // "সবাই : খাসা ! অতি যথার্থ বলেছেন।" [My underlining]

(Chowdhury, p.65)

And just after this when Cassio exits, Iago says to others:

"Iago: You see this fellow that is gone before; / He is a soldier fit to stand by Caesar/ And give direction [.....]" (137- 139) // "ইয়াগো : যিনি একটু আগে নিযুক্ত হলে, সবাই তাকে ভালো করে লক্ষ্য করেছেন নিশ্চই । মস্ত বড় সৈনিক । সীজারের পাশে দাড়িয়ে ইনি সীজারকে পর্যন্ত পরিচালনা করার ক্ষমতা রাখেন [.....]." [My underlining]

(Chowdhury, p 68)

In Scene 3 of Act 3, when Iago argues Othello not to suspect Desdemona after making him puzzled about the relationship between Desdemona and Cassio, Othello says; “Fear not my government” (315) // “নিশ্চিন্ত থাক / চিন্ত সংযমে আমি সম্পূর্ণরূপে অভ্যস্ত” / and Iago replies, “I once more take my leave” (316) // “তাহলে আমি যথার্থই বিদায় নিচ্ছি”

(Chowdhury, p 88)

From these examples we detect that Munier Chowdhury had a tendency to explain the lines a little more within the given space, by arranging and adding few words deliberately like- “আপনি এসে পড়েছেন ভালোই হয়েছে” // “অতি যথার্থ বলেছেন” // “সবাই তাকে ভালো করে লক্ষ্য করেছেন নিশ্চই” // “চিন্ত সংযমে আমি সম্পূর্ণরূপে অভ্যস্ত” in his translation. This made his translation simpler and clearer, which neither changes the meaning nor goes against the mode of the source text but brings the meaning to a level, and makes it very readable. More over, the song sung by Iago in Scene 3 of Act 2, is translated as:

And let me the canakin clink, clink;

And let me the canakin clink:

A soldier's a man;

A life's but a span;

Why then let a soldier drink.

(82- 86)

পেয়ালাতে পেয়ালাতে টুংটাং সুরতান

বাজে তান টুংটাং কত সুর কত গান।

সেনানীর জীবনের কিবা দাম কিবা মান

আজ আছে কাল নাই ভেঙে হয় খান খান।

ওরে ভাই আরও ঢাল, প্রাণভরে করি পান

করি গান , করি পান, প্রাণভরে করি পান।

ঢাল আরও !

[My underlining]

(Chowdhury, p 67)

This shows how he went through the lines in detail and explains one step more than that of the source text. The five lined song that Munier Chowdhury wrote by adding two more

lines translated into seven lines keeping a rhythm, he made it livelier despite retaining the essence of the original.

On the other hand Kabir Chowdhury, who translated *Othello* from the line 360 of Scene 3 of Act 3, had to keep the same pace, approach and mode in order to supply the same flavor that Munier Chowdhury kept in his translation. But, talking to Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, he says that he would have tried to translate *Othello* in the same manner that Munier Chowdhury applied if he was translating the play from the very beginning. He because he thinks that every translator takes up his or her own style of translating any foreign text of different languages and in case of translating Shakespeare he prefers the manner, Munier Chowdhury applied. But as Kabir Chowdhury completed an incomplete construction of *Othello* in Bangla, naturally he tried to be as closer to the Munier Chowdhury's translation but he is a different personality with his own way, which is reflected in his translation as well, when his way of translating Shakespeare, comes up with a slight difference than Munier Chowdhury. For example, Munier Chowdhury used very simple words and his arrangement of words seems very easy going, like conversation from daily life while in Kabir Chowdhury's translation, we note a tendency to use formal (hard) words that give his use of language a more elevated status. For example, when Iago tells Othello about the handkerchief with Cassio, Othello gets very upset and says:

Othello: O! that the slave had forty
thousand lives;
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge
Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago ;
All my fond love thus do I blow to
heaven:
't is gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow
hell!
Yield up, O love! Thy crown and hearted
throne
To tyrannous hate. Swell, bosom, with
thy fraught,
For 't is of aspics' tongues!

(Sc.4, Act. 3, L 543- 551)

ওথেলো : ওহ, কী করব আমি। ও যদি চল্লিশ সহস্র
প্রাণের অধিকারী হত! একটি প্রাণ নিশ্চিত করে
আমার প্রতিশোধের তৃপ্তি হবে না। এখন আমি স্পষ্ট
দেখতে পাচ্ছি যে সব সত্য। ইয়াগো, এই দেখ, আমার
সমস্ত ভালোবাসা এক ফুৎকারে আমি উড়িয়ে দিলাম।
এই, সব নিঃশেষ হয়ে গেল। এবার নরককুন্ড থেকে
জেগে ওঠ নির্মম প্রতিশোধ- বহি। প্রেম - ভালোবাসার
জয়কিরীট আর স্নিগ্ধ সিংহাসনের স্থানে এবার আধিষ্ঠত
হও নির্মম ঘৃণা। বিস্ময়িত হও বন্ধু,
সপজিহ্নার বিষাক্ত তাড়নায়।

[My underlining]

[Chowdhury, p 93]

Again a couple of segments from Scene 1 of Act 4, when Othello raised his hand to Desdemona and Lodovico asks Othello to "Make her amends, she weeps" (308) // "কাদছেন উনি, এর প্রতিবিধান করুন" (Chowdhury, p 107) and after that when Desdemona says to Othello- "I will not stay to offend you" (313) // "আপনার বিরক্তি উৎপাদন করব না, যাই" ((Chowdhury, p 108). [My underlynig]

Here we see that, Kabir Chowdhury's translation is very semantic but his selection of picking up the words for translation like- "ফুৎকার", "নরককুন্ড", "বহি", "জয়কিরীট", "বন্ধু", "সপজিহ্না", "প্রতিবিধান", "উৎপাদন" puts a mark against Munier Chowdhury's way of translation, who chose very simple words which are easy to understand and we normally use those in our daily life.

Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury both of them have done a semantic translation of *Othello* with no sign of being communicative. But the art to break the words within the

words in Munier Chowdhury's translation is remarkable, showing his brilliance of reading between the lines, which differs from the style of Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Chowdhury. Munier Chowdhury's translation is narrative and he has narrated the source text in his translation within the space that Shakespeare created in his play. Kabir Chowdhury who has very successfully translated the rest of the play despite the differences that he made in terms of selecting words and phrases which can hardly be detected as a difference, can be considered as a liberty that a translator usually takes while translating any text from different language as Kabir Choudhury thinks. He says that such liberty taken by a translator, like omitting or adding few extra words or explaining the mode or meaning of the source text in a different way is no harm, if it brings more clarity into the translation.

CHAPTER 4

Shakespearean Theatre in Bangladesh: An Overview

Though Lebedeff, a Russian intellectual founded the first Bangla theatre by establishing the *Bengali Theatre* in 1795 at Dharmtolla (at present Ezra Street) in Kolkata, the background of theatre movement in Bangladesh started just after the Liberation War in Bangladesh from 1972-73.

Lebedeff staged a drama in Bangla translation called *Kalpanik Sangbadal* on 27 November 1795 and his success inspired Bengalis to build a number of theatres in Kolkata in the nineteenth century. These include *Hindu Theatre* (1831), *Oriental Theatre* (1853), *Jorasanko Natyashala* (1854), and *Bidyotsahini Mancha* (1857). And with the same spirit a few theatre were also established in Dhaka towards the end of the nineteenth century; like *Purbabanga Rangabhumi* (1865), *Crown Theatre Stage* (between 1890 and 1892) and *Diamond Jubilee Theatre* (1897). At this time a theatre called *Jagaddhatri Natyamancha* was built in Munshiganj town. This theatre exists even today. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, quite a few theatres were established outside Dhaka. These include *Edward Theatre*, *Khulna Theatre* (1905), *Coronation Dramatic Club*, (Tangail, 1911). At this period the zamindars of Santosh, Elenga, Shibpur, Aloa and Karatia in Tangail established a number of theatres. After the partition of India in 1947 another one was established by the name of *Mahbub Ali Institute* in Dhaka. It is a permanent theatrical hall established in 1950 in old Dhaka. It began working in 1951 by staging Sharat Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Vijaya*. Besides, The Central Students Union of

Dhaka University staged Bijan Bhattacharya's play *Jabanbandi* here. In 1952 Sikander Abu Zafar's historical play *Sirajuddaula*, The Doctors' Club of Dhaka Medical College's *Manmayi Girls School* and the college's students union performed Tarashankar Bandyopadhyaya's *Dipantar* in this place. Bidhayak Bhattacharya's *Matir Ghar* was also staged by 'Agradoot Natyasangha' here. But after that till the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 there were hardly any major signs of any theatrical activities. Moreover, the state of the theatre in Bangladesh (East Pakistan) during that period was much unformed and scattered, quoting from আবদুল্লাহ আল- মামুন : ফিরে দেখা (*Abdullah Al Mamun: Phirey Dekha*), where Abdullah Al Mamun says, “যতদূর জানা যায়, সে সময়ে ভারতীয় নাট্যকারদের নাটকই ছিটেফোটা অভিনীত হয়েছে। বাঙালি নাট্যকাররা তখনও ঠিক সামলে উঠতে পারেনি।” [As far as it is known, that at that time only a few Indian plays were staged in Bangladesh, when the local dramatists were still struggling here. *Abdullah Al Mamun: Phirey Dekha*, p.105]

But despite all the obstacles that the theatre activists faced, during the Pakistani misrule over Bangladesh, when they wanted to sabotage our culture, language by declaring of 'Urdu' as the State language of Pakistan in 1948 in Dhaka, trying to ban Rabindra Sangeet and Pahela Bayshakhi festival, we remember with gratitude the contribution of playwrights like Nurul Momen, Sayeed Ahmed, Anis Chowdhury, Showkat Osman and Munier Chowdhury, which was priceless and noteworthy. They produced many plays, full of social concern, demanding the need for the enhancement of human rights knowledge in their writings. And they set the platform whereupon the group theater in the independent Bangladesh started its journey, to create a new arena of cultivation of modern drama keeping pace with the contemporary modern theatre world.

Staging plays with a single character within only a scene is always challenging and appreciated all over the world and Nurul Momen was the pioneer in the field of Bangladeshi theatre who brought and introduced such style even before the independence of Bangladesh by staging his *Nemesis*. He was one of the very well known hard working personalities among the theatre activists whose attempt to modernize the theatre here is beyond compare. His other remarkable plays are- *Rupantor*, *Jadi Emon Hoto*, *Alo Chaya*, *Naya Khandan*, *Aainer Antorale* etc, which were written mainly in a satirical way, where he had hardly left any chance to mock the uneven socio- economic sphere in which the general people are living. On the other hand Munier Chowdhury's writings and his plays were adding a new wave in the process of gearing up against Pakistani incursion besides enriching the path to develop our theatre. The way modern progressive attitude and social awareness was shown in his plays, matched with the contemporary issues and the reflection of history he brought, through short and simple dialogues in his plays like- *Kabar*, *Chithi*, *Dando*, *Dandodhar*, *Manush* and *Marmantik*. Till now 'Munier Chowdhury is considered to be a guide for the theatre activists in the post- independent Bangladesh. Beside them, at the same time Sayeed Ahmed and Anis Chowdhury also played an important role by producing abstract plays where they were very keen to uphold the despondent state of the middle class family on the stage. Especially Sayeed Chowdhury's abstract style of presenting his thoughts in his plays like *Kalbela*, *Milepost*, *Trishnay* became more popular abroad than here.

It has already been said that the background of theatre movement in Bangladesh started just after the Liberation War in Bangladesh and theatre activists like Nurul Momen, Saied

Ahmed, Anis Chowdhury, Munier Chowdhury, along with a few other playwrights and stage performers, who went to India during the war and came in touch with the theatre activities in Kolkata. They were inspired and were acquainted with the modern flavors of theatre activities there which they had had hardly any chance to apply or practice or to construct a professional atmosphere here compared to what they saw and experienced there. And it was because of the limitations imposed by the overruling Pakistani Government who never showed respect towards our own culture and customs, which bear our own identity. But all of a sudden the whole scenario started changing rapidly after we got independent in 1971. The theatre activists got an immense opportunity to create a space for freely practicing theatre activities by applying all the experiences and resources that they had, with a view to keep pace with the modern world theatre. In this context, quoting Abdullah Al Mamun from *Abdullah Al Mamun: Phirey Dekha*, “যে নাটক অভিনয়ের জন্য কোনো মঞ্চ নেই, নট্যদল নেই অর্থাৎ কোনো প্রেরণাই উপস্থিত নেই সে নাটক লেখার কাজটি মোটেই সহজ নয়। তবুও তারা নাটক লিখেছেন, পরবর্তীকালের স্বাধীন সার্বভৌম বাংলাদেশের দ্বারপ্রান্তে পৌঁছে দিয়েছেন তাদের নাট্যধারা, যা কোনো না কোনোভাবে বাংলাদেশের নাট্য- ঐতিহ্য নির্মানের কাজটা সহজ করে দিয়েছে।” [The play which has no stage, no forum of artists to perform it, that is an absence of inspiration, the task of writing plays are not easy at all. Still they have written plays, brought the atmosphere of theatre in Independent Bangladesh and established the tradition of staging plays here. *Abdullah Al Mamun: Phirey Dekha*, p.110]

The spirit of the Liberation War plays a key role in the theatre movement. From the very beginning of the movement, the theatre in Bangladesh started upholding the spirit of the war for freedom, democracy and anti- communalism. Senior play wrights, like Abdullah

(1978), Manoj Mitra's *Sajano Bagan* (1980) and Vijay Tendulkar's *Chup Adalat Chalchhe* (1984). In 1973 the Nagarik Natya Sampraday staged *Bidagdha Ramanikul*, *Taila Sankat*, *Cross Purpose* and *Nisiddha Pallite*. Among the other theatre and cultural groups that staged plays here from time to time were Aranyak Natyadal, Dhaka Theatre, Nandanik Natya Sampraday, Dhaka Padatik, Bangladesh Udichi Shilpigoshthi, Bibartan Sanskritik Kendra, Lokanatya Dal, Dhaka Little Theatre, Sarak Sahitya O Sanskritik Sangathan and Lion Theatre.

And some of the notable plays performed at Guide House Auditorium by different dramatic societies include *Prajapatir Lilalasya* (1972) and *Oedipus* (1982) by Bahubachan, *Payer Awaj Paoya Jay* (1976), *Ghare Baire* (1985), *Kokilara* (1989) and *Antigone* (1992) by Theatre; *Shakuntala* (1978) by Dhaka Theatre, *Dewan Gazir Kissa* and *Bisarjan* (1985) by Nagarik Natya Sampraday, *Jiban Ghase Agun* (1986) by Subachan Natya Sangsad; *Padma Nadir Majhi* (1991), *Mahaprayan* (1994) and *Ekattarer Dingulo* (1995) by Lokanatya Dal, *Asman Tara Shadi* (1991) and *Bajimat* (1994) by Samay Sangskritik Gosthi; *No Vacancy* (1991) by Kushilab Natya Sampraday; *Bichchhu* (1991), *Lalsalu* (1991) and *Tughlok* (1992) by Natyadhara; *Hallucination* (1992) by Sarak; *Merchant of Venice* (1993) by Dhaka Little Theatre; *Court Martial* (1993), *Kalantar* (1994) and *Golapjan* (1995) by Theatre Art; *Putul Khela* (1993) and *Bhrtiya Rajaktantra* (1995) by Kanthashilan; *Bibisab* (1994) by Dhaka Subachan Natyadal; *Phera* (1994) by Dhaka Padatik; *Public* (1995) by Jahangirnagar Theatre etc.

One thing can be mentioned here that, even in that period when Bangladesh got its freedom, people were not much used to going to a theatre show in the evening and for this two factors are responsible. One, the condition through which the Bangladeshis had to go through, under the Pakistani regime where the habit of getting involved in theatre didn't get the chance to flourish and secondly, the traditional mentality of many Muslims here, not willing to mix with people or activities which go against the Islamic sentiment. But after 1971, that started changing gradually.

From that time onwards, the development of the post independent theater arena in Bangladesh can be divided into two major streams- one is, plays based on original Bangla scripts and the other, plays adapted or translated from foreign scripts. At this point Syed Shamsul Haq says that in the whole world whenever anything good has taken place for the welfare of the people for any nation, the whole world shares and belongs to that good thing. And so it happened and is still happening to the development of our theatre. We didn't confine ourselves to only the original Bangla scripts but have brought the foreign scripts, playwrights and their translations in our theatre to enrich our stage and give a taste of modern theatre to our audience. He also says that the lines written by a poet can be very personal but when a playwright writes a play that becomes a social product by incorporating people, social- economic problems, politics, human relationship and so on

within the play that subsequently demands a stage which in turn works as a mirror for the society. That is why a stage is a common platform for people from all over the world, to represent their society, their feelings, views and ideologies and it becomes a process of

exchanging ideas from different places besides knowing one's own people and country. As far as Shakespeare's plays are concerned, his works are very well known all over the world and have appealed to people for centuries. Thereby the attempt to translate his plays and stage them for a large number of audiences is praiseworthy as many theatre goers might have heard about Shakespeare but hardly knew his works, and credit goes to those translators and performers who made it possible by staging Shakespeare in different times in Bangladesh.

In the earlier chapters as I have discussed the translations of books like *Macbeth* by Syed Shamsul Haq, *Macbeth* by Mafize Choudhury and *Othello* by Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury, it is relevant to mention here that *Othello* was staged in Mahila Samiti in Dhaka in September 1981 by Theatre, directed by Abdullah Al Mamun and Syed Shamsul Haq's *Macbeth* was staged as a joint collaboration in The British Council Auditorium and Mahila Shamiti by Nagorik and Theatre in Dhaka in 1984.

These were staged under the same settings provided by Shakespeare but apart from these, the adaptation of *Hamlet* by Aly Zaker, who titled the play *Darpan*, gave the plot a rural setting, where the characters used local dialect but remained faithful to the main story line. It was staged by Nagorik (1987- 88). There was another experimental attempt, taken by Natyadhara (1994- 95), a free adaptation of *Hamlet* scripted by Alok Basu titled *Ah Hamlet*, which is a city version of *Hamlet*, set in Dhaka city. In 2005, Dhaka University Drama and Music Department made a modern adaptation of *Macbeth* by breaking away from the traditional setting of the source text. They used TV and newspapers as

metaphors for the witches, which have become a means to influence people to become more aggressive. The play was a piece of a modern story relating to what is happening around us. These attempts prove that Shakespeare's work is everlasting and can be recreated even on the basis of the demand that matches the post- modern world.

Now coming back to the translations of Shakespeare by Munier Chowdhury, Kabir Chowdhury , Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury,that I have discussed in this paper, all the translators have tried to remain as faithful as possible to the source texts. In *Othello*, Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury made a semantic but a narrative translation, which becomes very readable and comparatively easier for the performers to act, especially while delivering the dialogues on stage. On the other hand, Syed Shamsul Haq and Mafize Choudhury made a semantic translation but both of them were very concerned about being faithful to the rhythm of the source text. At this very point when Syed Shamsul Haq says that he tried to make a faithful and creative translation and by pointing out the word 'creativity' he adds that, every word from any particular language bears a unique color which creates a different frame of mind and the approach of the meaning of the words from other languages, is very difficult to bring into another language like Bangla. From the very beginning he tried to keep the pace, especially the rhythm intact and as close as possible to the source text. Keeping in mind the way the inner conflict of the characters in the source text have been portrayed through a particular arrangement of the words and rhythm,Syed Shamsul Haq tried to bring that color in his translation. He says that while translating Shakespeare he emphasized on the consonants rather than on vowels of the source text, which carries a unique sound value. It was

important to bring that sound value in his translation and so he was very conscious about choosing the words for his book. Translating Shakespeare into a different language and giving an exact color of a different language is very difficult and we note that Professor Munier Chowdhury and Professor Kabir Chowdhury move away from the pace and the rhythm of Shakespeare at the very beginning by their choice of diction and style. A person who has read Shakespeare extensively will not get the feeling or the mood when Shakespeare is translated in a simple narrative form, but on the other hand a person who does not know English but knows about Shakespeare will benefit greatly by reading these translations. In this respect Munier Chowdhury and Kabir Chowdhury have generalized Shakespeare and by doing it they have brought Shakespeare and his work to a level where any one can easily get access to the world of Shakespeare. Someone who knows Shakespeare well will surely find the essence of Shakespeare in the translations made by Syed Shamsul Haq.

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