

PERFORMING SHAKESPEARE IN INDIA: ADAPTATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS

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fulfillment of the award of a Ph.D. degree in Comparative Literature**

By

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **“Performing Shakespeare in India: Adaptations and Appropriations”** submitted by Mr. Vikram Singh Thakur bearing Regd. No. 07HCPH05 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature is a bonafide work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

The thesis has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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DECLARATION

I, Vikram Singh Thakur, hereby declare that this thesis entitled **“Performing Shakespeare in India: Adaptations and Appropriations”** submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Professor Tutun Mukherjee is a bonafide research work. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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Chapter I

Introduction

This thesis titled “Performing Shakespeare in India: Adaptations and Appropriations” looks at various responses to Shakespeare productions in India which date back to the mid-18th century when British officers in India staged Shakespeare’s plays along with those of other English playwrights for entertainment. This was a part of a larger imperialistic design that was evolving during the later part of the 19th century to establish moral and cultural superiority over India through English education and literature. Shakespeare was used as a convenient ploy for achieving this aim. T.B.Macaulay’s Minute of 1835 recommended the inclusion of English language and literature in the syllabi of education institutions. As a result, Shakespeare acquired a prominent place in the Indian educational curriculum. The educated Indian regarded Shakespeare as the most revered writer of all ages. This compulsive love for Shakespeare, at least from young Indian students aspiring to become civil servants, led not only to reading of his plays but also performing them. However, India’s engagement with Shakespeare through these two hundred years has not been uniform throughout. From being ‘imitative’ during the first half of the 19th century to ‘popular’ during the later 19th and early 20th centuries to ‘urban-folkish’¹ in post-colonial India, the productions of Shakespeare’s plays have undergone remarkable transformations.

The subject of my study is Shakespeare productions in India which remains an under-researched area. Although Shakespeare has been translated, adapted and performed in India for more than two centuries, there is hardly any consolidated bibliography or cohesive history available on the subject. This is especially true for those Indian languages which have registered considerable influence of Shakespeare on

their drama and theatre let alone other languages and their theatre traditions. With so many languages and theatre traditions in India it is quite challenging to trace Shakespeare reception in the whole country. This would need several scholars from various Indian languages to compile such an encyclopedia of Shakespeare reception in India. I do not attempt such a bold step. For the purposes of this thesis, I have limited my area to a few regions with relatively greater theatre activities. I discuss Shakespeare in Bengali and Parsi theatre at length. Other theatre traditions like Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi which are equally rich and have registered considerable influence of Shakespeare could not be ignored. As a non-native speaker of most of these languages, I had to depend a great deal on available sources. This is the limitation faced by scholars in India working with Shakespeare performances in the Indian languages. I hope my efforts to trace various responses to Shakespeare evoked through the Indian productions would modestly extend the existing scholarship on Shakespeare by discussing new perspectives offered by these productions.

This thesis does not delve into the study of Western and Indian aesthetics of performance traditions *per se* yet some observations in this regard would be helpful in studying the fusion of the aesthetics of these two traditions in ‘modern’ Indian theatre. Many theatre scholars have argued that modern Indian theatre in its early years was characterized by imitating the Western theatre. Girish Ghosh, for instance, blended various traditions in his plays, taking elements from *jatra*, the Sanskrit tradition, the newly emerging social drama and the Western classics (Chatterjee 13). Poonam Trivedi argues, “Not just in politics and governance but in the arts too, and particularly in literature, the engagement with the West began with the imitation of Western forms” (100). The reasons for this imitation were many. Classical Sanskrit theatre had almost disappeared by the 11th century and theatre activity in India was sustained by sparse folk

and traditional performances, which too were on the decline by the 18th century due to the lack of patronage. There was a void as far as theatre activity was concerned. At this juncture, the decline of folk and traditional performances and the rise of English theatre paved the way for ‘modern’ Indian theatre. This was furthered by the quest of the Indian middle-class for a distinct cultural identity which the English theatre seemed to offer. The indigenous reform movements stemming from the colonial intervention into social practices also paved the way for the emergence of a modern sensibility and thereafter, ‘modern’ Indian theatre. Folk and traditional performances had already come under severe attack by the British for being ‘licentious’, ‘immoral’ and ‘degraded’. The educated Indian middle-class followed the colonial example and condemned these performances as ‘degenerate’ that needed cleansing to become ‘respectable’ viewing. Indologists suggested differentiating between the ‘great’ and the ‘little’ traditions. Thus emerged the difference between the *margi* and the *desi* which in turn influenced the treatment of all expressive forms. As regards theatre, the model provided by Western theatre was followed in terms of conventions, techniques and devices. Representing this ‘imitative’ theatre are the early productions of plays mostly in English by the educated Indians. Specially school and college students staged Shakespeare’s plays which I discuss at length in Chapter II. However, with the re-discovery of Sanskrit drama, especially after William Jones’s translation of *Sakuntala* (1789), Indian dramatists started looking towards their own classical dramatic tradition as well. This had a two-fold result. First, Indian writers started translating Sanskrit drama into regional languages. Prior to the colonial period there were hardly any translations of Sanskrit drama in any of the Indian languages. The second and the more important result was the syncretism of Western and Indian aesthetics, dramatic and theatrical conventions, techniques and devices that characterize the later years of Indian theatre. The focus on

‘syncretism’ also generates a more nuanced way of looking at modern Indian theatre which came about as result of a fusion between two theatre traditions, rather than a narrow argument which many have put forth, that the Western theatre destroyed the traditional performances of India. The fusion, in fact, created a new kind of theatre which while drawing upon Western aesthetics and conventions, indigenized them by incorporating aesthetics and conventions from classical and traditional performances. Poonam Trivedi rightly argues in this context that “the imitation of Western forms in India served not so much as a model of mimetic subordination but as an intercultural interaction, which created for itself ‘a margin of freedom’, a ‘self consciousness’, of the possibility of the new” (100).

Classical theatre in India had been governed by the aesthetics laid down by Bharatamuni in *Natyasastra* written somewhere between 2nd century B. C. and 2nd century A. D. This is a comprehensive treatise on Sanskrit theatre, poetics, aesthetics, dance and music. Although Sanskrit theatre had lost its glory by the 11th century, various principles of the *Natyasastra* had percolated into the traditional theatres of India which sustained theatrical activity before ‘modern’ Indian theatre took shape. *Sutradhar*, for example, the chief character in the Sanskrit theatre, retained its role in *yakshagan* as *bhagvata* and in *raslila* as *swami*. *Natyasastra*, unlike Aristotle’s *Poetics* which deals with the literary aspects of a drama, is much wider in scope. It deals with various aspects of performance, the literary text being just one among these. A comparative study of the *Poetics* and *Natyasastra* is not the objective of my thesis. It is, however, necessary for the argumentative framework of my thesis to highlight the elements related to the dramatic text and performance in both the traditions which found a fusion in modern Indian theatre. For instance, in Western especially Aristotelian aesthetics, tragedy has been regarded as the highest literary form. The preference for a

tragic end in Aristotle *Poetics* leading to *catharsis* or the purgation of pity and fear in the spectator is considered the ultimate end of poetry. Theoreticians like Horace and Philip Sidney endorsed that the ideal combination of *arche* and *telos* would “move” the audience towards ethical and moral self-realization. All of Shakespeare’s tragedies have tragic ends. Such a concept of tragedy is absent in Sanskrit aesthetics as laid down by Bharata. The ultimate end of drama in Indian dramatic theory is the enjoyment and the realization of *rasa*. According to the *Natyasastra*, the play of *rasa* in the drama leads to *sthayibhava* after *phalprapti*, which means that the desire of the protagonist is attained in the end. In Kalidas’s *Shakuntala*, for instance, after the ordeals the protagonists have gone through, the drama ends with the union of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. While in Western aesthetics, there are well-defined categories of tragedy and comedy, classical Indian aesthetics does not have such definitive categories. On the contrary, the *rasa-siddhanta* in the *Natyasastra* does not subscribe to a performance which has only one *rasa*. This is probably the reason that one cannot find a pure tragedy in Indian dramatic tradition. Bharata insists that there be many *rasas* in a play (in fact, the more number of *rasas* the better the play is) but one of them has to be the principle *rasa*. The other *rasas* would be merely *suchnamatra*. However, as Shakespeare’s plays came to be translated and performed in India in the 19th century, the tragic end gradually came to be accepted by the Indian dramatists as well as the spectators. Shakespeare’s plays epitomize the inclusion of the tragic ending in the Indian dramatic tradition.

An important difference between Western and Indian aesthetics of drama is that while Western aesthetics makes a difference between the character who represents action and articulates dialogue and the chorus which comments on the action and presents songs and dances. Or, in Nietzschean terms, there is a distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian elements as in the classical Greek drama. On the other

hand, dance and drama are integrated into and are inseparable in Indian aesthetics of performance. While in the Greek tragedies, it is generally the Apollonian element that dominates the Dionysian element, it is the Dionysian element represented by dance, music, song and stylization which is emphasized in the *Natyasastra*. Bharata's preference for *natyadharmi* to *lokadharmi* makes this clear. In Marathi theatre, Vishnudas Bhave's plays generally referred to as '*akhyans*' had music and songs as an important element. Songs were formally composed while the speeches and dialogues were largely improvised by the actors and were impromptu. However, one finds that the contact with the English drama and theatre, which was governed largely by the Apollonian element with regard to dialogue and action, gave rise to a new kind of drama in the Indian languages in which the Apollonian element of dialogue and action became important without completely losing the Dionysian elements of song and dance. Parsi theatre would be a suitable example of this fusion. In Parsi theatre, dialogue and action occupy an important place, but equal importance is also accorded to the songs and dances. In fact, the fusion of the two aesthetic elements of dialogue and action and song and dance find its best manifestation in Parsi theatre.

Not only the aesthetics of drama but that of performance also saw a happy fusion in modern Indian theatre. Indian theatre, both classical and traditional, emphasized the capacity of imagination of the spectators. Hence, both kinds used empty space without décor. However, the advent of Western theatre brought the idea of representing nature on the stage. Painted scenes were hung at the back and/or rolled down for particular scenes. Although proscenium theatre became a vogue following the Western model, one finds that even the proscenium stage was not adopted indiscriminately. Unlike the levels in the Western proscenium stage, the proscenium stage in India was largely empty which enabled the actor to move freely either in a

realistic manner or in a stylized way. The empty stage also helped the actors particularly for the dance sequences which demanded free movement. For instance, although Parsi plays were staged in proscenium with box sets, painted curtains and transformation scenes, they incorporated folk forms like *bhavai*, *yaksagana*, or *lavani* and Urdu, Gujarati or Persian *ghazals* and *thumris*. The performance of *Ek Bevapha Mitr* (an adaptation of *Othello*) by “The Parsi Stage Players” opened with *ishvar-stuti* (praise of God) (Willmer 199). This mixing of conventions becomes clearer in the following account provided by R. K. Yajnik:

In the midst of the noise and bustle of the Urdu theatre, opened an hour before the performance, one hears three bells at short intervals and with the third bell a thundering gun shot is heard as the drop-curtain, gorgeously painted with mythological legends, goes up. The chorus girls sing a prayer or a “welcome” to the accompaniment of the harmonium and rhythmic drum beats. This song ends with an offering of flowers to the distinguished patrons and with garlanding the portraits of the pioneers of the respective company or of deities. Then the action commences (112).

The above account clearly shows that even if Parsi theatre drew upon Western stage conventions they were adapted to suit the sensibility of the target culture. Rustom Bharucha refers to this fusion of the theatrical conventions of the two performance traditions in Parsi theatre which were,

[...] mediated by the colonial machinery of the nineteenth-century theatre, the conventions and stage tricks derived from the pantomimes and historical extravaganzas of the English Victorian stage. However,

it should be emphasized that these derivations had been thoroughly ‘Indianized’ through music, song, colour, pathos, melodrama and the histrionic delivery of lines that are intrinsically a part of the popular theatrical tradition in India (1993, 193).

It is this fusion of aesthetics exemplified by Shakespeare performances in India that this study hopes to illustrate.

The last two decades have seen a shift of focus from text to performance in Shakespeare studies. This is evident from the number of studies on Shakespeare performance published through the last two decades. Although the domain of Shakespeare studies has always accommodated new perspectives, Western scholarship has tended to ignore Shakespeare productions in the non-Western countries. If non-Western Shakespeare appears at all in Western scholarship, it is largely the ‘intercultural’ performances using non-Western traditional forms of performance that figure. Productions like that of Annette Leday and David McRuvie’s *kathakali King Lear* (1989), Tim Supple’s multilingual production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2006) or productions of Ariane Mnouchkine and Peter Brook that ‘appropriate’ non-Western forms of performance get noticed in the Western discourse. But non-Western Shakespeare productions have been largely ignored in the Western discourse on Shakespeare performance, especially at a time when post-colonial theory has made significant contributions and even changed the critical paradigms in understanding Shakespeare’s text. Studies still tend to be Euro-centric with hardly any attention being paid towards Shakespeare production and reception in non-European countries.

Recently some attempts have been made in the West to include non-English Shakespeare productions in Shakespeare studies. Some of these works include Dennis

Kennedy's (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare: Contemporary Performance* (CUP, 1993), James C. Bulman, (ed.), *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* (Routledge, 1996), Pascale Aebischer, et al (ed.), *Remaking Shakespeare: Performance across Media, Genres and Culture* (Palgrave, 2003), Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (eds.), *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (Blackwell, 2005) and Sonia Massai (ed.), *World-wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (Routledge, 2005). However, the number of essays related to Shakespeare performance in Asia, in particular India, which probably has the longest history of Shakespeare performances outside England, is quite scant in all these volumes. The major portions are dedicated to the study of Western productions. Kennedy's *Foreign Shakespeare* (1993) tries to broaden the scope of Shakespearean scholarship by taking into account non-English Shakespearean productions. Unfortunately, the work only accommodates Shakespeare productions from Germany, France and Central Europe. By leaving out Shakespearean productions from non-European countries, with the exception of one essay discussing Shakespearean performances in Japan, this work too remains largely Euro-centric. There is no mention of Shakespeare productions in India. Bulman's *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance* (1996) discusses various issues involved in Shakespeare performance ranging from actor's body, gender, stagecraft and performance editions. Here too post-colonial Shakespeare finds place in only an essay by Dennis Salter on "Acting Shakespeare in Postcolonial Space" that discusses the problems faced by actors in enacting a colonial text in a postcolonial society. However, his analysis is limited to Shakespeare's performances in Quebec. Aebischer's *Remaking Shakespeare* (2003) expands the range of Shakespeare studies by including performances across media like biography, sign language and novel, in addition to films and theatre. There is, however, only one essay in the volume by Poonam Trivedi titled "Reading 'Other Shakespeares'"

on non-Western Shakespeare. Hodgdon's *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance* (2005) is the most comprehensive of all the works on Shakespeare performance containing 34 essays out of which only Ania Loomba's "Shakespeare and the Possibilities of Postcolonial Performance" and Yong Li Lan's "Shakespeare and the Fiction of the Intercultural" discuss Shakespeare performances in Asia. Rest of the volume is dedicated to Shakespeare performances in the West. Massai's *World-wide Shakespeares: Local Appropriations in Film and Performance* (2005) is a welcome attempt as it includes Shakespeare "world-wide". As Massai herself admits, the book has "a genuinely international scope", and includes various Shakespeare performances across the world including an essay on Shakespeare productions in India by Poonam Trivedi titled " 'It is the bloody business which informs thus ...': Local Politics and Performative Praxis".

Having realized this eurocentrism in Shakespeare studies, scholars from post-colonial societies which still show considerable influence of Shakespeare in their literatures and theatres, have attempted to represent non-Western Shakespeares. Notable are two attempts on Shakespeare performances in India. The first is an unpublished Ph.D. dissertation by Parmita Kapadia (University of Massachusetts, 1999) on *Bastardizing the Bard: Appropriations of Shakespeare's Plays in Post-Colonial India*. Although the dissertation takes into account the post-colonial appropriations of Shakespeare in India, it discusses only the English productions. The second is an edited anthology by Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz titled *India's Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation, and Performance* (2005). The work is commendable for its scope and includes Shakespeare translation, interpretation and performance in India. However, the analyses of performances like Dutt's *Macbeth*, Tanveer's *Kamdeo ka Apna Vasant Ritu ka Sapna* or Karanth's *Barnam Van* find just a page each of

discussion. Understandably, some important productions like Lokendra Arambam's *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* which fuses the original text with the troubled history of Manipur are absent. Arambam's production using elements from Meitei mythology, rituals, culture and performance traditions like *thang ta* is probably the best example of using Shakespeare to subvert specific agenda and express the political concerns and aspirations of a contemporary society.

This thesis is divided into six chapters along with an appendix of Shakespeare translations and adaptations available in various Indian languages. Following the **Introduction** which forms **Chapter I** of this thesis, **Chapter II** titled “**Shakespeare in Calcutta**” is divided into three sections. Section I on “English Theatre in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries in Calcutta” discusses English theatres in Calcutta opened by the British colonists that staged Shakespeare's plays along with those of other English eminent playwrights for entertainment. The section also discusses the role played by the English in the opening of play-houses in Calcutta. Section II on the “Spread of English Education” discusses the role of English education through the introduction of Shakespeare into the curriculum to promote the colonial project. Section III on “Shakespeare Productions in Calcutta” discusses Shakespeare adaptations and translations in Calcutta starting with various school and college productions that were staged in Calcutta. The section then looks at the shift from English to Bengali productions with the passage of time.

An important point that one might miss when dealing with these early Shakespeare productions is that even during the colonial period Shakespeare reception in India did face some resistance which is not usually acknowledged by scholars. Kennedy observes,

[W]hereas in Europe the Shakespeare project embraced the translation and outright appropriation of the texts, in Asia the imperial mode tended to bring them in the original language as a demonstration of the linguistic and the cultural superiority of the conqueror. This was most notable in India, of course, where the insertion of the Shakespearean text into native life paralleled the insertion of the power of the master's race (291).

Such an argument assumes that Shakespeare was received passively in colonial societies like India. However, this was not always the case. Resistance to Shakespeare can be registered in various ways. Scholars like Samarjit Dutta whose *Shakespeare's Macbeth: An Oriental Study* (1921), *Shakespeare's Othello: An Oriental Study* (1923) and *Shakespeare's Hamlet: An Oriental Study* (1928) and Ranjee Shahni whose *Shakespeare Through Eastern Eyes* (1932) were trying to evoke Indian responses to Shakespeare's work taking into account various factors like race, ethnicity and culture. Another kind of resistance can be seen in the comparisons made between Shakespeare and Kalidasa. Parmita Kapadia argues, "in their comparisons, Indian scholars seeking to promote Indian nationalism and pride would universalize Kalidasa and argue that Shakespeare was the more provincial writer" (4). Yet another instance is Jayavijay Narayan Singh Sharma's "Introduction" to *Shakespeare Katha-gatha* (1912) where he turns the table on colonist condescension and writes that "Shakespeare is regarded as supreme in English literature and is described as the *Kalidasa of English*" (I; my emphasis).²

Chapter III titled "**Appropriating Shakespeare in Parsi Theatre**" studies Shakespeare's plays as adapted by Parsi theatre, one of the major theatre movements in the history of modern Indian theatre. The most important factor, probably, in

popularizing Shakespeare in India was Parsi theatre. Adapting Shakespeare's plays was a common feature especially during the early years of its inception. Shakespeare and Parsi theatre worked well for each other. While Shakespeare helped Parsi theatre to establish itself, Parsi theatre helped in popularizing Shakespeare in India by taking theatre away from the confines of the educated elite to the masses of the mofussil. The chapter is divided into five sections. Section I on "Some Research-Related Problems" discusses various problems involved in dealing with Shakespeare in Parsi theatre. Section II on "Parsis and the Public Sphere" discusses the emergence of public sphere in Bombay and the role played by the Parsis. It is my contention that Parsi theatre emerged as a part of Parsi philanthropy that regarded theatre as a civic and cultured activity. The failure to locate Parsi theatre in this context has led many theatre scholars to argue that Parsi theatre from its very inception was 'commercial', with profit as its sole motive. I argue that this aspect holds true for the later Parsi theatre and not in the beginning. Only in the 1870s did Parsi theatre become thoroughly professional and 'commercial'. Section III on "Locating Parsi Theatre" defines Parsi theatre and provides a short history of its emergence and development. Section IV on "Parsi Theatre and Shakespeare Productions" deals with various productions of Shakespeare in Parsi theatre which were largely free adaptations. In adapting Shakespeare's plays, plots, characters, locales and situations were Indianised sometimes to such an extent that the productions hardly resembled the originals. Section V on "Parsi Theatre and the (Post-) Colonial 'Hybridity'" discusses the problems involved in locating Parsi theatre within the discourse of postcolonial "hybridity". The eclectic nature of Parsi theatre and its free borrowings from various sources might make it appear "hybrid" in the sense of Bhabha's notion of "hybridity"; but a close study of Parsi theatre reveals that there was no desire to 'mimic' European theatre in order to "*become like that*" which is so central

to Bhabha's definition of the term. It was more, as Rajiva Verma argues, "a matter of [...] one professional playwright borrowing plots and situations and other tricks of the trade from another" (243). Parsi theatre enjoyed its heyday from 1870s to 1920s. By the 1930s, in the wake of high nationalism, Shakespeare performances started declining and gave way to social and political theatre that IPTA promoted. Another factor that led to the decline of Parsi theatre was the advent of the talkies. Parsi theatre might have disappeared now, but its legacy of song and dance continues in the Indian film industry.

Chapter IV titled "**Shakespeare in Some Other Theatre Traditions of India**" is divided into four sections dealing with Shakespeare in Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi theatre traditions. Marathi and Kannada theatre are similar in their approach to Shakespeare. Since both these traditions had professional theatre companies, Shakespeare was a popular choice for adaption for performance. Marathi playwrights had two models in front of them: Shakespeare and the Sanskrit model. The first gave rise to 'prose' plays unfamiliar to Marathi theatre which had been dominated by the musicals. The second gave rise to *sangeet natak* (dance-drama). Shakespeare, however, was common to both kinds. While the English educated adapters tried to remain close to Shakespeare's text and either wrote prose plays or translated Shakespeare in prose, *sangeet natak* moulded Shakespeare into musicals and took liberties with their plot and structure, following Parsi theatre. Similarly, Shakespeare reception in Kannada represents two sensibilities as T. S. Satyanath suggests: the literary and the stage tradition. One is led by love for Shakespeare and the other by love for the stage. While the first translated Shakespeare 'faithfully', the second – the company theatre, like the Parsi theatres of Bombay, freely adapted Shakespeare. Malayalam and Hindi theatres registered lesser influence of Shakespeare as far as theatrical performances were concerned. The absence of play-houses modeled on the English theatres, the presence of

already available strong performance traditions like *teyyam*, *tullal* and *kathakali*, and more emphasis on prose farce during the first decade of the 20th century might have prevented the staging of Shakespeare's plays in Kerala. This is not to say that there were no translations or adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in Malayalam. Although there were translations or adaptations of the Bard's plays, these early adaptations unlike those in Karnataka and Maharashtra, were not done with an eye on the stage. It is in the post-Independence Malayalam theatre that Shakespeare plays received more attention by various theatre groups of Kerala. There have been attempts at producing at least three plays of Shakespeare in *kathakali* viz. *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*. Among other notable Malayalam productions are *Othello* in *kathaprasangam* by V. Sambasivam, K. N. Panikkar's *Kodumkattu* (*The Tempest*, 2000), Chandradasan's *Chatthankattu* (*The Tempest*, 1995) and *Macbeth* (2002) and M. G. Jyotish's *Macbeth* (2009). Unlike Marathi, Bengali and Kannada theatres, Hindi did not have professional theatres. Hindustani was employed by Parsi theatre for its performances, but Hindi theatre right from beginning distanced itself from Parsi theatre for its 'vulgarity', 'crudity' and 'commercialism'. In the absence of such theatres most of the Shakespeare translations in Hindi prior to Independence were done as literary exercises rather than for the stage. This is probably the reason that many of these translations were 'faithful' to the original unlike in Parsi theatre. Some of the Hindi translators of various plays of Shakespeare during this period were Lala Sitaram, Ganga Prasad, Kashinath Khattri, Jai Vijay Narain Singh Sharma, Seth Govind Das, Mathura Prasad Chaudhari and Govind Prasad Ghidyal. Most of these translations remained close to the original texts. It is only in post-Independence India that one finds Hindi translations of Shakespeare done for the stage though translations by Rangeya Raghava, who translated 15 plays of Shakespeare during the 1957-58, *Mano na Mano* (*As You Like It*, 1960) and *Athens ka*

Raja Timon (Timon of Athens, 1960) by Dharam Pal Shastri, *Barehvin Raat (Twelfth Night, 1961)* by Kuldeep Kapur, *Barehvin Raat (Twelfth Night, 1962)* by Shyam Sunder Suman, *Othello (1962)* by Vidyarthi Diwakar Prasad and *Hamlet (1988)* by Amrit Rai are mainly literary exercises that have not found favour on the Hindi stage. Two translators stand out during this period -- Harivanshrai Bachchan and Raghuvir Sahay. Both being poets in Hindi were able to translate Shakespeare's plays into verse, a rare feat achieved in Hindi translations of Shakespeare. The success of the translations by the two is evident from the fact that they have been successfully staged.

Chapter V titled **“Performing Shakespeare in Post-Independence India”** is divided into two sections. Section I “Decolonizing Indian Theatre” discusses the issues involved in the post-colonial Indian theatre and the subsequent rise of “theatre of roots” movement. Ania Loomba and Martin Orkin in *Post-Colonial Shakespeares* observe, “history does not just provide a background to the study of texts, but forms an essential part of textual meaning; conversely, texts or representations are seen as fundamental to the creation of history and culture” (3). For this reason I try to locate Shakespeare productions in post-Independence India in the discourse on the decolonization of Indian theatre which gained significance during the first three decades after Independence. The discourse on post-colonial Indian theatre does not only present a context for these productions but also a *co-text* that has to be read along with the productions. Only then can one understand the complex Shakespeare productions in post-Independence Indian theatre. Section II “Shakespeare Performances in ‘Urban-Folk’ Theatre” discusses several Shakespeare productions that incorporate elements from folk and traditional performances in post-Independence Indian theatre. Christy Desmet in *Shakespeare and Appropriation* describes the process of adapting Shakespeare by post-colonial societies as one “in which post-colonial societies take over those aspects of imperial culture ...

that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities” (19). In the post-Independence Indian theatre, Shakespeare productions like Utpal Dutt’s *Macbeth* (1954) and *Bhuli Nai Priya* (*Romeo Juliet*, 1970), B. V. Karanth’s *Barnam Van* (*Macbeth*, 1989), Habib Tanveer’s *Vasantritu ka Sapna Kamdev ka Apna* (*A Mid-Summer Night's Dream*, 1993), Lokendra Arambam’s *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* (1997) and M. K. Raina’s *Badshah Pather* (*King Lear*, 2010) illustrate the practical application of this process. Although these productions cannot claim to be truly ‘folk’, they represent the use of indigenous elements from traditional forms typical to Indian performance traditions.

Chapter VI presents my concluding arguments that Shakespeare productions in India have been governed by their own aesthetics. Right from the mid-19th century when Shakespeare’s plays moved out of schools and colleges, Shakespearean texts have been adapted to suit the general Indian milieu and audience taste. Shakespeare may have served the British colonists’ agenda academically, but theatrically Shakespeare productions in India refused to be overwhelmed by the master’s text and in fact appropriated the text itself by subjecting it to the conventions of indigenous folk and traditional performances. The conclusion also suggests further research investigations into Shakespeare productions in India.

Notes

¹ I use the term “urban-folk” theatre as used by Aparna Bhargava Dharwadker in *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*, New Delhi: OUP (2006), 322. She makes the distinction between folk and urban folk drama as follows:

[...] in radical distinction from folk theatre itself, urban folk drama is a transportable entity: while folk theatre always belongs to a specific region, language, ecological cycle, and participating community, the urban folk drama can be detached from all these particularities and performed (in the original language or translation) anywhere an audience is available.

² This is a repartee to the British way of referring to Kalidasa as ‘the Shakespeare of India’!

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CHAPTER II

Shakespeare in Calcutta

This chapter looks at Britain's entry into India and the consequent colonial strategies adopted by them. The major thrust of the chapter's argument is the use of English education, especially the introduction of Shakespeare into the "curriculum" to assert the English moral and cultural 'superiority' over the 'natives'. However, it would be incorrect to maintain that William Shakespeare's plays made their way into India only through English education. Much before English education was institutionalized in India, educated Indians, especially in cities like Calcutta and Bombay, had become familiar with the bard through the playhouses set up by the Englishmen in Calcutta. As Sushil Kumar Mukherjee notes, the "names of David Garrick (1717-79) the great eighteenth century Shakespearean actor and Garrick's Drury Lane Theatre, built in 1662, were familiar in Calcutta among the readers of Shakespeare and the lovers of theatre" (1). The first play-house might have been set up in Calcutta in 1831 but there was enough theatrical activity in Calcutta that created a need for Indians to set up their own theatre on English lines as S. K. Bhattacharya writes, "the English playhouses by their production of English, especially Shakespeare's plays, created an appetite for theatrical performances" (29).

I. English Theatre in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries in Calcutta

Shakespeare productions in India date back to mid-18th century when British officers in India staged the Bard's plays along with those of other English eminent playwrights for entertainment. The sources of entertainment were limited to the British officials and so English theatre was 'imported' to Calcutta. Many playhouses came into existence as a consequence. Nandi Bhatia notes that theatres formed an important part

of the English social life in India as early as 1757 (2004, 12). Poonam Trivedi and Jyotsna Singh note that the earliest modern theatre to be established in India was The Calcutta Theatre (1775) (13 & 1996, 121). However, theatre scholars like Sushil Kumar Mukherjee and Kironmoy Raha state that much before The Calcutta Theatre, the first English theatre to be set up in Calcutta was The Playhouse in 1753 that received help from David Garrick, one of the most celebrated actors of London (2). The Playhouse shut down soon with Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula's attack on Calcutta in 1756. It was 19 years later in 1775 during the Governor Generalship of Warren Hastings (1772-1785) that The New Playhouse or The Calcutta Theatre was built at the expense of one lakh rupees. The Calcutta Theatre ran for 33 years and was closed due to financial strain. David Garrick, who had earlier helped to set up the Playhouse, supplied a number of painted scenes from London and an artist named Bernard Messink. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee quotes from a letter of 26 March 1781 (by Mrs. Eliza Fay) that this playhouse was well-equipped and "very neatly fitted up and the scenery and decoration quite equal to what could be expected here" (cited in Mukherjee 2). The Calcutta Theatre staged plays of Shakespeare, Massinger, Congreve, Sheridan and others. Trivedi notes that among various plays staged here, some eight plays were by Shakespeare which were performed more than once (14). The Calcutta Theatre was known for its performances and got special mention in the reviews of the newspapers. For example, the following is a review of *The Merchant of Venice* published in *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes* (29):

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21ST, 1784.

Calcutta.

On Monday evening the Comedy of the “Merchant of Venice” was performed here to a very full theatre. Shylock never appeared to greater advantage, and the other characters were, in general, well supported.

On 11 November 1784, a production of *Hamlet* was advertised as follows (*Selections from Calcutta Gazettes* 30);

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1784.

Calcutta.

We hear the Tragedy of “Hamlet” will be performed in the course of next week ; but the managers have thought proper to omit the farce of the “Mock Doctor.” For the better accommodation of the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Settlement, the Gallery is to be converted into Boxes.

Calcutta Gazette dated 28 Feb. 1788 reports on the production of *Henry IV* at Calcutta Theatre as follows:

The representation of such a character as Falstaff requires very uncommon and eccentric powers. It is only one of all Shakespeare’s, never (we believe) even attempted by Garrick who certainly thus tacitly acknowledges his want of the requisite talents to do it justice. The gentleman who performed the part on Friday Night though he gave it almost entirely after a manner of his own, conveyed the humour of his author very irresistibly to the audience.

Another performance of *Richard III* on 25 January 1788 at the Calcutta Theatre was also praised, “We agree in the general opinion that the whole performance went off with

well-merited éclat” (cited in Dasgupta 1988, 193). A review of *The Merchant of Venice* was published on 20 November 1788 as follows (*Selections from Calcutta Gazettes* 270-1):

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1788.

Calcutta.

Last night the Comedy of the ‘Merchant of Venice’ was performed before a respectable audience. Shylock was accurate and spirited, and Portia elegant and interesting; her dress was much remarked and admired. Antonio displayed dignity and feeling, and Gratiano spoke his “infinite deal of nothing” with great pleasantry.

In the meanwhile several other playhouses were established like Mrs. Bristow’s Private Theatre (1789-90), Wheler Place Theatre (1797-98), Atheneum Theatre (1812-14), The Chowringhee Theatre (1813-39), Dum Dum Theatre (1817-24), Baitaconah Theatre (1824) and Sans Souci Theatre (1839-49). The number of such English playhouses shows the growing status of theatre in the social life of the English. Besides the repertoire of their own local actors, the play-houses also invited actors from London as for instance, Mrs. Atkinson who came from Drury Lane Theatre and Mrs. Chester from London’s Royal Theatre, James and Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Deacle, Miss Cowley and James Vining of Covent Garden and Drury Lane Theatres. It is therefore clear that Shakespeare was one of the major dramatists to be produced in India in the colonial times. Jyotsna Singh argues that Shakespeare was readily imported to India since

the productions of Shakespeare’s works enjoyed great popularity in Britain from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth centuries.

And by the mid-Victorian period, the grand-scale pictorial realism of

the London productions, combined with the trend of canonizing individual characters, had left strong impression on the popular imagination. Shakespeare's characters and plots had become both commonplace and source of inspiration for artists and writers. Thus, the Victorian colonists in India, while apishly promoting Shakespeare's works in colonial Calcutta, were, in effect, reproducing the metropolitan culture as a part of the "civilizing mission" of the British Raj. And not only were the Calcutta productions popular, but visiting troupes from overseas increased the local exposure to dramatic "classics" such as Shakespeare [...] (1996, 122).

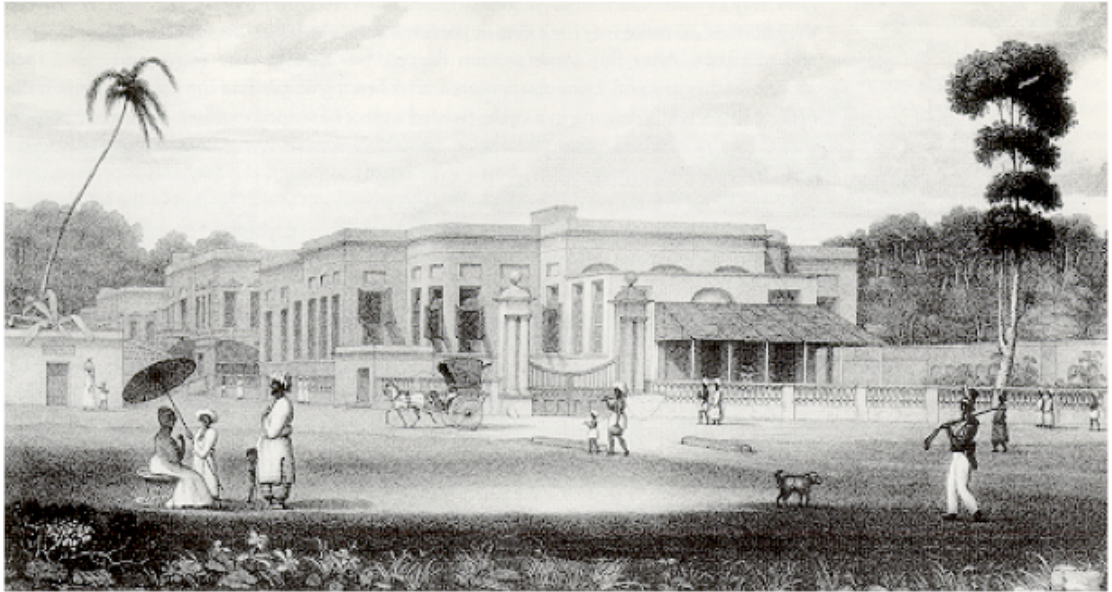
Among the above-mentioned theatres, The Chowringhee and Sans Souci were specially known for their Shakespearean performances such as *Henry IV*, *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*. Chowringhee Theatre opened on 25 November 1813. Hemendranath Dasgupta argues that the greatest influence on the educated Bengalis was to have Chowringhee Theatre as a theatre of their own which used the best talents of the times (1988, 246). To name a few stars attached to this theatre: D. L. Richardson, Horace Haymen, Esther Leach, J. H. Stokler and Henry Meredith Parker. Stokler was especially famous for enacting powerful characters like Iago, Cassius and Falstaff at the Chowringhee. Following is a review of *Merry Wives of Windsor* performed at the Chowringhee:

Last Friday, *Merry Wives of Windsor* gratified expectations. The quarrel was sustained with infinite drollery. Governor General was present. The house was crowded to excess and reminded us of the lines in the rejected address:-

“Now the full benches, to late comers, doom

No room for standing, miscalled standing room”

(cited in Dasgupta 1988, 262).



Chowringhee Theatre, Calcutta (Mukherjee 545).

Chowringhee Theatre continued till May 1839 when a tragic fire destroyed it completely.

In August of the same year when Chowringhee was gutted, Mrs. Leach, previously associated with Chowringhee, opened Sans Souci at the Waterloo Street. Sans Souci continued to stage plays here for a year when a bigger theatre was built by raising a subscription at the Park Street. Dwarkanath Tagore and Lord Auckland contributed rupees one thousand each for the new theatre. The new Sans Souci opened on 8 March 1841 with a production of Sheridan Knowles's *The Wife* (Dasgupta 1988, 269). The theatre's fortunes dwindled when in 1843, during a performance, Mrs.

Leach's costume caught fire. She was fatally burnt and succumbed to her injuries in a few days. Nandi Bhatia notes, "[D]uring the performance of *The Merchant of Venice* in 1843, Mrs Leach died as a result of her gown catching fire from the footlights. After facing financial and administrative difficulties, the Sans Souci closed down in 1849" (2007, 160). However, the above-mentioned accident did not happen during *The Merchant of Venice*'s performance as Bhatia observes. The accident took place during the performance of *The Handsome Husband*, which followed *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Mrs. Leach was performing the role of Mrs. Wyndham. Regarding the closure of Sans Souci there seems to be a disagreement among scholars. Most scholars mention its use in 1849. Hemendranath Dasgupta explains that Sans Souci was actually leased out to a French Company and in 1846 the building was sold to Archbishop, Rt. Hon'ble Dr. Carew (1988, 274). However, one James Barry, a friend of Mrs. Leach continued to give occasional performances under the name of Sans Souci at his private residence at 14 Wellington Square (Dasgupta 1988, 274). It is thus a debatable issue as to where the famous performance of *Othello* in 1848 took place. Dasgupta quotes from *Sangbad Pravakar* that Baishnav Charan Addy played the role of Othello twice at Barry's residence in 1848 (1988, 275). Sudipto Chatterjee on the other hand quotes from a letter by one Mr. Cheeks in *The Calcutta Star* (12 August 1848) that the performance took place at Sans Souci in Park Street (cited by Chatterjee 1999, 76). Wherever the performance may have staged, it is significant in the annals of Indian theatre because a 'native' played the lead role for the first time in an otherwise all-English cast. The play was directed by James Barry and had Mrs. Leach's daughter playing Desdemona with Basihnav Charan Addy, a Bengali, as Othello. It may be argued that the Indian actor was probably not cast for his histrionic talents but his colour which made him suitable to the role. This seems to be endorsed by a report in an English newspaper which called

him a “real unpainted nigger Othello” which set “the whole world of Calcutta agog” (Raha 13). The novelty of a ‘native’ playing Othello was advertised in the *Calcutta Star* thus:

On Thursday Evening, August 10th, 1848, will be acted Shakespeare’s Tragedy of ‘Othello’. Othello ... the Moor of Venice ... By a Native Gentleman ... (Mitra cited in Chatterjee 2007, 59).

Although the play was advertised well, it could not be staged as scheduled. A report from the *Bengal Harkaru and India Gazette* provides information regarding the reason:

The friends of Young Bengal mustered in considerable numbers at the place of recreation, on Thursday night, to witness the long looked for *debut* of a native amateur in the character of Othello. Unfortunately, they were doomed to disappointment—not indeed owing to any defection on the part of the *debutant* or the Calcutta amateurs, but, solely because the parties who were severally to have played Iago, Brabantio and Emilia, were prohibited from doing so by the preemptory military order of the Brigadier of Dum Dum. A letter to that effect, we understand, was forwarded to the stage manager by half past 6; moreover, the police were in attendance, having received military notice to arrest the well-known amateurs should they have attempted to make their appearance. Many appeared to be greatly cut up at this untoward event, but none more so than poor Mr. Barry who promised to use his every effort to produce the play on Thursday next, and thus far solace those who might surmise—“Othello’s occupation’s gone” (cited in Frost 97).

The play was successfully staged on 17 August, 1848 and later on 12 September, 1848.

The *Bengal Harkaru's* review of August 19 praised Addy's confidence and pronunciation:

Othello's entry was greeted with a hearty welcome, and the first speech, 'Let him do his spite', evidenced considerable study and the absence of that timidity so constantly the concomitant of a first appearance. Slim, but symmetrical in person, his delivery was somewhat cramped, but, under all circumstances, his pronunciation of English was for a native remarkably good (Mitra cited in Chatterjee 2007, 61).

Another review in *The Englishman* criticized Addy's speech and pronunciation but lauded him for attempting the role:

In the delivery, however, the effects of imperfect pronunciation were but too manifest. This was to be expected, but not to the extent it occurred. Scarcely a line was intelligible, and this did not arise from the low tone of voice; Othello spoke quite loud enough, but he 'mouthed' too much. Had he spoken in his natural tone, he would have succeeded far better. His action was remarkably good in some parts, and once or twice when he delivered himself in a modulated tone, we were much pleased with the effect produced. Taking it as a whole, we consider the performance wonderful for a Native. It reflects great credit on his industry and performance (Mitra cited in Chatterjee 2007, 64).

Jyotsana Singh, following Bhabha's concept of mimicry, sees Addy's entry into the colonial world as disrupting the simple colonizer-colonised binary whereby the Bengali actor by putting on the 'white mask' also "enacted his difference from the white world, both in fictional Venice and in colonial Calcutta" (1989, 446). She elaborates that instead of being appropriated by "the colonial sahib's play-text, the Indian actor revealed the ambivalence of its cultural authority through a native strategy perhaps best described by Homi Bhabha as 'camouflage, mimicry, black skin/white masks'" (1989, 446).

Thus it is obvious that prior to 1830s when the first Bengali theatre as Hindu Theatre (1831), there was enough theatrical activity on part of the English. This played an important role towards establishing modern Indian theatre. Whether the Indian elite had access to these theatres prior to 1813 is not easy to ascertain but in all probability, the audience were exclusively English.¹ Kironmoy Raha notes that even the ushers and doorkeepers of such theatres were Englishmen (13). Even if the Indian elite did not have direct access to these theatres, they may have been influenced by extensive newspaper coverage of these theatres and their productions. P. Guha-Thakurta notes that the *Calcutta Gazette*, the *Bengal Hurkara*, the *Bengal Courier* and the *Asiatic Journal* regularly published notices and reviews of the performances held at the Chowringhee Theatre (42). The *Calcutta Gazette*, one of the earliest English language newspapers in India founded in 1784 gave a description of Mrs. Emma Bristow's residential theatre at Chowringhee in its issue of 7 May 1789: "It was not merely an apartment in a house temporarily fitted up for a single representation, but a distinct edifice completely furnished with every usual convenience and decorated with every ornament customary in familiar places of exhibition — in short, a perfect theatre differing only from a public one in its dimension" (cited by Mukherjee 3). The *Calcutta Gazette* dated 31 August

1815 wrote about a performance of *Richard III* held on 25 August 1815: “We have not known there of any representation for some time past with more success” (cited in Guha-Thakurta 42).

Gradually, these theatres opened their doors to the Indian elite, which furthered the cause of establishing theatres by Indians. The reason for this selective inclusion of the ‘natives’ into the English society was the realization on the part of the British that they could not rule over the natives if they exercised the policy of segregation. Having understood the need to co-opt the native elite as a “conduit of Western thought and ideas”, the British employed the strategy of, what Homi Bhabha calls, “mimicry” whereby the ‘native’ elite was encouraged to “mimic” English culture, values, habits and assumptions (Vishwanathan 1987, 10). This inclusion of the Indian elite can be seen as a strategic move to expose them to the Western culture and values and to create “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Macaulay 249). Theatre was a vital instrument that could provide the elite Indians the access to English culture. The first prominent member of the Bengali aristocracy to enter the English theatre circuit was Dwarkanath Tagore who was also one of the founding members of the Chowringhee Theatre (1813) along with D.L. Richardson, Dr. H.N. Wilson and Henry Meredith Parker.

Subsequently, the English colonial authorities encouraged the ‘natives’ to establish their own theatres. The strong urge to have theatres of their own came not only from the English-educated Indian elite but also from the orthodox nationalists. One such project of ‘imitation’ can be found in the following editorial of *Samachar Chandrika*, a 19th century Bengali newspaper, as quoted in *Asiatic Journal and Monthly Miscellany* (August 1829):

In the extensive city public institutions of various kinds and moral descriptions have lately sprung up for the improvement and gratification of its inhabitants; but their amusement has not yet been consulted and they have not, like the English community, any place of public entertainment. ... It is therefore very desirable that men of wealth and rank should associate and establish a theatre on the principle of shares, as the English gentlemen have done, and retaining qualified persons on fixed salaries, exhibit a performance of song and poetry once a month conformably to the written natakas or plays ... such a plan will promote the pleasure of all classes of society (214).

The point to note is that such a plea to set up theatres for Indians based on Western models was published in an orthodox Hindu newspaper like *Samachar Chandrika*. The newspaper had earned its reputation by using orthodox arguments in the religious and social controversies of the day. It was, for example, against *sati* abolition and had campaigned against it. This shows that the need to imitate the colonial master was, at least on part of the nationalists, a sort of retort to stress that they were in no way inferior to them. A committee was formed to establish a theatre based on the English model. The members comprised Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Srikrishna Sinha, Krishna Chandra Dutt, Ganganarayan Sen, Madhab Chandra Mullick, Tarakchand Chakravorty and Hara Chandra Ghosh. As a result, the Hindu Theatre opened on 28 December 1831 in the garden-house of Prasanna Kumar Tagore. Although this theatre was set up for a Bengali audience and was established in a predominantly Bengali quarter, the plays performed were either in English or English translations of Sanskrit plays. The theatre was inaugurated with the performances of Act V of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and Act I of Bhavbhuti's *Uttarramcharit* translated into English by H. H. Wilson. The *Calcutta*

Courier reported, “Babu Prasanna Kumar Tagore has fitted up a neat little stage in his house in Narkeldangah where some young Hindoo gentlemen admirably schooled in the Histrionic art exercise their talents for the amusement of their native and European friends *who are admitted by invitation*” (4 April 1832; italics mine). The theatre was not really a public one as it catered to an exclusive audience. It closed down after staging another performance in English.

There were other reasons that promoted the Indian theatre based on Western models during this time. Classical Sanskrit theatre had almost disappeared by the eleventh century and theatre activity in India was sustained by sparse folk and traditional performances, which too were on the decline by the eighteenth century due to the lack of patronage. There was a void as far as theatre was concerned. At this juncture, the decline of folk and traditional performances and the rise of English theatre paved the way for modern Indian theatre. This was furthered by the quest of the middle class Bengali men for a distinct cultural identity which the English theatre seemed to impart. Otherwise, why would a Bengali theatre — mainly, Hindu Theatre — meant for Bengali audience in a Bengali quarter of Calcutta choose to perform either English plays or Sanskrit plays in English translation? Sudipto Chatterjee describes this Bengali quest for a distinct cultural identity in the following words:

The Bengal Renaissance was the outgrowth of the grafting of a foreign culture onto a more-than-willing native culture. For the Bengalis their response to what was imposed by the British was a search for a cultural identity that could, at some level, set them on a par with their European overlords. It is in the wake of this endeavour to assume/regain a respectful self-identity that, in 1840s, several theatres [among other institutions] were spawned in the native quarters of Calcutta (1995, 20).

Moreover, the indigenous reform movements stemming from the colonial intervention into social practices also paved the way for the emergence of modern Indian theatre. Folk and traditional performances had already come under severe attack for being ‘licentious’, ‘immoral’ and ‘degraded’ by the British. The *Asiatic Journal* (1837), for instance, notes that “[T]he songs, tales, histories, in fact every thing connected with Asiatic amusements and literature, are, with few exceptions, more or less licentious” (1837, 28). The educated Indian middle class followed the British and condemned these performances as ‘degenerate’ that needed cleansing to become a ‘respectable’ viewing. English theatre also provided access to power and a cultural respectability – no doubt ‘colonial’ – for the middle-class. That is why, as Kathryn Hansen observes in connection with *jatra* in Bengal, the *bhadralok* tried to consolidate their position and exerted “increasing pressure on their womenfolk to conform to British standards of ideal womanly conduct. They considered women’s popular songs with their robust sense of humour and frank sensuality threatening to the new ideal of domestic order and heavily restricted elite women’s association with female performers” (255). Quoting Meredith Borthwick, Hansen says that Brahmo Samaj in Bengal “uncompromisingly condemned gambling, going to prostitutes, smoking, drinking, and the theater” (cited in Hansen 253). Literati like Bharatendu “declared most kinds of popular theatre ‘depraved’ and lacking in theatricality ... [and] championed a refined form of drama limited largely to drawing rooms and school auditoriums whose purpose would be to assist in the moral regeneration of the nation” (Hansen 253).

Modern Indian theatre could define itself against the ‘crude’ and ‘degenerate’ indigenous theatre by adopting Western theatre which was taken to be ‘high’ culture by the Indian elite. An example of such reverence towards the English theatre could be

Vishnu Das Bhave, the father of modern Marathi theatre, ‘who was so impressed by “the order, the seating arrangements, the curtains, the scenery etc” of the Grant Road Theatre that he produced his own play *Raja Gopichand* in 1853 with all the apparatus of English plays, “unperturbed by dislocating hybridities”’, observes Poonam Trivedi (14). Soon there was a flood of theatre buildings in Calcutta following the opening of the Hindu theatre on 28 December 1831.

II. Spread of English Education

The interest of the Indian elite in Western culture and theatre coincided with the British colonial policy of institutionalizing English education in India which played an important role in promoting Shakespeare and helped the growth of modern Indian theatre. The aim of imparting English education in India was from the very beginning a political strategy to consolidate British control over the subcontinent. In the words of Macaulay, English education was necessary to “form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern” (249).

The middle-class Indian accepting the colonial master as ‘saviour’ was more than willing to adopt western education. An example of such reverence towards western education is manifested in a letter written to one Rev. Henry Ware of Cambridge on February 2, 1824 by Ram Mohun Roy who felt “fully justified in stating that two-thirds of the native population of Bengal would be exceedingly glad to see their children educated in English learning” (Mitra 1967b, 434). This aim could not have been realized before establishing the Orient as uncivilized and justifying the ‘civilizing mission’ of the West. This involved creating stereotypes about the Orient and then defining the Occident against those stereotypes. This way of defining the Orient, argues Edward Said, is a corporate institution “dealing with it by making statements about it,

authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient” (1991, 3). As this knowledge about the Orient is created, the Occident could define itself against the Orient by making comparative evaluations and, thereby, emerging as the ‘superior’, and ‘civilized’ culture. The point that should be made note of here is that the knowledge created by the Orientalists is not objective but, as Said argues, “it is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures” (1980, 181). Once the Orient takes this construct to be true, it gives the ‘Occident’ the authority required to rule over the former. Gauri Vishwanathan notes:

Through its government-supported research and scholarly investigations Orientalism had produced a vast body of knowledge about the native subjects that the Anglicists subsequently drew upon to mount their attack on the culture as a whole (1989, 30).

Once the ‘superiority’ of the British was established, it turned to ‘educate’ the ‘uncivilized’ and ‘morally depraved natives’. However, under the guise of education there were political and economic interests of the British. The educated Indian would provide the British with cheap labour in the form of ‘baboo’ for administrative jobs and also, as Charles Trevelyan, a civil servant and brother-in-law of Macaulay, noted, “[T]hey will then cease to desire and aim at independence on the old Indian footing ... and a long continuance of our present connection with India will even be assured to us” (93). There was, however, a clash as to what should form the subject of study. The missionaries wanted to ‘educate’ and ‘civilize’ the ‘natives’ through religious morals and values of Christianity as was the case in England where the Church exerted influence on educational institutions. Along with the Bible, R. Nelson’s *The Whole*

Duty of a Christian Designed for the Charity Schools in and about London (1704); T. Green's *Principles of Religion for Charity Children*; Ellesby's *A Caution against Ill-company: The Dignity and Duty of a Christian and the Great Duty of Submission to the Will of God*; and White Kennett's *The Christian Scholar; or, Rules and Directions for Children and Youths sent to English Schools, more especially designed for the Poor Boys Taught and Cloathed by Charity in the Parish of St. Botolph's, Aldgate* (1710), among others, were taught in schools in England while "works of imagination" were kept out of the mainstream curriculum (Vishwanathan 1989, 70). However, the colonial authority feared violent reactions from the 'natives', especially the educated ones if such a religious education were to be imposed upon them. A more secular education was favoured for the 'moral upliftment' of the 'natives'. English literature and language was the best possible alternative for the British, although it had still not been established as a discipline in England itself, rather than religious studies or military control. Thus, literature was appropriated to inculcate among the natives European values, beliefs, assumptions and tastes. An ideological and a humanistic function was assigned to literature and language which was, as Gauri Vishwanathan argues, "vital in the process of sociopolitical control" (1987, 2). The desired role that literature was to play is clearly manifested in Horace Wilson's words who emphasised the need to "initiate them [Indians] into our literature, particularly at an early age, and get them to adopt feelings sentiments from our standard writers, can we make an impression on them, and effect any considerable alteration in their feelings and notions" (cited in Vishwanathan 1989, 48).

There were, however, two thoughts as to how the 'natives' should be educated suggested by the Orientalists and the Anglicists. The Oriental philosophy was based on the assumption that India had a 'glorious past' which was lost and that it was the 'white

man's burden' to *re*-cover the 'riches of Indian heritage' and thus to *re*-present the Indian (read: Hindu) identity. The Orientalists wanted to impart the education in European knowledge system through native languages along with indigenous forms of knowledge. A. A. Wilson writes,

Upon its [Sanskrit's] cultivation depends the means of native dialects to embody European learning and science. It is a visionary absurdity to think of making English the language of India. It should be extensively studied, no doubt, but the improvement of native dialects enriching them with Sanskrit terms for English ideas must be continued and to effect this, Sanskrit must be cultivated as well as English (cited in Kopf 505).

Thus there were '*re*-discoveries' of the 'glorious' Sanskrit literature and languages by Orientalists. William Jones's translation of *Shakuntalam* is an example. Frantz Fanon in his *Black Skins, White Masks* describes the polarization of a colonial culture into two categories — those who "threw themselves in a frenzied fashion into the frantic acquisition of the culture of the occupying power and (took) every opportunity of unfavourably criticizing their own national culture" and those who sought refuge in "setting out and substantiating the claims of their indigenous culture in a way which rapidly becomes unproductive" (1986, 190). In India, however, there seems to be a convergence of the two, thus making the English literary text, "not a site of conflict, but an accommodative ideal where the humanistic assumptions of that discipline could include both a Westernised consciousness and a revivalist one" (Loomba 15-16). Such an approach had the support of middle-class Indians who felt that western education would usher the revival of their own literature. The Hindu College founded in Calcutta

(1817) represented such thinking. Sir Edward Hyde East writes of his reminiscences of a meeting held on May 14, 1816 with the founders of Hindu College as follows:

the head pundit, in the name of himself and the others, said that they rejoiced in having lived to see the day when literature (many parts of which had formerly been cultivated in this country with considerable success, but which were now extinct) was about to be revived with great lusture and prospect of success than ever (cited in Kopf 182).

There was a palliating effect on the colonizer-colonized relationship but, this proximity did not augur well for the Hindu-Muslim amity. As Sudipto Chatterjee notes that the ‘otherness’ of the British was now “transferred to the Muslims who were now looked upon as invaders of the land (*jaban*) and corrupters of Hindu heritage (*mleccha*)” (2009, 100). The Muslim was thus disconnected from the mainstream of Bengali culture. The policy of creating nostalgia for the past among the Hindu Indians and the British duty to ‘re-cover’ for them provided a kind of authority to the British to ‘re-present’ the natives. This glorification of historical past was a colonial strategy “deliberately posited at the heart of the colonizer’s historiography to justify and consequently solidify the colonial enterprise” (Chatterjee 2009, 102).

Anglicists like T. B. Macaulay and Charles Trevelyan dismissed Indian literatures and languages and promoted English education among the natives. Macaulay’s (in)famous *Minute on Indian Education* (1835) arrogantly declared that “a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of Indian and Arabia” and that he had never “met with any Orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations” (241). Charles Trevelyan in *On the Education of the People of India* (1838)

justified the ‘civilizing mission’ and supported the need to educate the Indian middle and upper classes in the ‘superior’ European literature so that the natives would be able to produce their own ‘worthy’ literature. He writes,

The cases in which the most lasting impressions have been made upon national character, in which the *superior civilization* of one country has taken deepest root and fructified most abundantly in other countries, have a *strong general resemblance* to the case before us [in India]. In those cases the foreign systems of learning were first studied in the original tongue by the *upper and middle classes*, who alone possessed the necessary leisure. From this followed a diffusion of the knowledge contained in the foreign literature, a general inclination of the national taste towards it, and an assimilation of the vernacular language, by the introduction into it of numerous scientific and other terms. Last of all, the vernacular tongue began to be cultivated in its improved state; translations and imitations sprang up in abundance, and creative genius occasionally caught the impulse, and struck out a masterpiece of its own (36-7; italics mine).

The Anglicists finally won the debate between them and the Orientalists regarding the subject and medium of study. Consequently, English education and English language as the medium were institutionalized in 1835.

Whether it was introducing the natives to English knowledge and language or providing them access to English theatres, both were, in effect, manifestations of Gramscian ‘hegemony’ whereby “Domination is [thus] exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the

economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class's interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted" (Ashcroft et al. 116). Ania Loomba argues that English education offered "a programme of building a new man who would feel himself to be a citizen of the world while the very face of the world was being constructed in the mirror of the dominant culture of the West" (21). In this way, English education proved to be an effective tool of domination for the British as the Indian elite welcomed the advent of English education as a window to the new world which was 'rational' and culturally and morally 'superior'.

III. Shakespeare Productions in Calcutta

William Shakespeare is still considered the greatest achievement of his race and culture and the repository of Christian beliefs. Shakespeare formed the core of the curriculum of English education imposed by the British to inculcate in the natives codes of proper moral behaviour, culture and values. Even the missionaries who had earlier resisted the British policy of secular education in favour of a religious one found in Shakespeare, along with Goldsmith, a carrier of their agenda. Reverend William Keane uses Shakespeare for imparting Christian values to the natives. He comments,

Shakespeare, though by no means a good standard, is full of religion; it is full of the commonsense principles which none but Christian men can recognize. Sound Protestant Bible principles, though not actually told in words, are there set out to advantage, and the opposite often condemned. So with Goldsmith ... and many other books ... which are taught in the schools; though the natives hear they are not to be proselytized, yet such books have undoubtedly sometimes a favourable

effect in actually bringing them to us missionaries (cited in Singh 1996, 129).

Hence, from the beginning Shakespeare was made to bear the burden of the civilizing mission of the British. It was necessary therefore to valorize Shakespeare and represent his plays as ‘universal’, ‘timeless’ and ‘transcendental’. This proved quite successful as the native elite took to Shakespeare and made him synonymous with ‘universal humanism’. Such reception continued even in post-Independence India as is manifest in the following extract from the *Bulletin of the Shakespeare Society of India*:

Professor Datta observed that we read Shakespeare because he transcends all ages, nations, and cultures, and can, therefore, be assimilated into any age, nation, or culture. He deals with human beings, their sentiments and feelings, and since these do not change in any real sense, Shakespeare’s appeal is timeless and universal. Further the issues he raises, the clash of values he depicts, are relevant to us and to our situation ... On a more personal note Professor Datta confessed that in moments of crisis he recalls lines from Shakespeare and finds wisdom and consolation in them (cited in Singh 1989, 456).

In addition to the formal introduction of Shakespeare there were other reasons that helped strengthen Shakespeare’s position. For instance, Shakespeare was taught by Henry Derozio and D. L. Richardson who created among their students an unfading admiration for the dramatist. They were taught to recite lines from Shakespeare and enact them. Richardson advised his students to watch Shakespeare productions. Macaulay noted of Richardson: “I may forget everything else about India, but your reading of Shakespeare never” (cited in Presidency College, *Centenary Volume* 1956,

4). The 1853 Act which introduced competitive examination for civil services included English literature and language as optional subjects which included Shakespeare's plays. Also, the travelling companies that frequently visited India performed Shakespeare's plays and helped in popularizing them among the educated Indians. Soon it became a rage among the educated Bengalis to stage Shakespeare. As late as 1926, the English professor C.J. Sisson observed this fad for performing Shakespeare among Indian students who 'busy[ied] themselves almost exclusively with Shakespeare in English' (15).

The early 19th century Shakespearean productions in Calcutta which were mostly the student productions seem to be 'faithful' to English culture and language. Emily Eden, who spent some years in India with her brother in early 19th century, gives one such account of Calcutta College in her letters to her sister:

Yesterday we had an examination at Government House of the Hindu College, and the great banqueting-hall was completely filled with natives of the higher class. Some of the boys in their gorgeous dresses looked very well, reciting and acting scenes from Shakespeare. It is one of the prettiest sights I have seen in Calcutta (265).

Most notable students were the performances and recitations by the students of Hindu College and Sanskrit College. In 1837, the students performed *The Merchant of Venice* at the Government White House under the supervision of Dr. Wilson.

The period from 1837 to 1853 was quite dull for Bengali theatre. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee in his comprehensive study of Bengali theatre admits that "there is nothing known to happen in the Bengali theatre for about two decades" (15). *The Merchant of*

Venice was staged twice by the David Hare Academy students in 1853. The *Bengal Hurkara* of 28 Feb 1853 observes,

Mr. Clinger, Headmaster of the English Department of the Calcutta Madrassa gave instruction on Shakespeare's dramatic plays to the alumni of the David Hare Academy and succeeded in training some boys to the competent performance of the plays taught [to] them and accordingly the play took place on two *nights* in the hall of the Institution. The part of Shylock was pronounced the best and the Merchant of Venice etc. was rather defective which it was hoped, diligence and performance would perfect in time.

Hemendra Nath Dasgupta notes that the play was attended by some six or seven hundred Indians and Englishmen who were quite pleased with the performance (1988, 299). Other Shakespeare enthusiasts were to be found in the Oriental Seminary. In 1853, the students and ex-students of Oriental Seminary "raised a subscription of Rs.800 among themselves and with that the stage was built and dresses purchased" (*Bengal Hurkara*, 7 April 1853). The new theatre which was called Oriental Theatre was situated in the school premises. The theatre was established mainly for staging Shakespeare plays and opened on 26 September 1853 with a production of *Othello* with a repeat performance on 5 October 1853. The production received rave reviews from newspapers. *Bengal Hurkara* (28 Sep. 1853) appreciated the production for helping to 'improve' the native intellect:

The performers were, all of them, youngmen ... and the character which we feared would be the worst represented, was the best represented—Iago by Babu Prianath Dey [Dutt] was acted with an

evident knowledge of the character ... the mode in which they acquitted themselves must have given much satisfaction to every member of the audience who cares for the intellectual improvement of his native fellow-citizens.

Another performance at the “Oriental Theatre” was advertised in *The Citizen* (2 March 1854) thus:

The Oriental Theatre
No. 268, Gurranhatta, Chitpore Road,
The Merchant of Venice
Will be performed at the above Theatre
On Thursday, the 2nd March, 1854
By Hindu Amateurs
Doors open at 8 P. M.
Performance to commence at 8^{1/2} P.M.
Tickets to be had of Messers. F. W. Brown & Co. and Baboo
Woomesh Chunder Banerjee, Cashier, Spences Hotel.
Price of Tickets Rs. 2/- each.
The Tickets distributed will avail on the above evening.

The *Morning Chronicle* of the same day appealed to

[T]hose who are desirous of seeing how young native gentlemen can wear the buskin, should attend the Oriental Theatre this evening and we promise them that they will come away with a higher impression of native tragic talent than that which they may possibly, at present, be improved. We recollect some months ago witnessing at the same Theatre a performance of Othello and we presume the same company

will appear tonight, we have no doubt that they will be well worth-hearing.

The productions of Oriental Theatre are significant because they performances were open to public who could buy a ticket to watch them unlike the private theatres of Calcutta. But Oriental theatre had a short life and the last production was that of *Henry IV (Part I)* on 15 February 1855.

Apart from the student productions there were other productions held in private and public theatres in Calcutta. Pyari (Parry) Mohan Bose's Jorsanko Natyasala staged the much-acclaimed performance of *Julius Caesar* in English on 3 May 1854. *Sambad Pravakar* of 3 May 1854 showered praises on the production and compared it with the Oriental Theatre:

Pyari Babu's house was illumined and decorated in the nicest way. The audience numbered around 400, and would have been more but for rain and storm. Babu Mohendra Nath Bose acted in the role of Caesar, Kistoodhan Dutt of Brutus and Jadu Nath Chatterjee of Cassius and the artists were thus all of culture. Even the performance by the amateurs of the Oriental Theatre stood inferior in comparison, and they were astonished at the excellent way the performance of such a play was rendered.

However, *The Hindu Patriot* (11 May 1854) was quite critical of the production and condemned it for bastardizing the Bard:

We ourselves are the most steadfast admirers of the Drama. Nothing will give us greater pleasure than to behold Shakespeare springing into

new life under the histrionic talent of our educated countrymen, but we cannot calmly look on while the old gentleman is being murdered and mangled.

From the above discussion it is clear that early Bengali theatre and its Shakespearean productions in the 1850s were driven by a desire to 'imitate' the Western canons of drama and theatre. A change occurred in the post-eighteen fifties when the Bengali audience craved for Bengali plays. Newspapers started voicing the need to stage Bengali plays in Bengali theatres. The same review of *The Hindu Patriot* mentioned above further suggested that "the Joranskowallahs [to] take in hand a couple of good Bengallee plays and [we] will promise them success". In the same vein, the review of the Oriental Theatre's *Henry IV* lamented the lack of public response and advised the staging of Bengali plays (*The Hindu Patriot*, 21 Feb 1855). It was probably due to this reason that there was a decline in the number of Shakespearean productions from 1857 onwards. Bengali drama was on the rise. The first original Bengali play to be written was Ram Narayan Tarkaratna's *Kulin Kulasarvasa* in 1854 focuses on the evils of polygamy. The next twenty years saw the emergence of Bengali social drama when plays like Tarkaratna's *Kulin Kulasarvasa* and *Naba-Natak* (1867), Umesh Chandra Mitra's *Bidhba Bibaha* (1856), Michael Madhusudan Dutt's *Sarmistha* (1859) and Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nildarpan* (1860), were staged. 1872 witnessed the establishment of first Bengali public theatre — National Theatre — though housed in a private residence. Soon more public theatres were opened in Calcutta like Hindu National Theatre (1873), Oriental Theatre (1873), Bengal Theatre (1873), Star Theatre (1883), Minerva Theatre (1893), Emerald Theatre (1887) and Unique Theatre (1903). However, the emergence of professional theatres in Calcutta saw the decline of the newly born Bengali social drama. Perhaps a reason for this was the institution of Dramatic

Performances Control Act of 1876. Rustom Bharucha says that professional Bengali theatre of the time “was not equipped to deal with the rigors of censorship on a theatrical level” (23). He adds,

For the most part, the plays of the Bengali theatre between 1872 and 1912 included musicals, domestic comedies, sensationalized versions of mythological stories, and religious melodramas based on the lives of saints and devotees. Even historical subjects were pretexts for escapist entertainments that specialized in songs, dances, theatrical tricks, spectacular devices, and melodrama (23).

One finds Bengali theatre of the last quarter of the 19th century following the footsteps of Parsi theatre in Bombay. It was around this time that Shakespeare plays began to be staged again with vigour albeit with a difference. His plays were performed in Bengali by professional Bengali theatres. The trend was to ‘Indiannise’ and to assimilate the plays. Hemchandra Bandopadhyay, for instance, in his “Introduction” to the translation of *Romeo and Juliet* defends his indigenization of the play in the following words:

I have tried to present the story of the play of Shakespeare and the essential features of the characters in a native mould to suit the taste of the readers of my country. I cannot say how successful I have been. But I believe that without adopting such a method no foreign play will ever find a place in Bengali literature, which will be denied nourishment and advancement. After a period of such exercises, faithful translations of foreign plays and poems will find acceptance in Bengali literature. But now, for some time to come, I believe, this method is indispensable (cited in Das 58).

Those who failed to indigenize Shakespeare were rejected by the audience, as for an example Girish Ghosh's *Macbeth* (1893).

The earliest Bengali production of Shakespeare on the public stage was probably *The Comedy of Errors* in 1873. Nothing much is known about the performance. The following year saw the productions of *Cymbeline* (*Kusum Kumari*) and *Macbeth* (*Rudrapal*). *Kusum Kumari*, an adaptation of *Cymbeline* by Chandrakali Ghosh, was staged at the National Theatre. *Macbeth* was adapted by Haralal Ray as *Rudrapal* for The Great National Theatre and performed in 1874. R. K. Yajnik notes that the adaptation was too literal to impress the ordinary playgoers (176). Ray had only changed the English names to Hindu ones. Sarottama Majumdar observes, “contemporary accounts report an unruly and abusive audience who actually managed at one performance to have the play abandoned halfway through” (237). Girish Chandra Ghosh's *Macbeth* was staged on the opening night of Minerva Theatre in 1893. The event was reported by the newspapers as an important one in the history of Bengali theatre. Ghosh considered Shakespeare to be his model. Raha informs us that “Girish Ghosh had wanted the average theatergoer to be acquainted with the Bard's plays and nursed the hope of producing a number of his tragedies” (41). However, Ghosh's dream was shattered after the dismal failure of *Macbeth* which he had translated the play himself and produced. The advertisement in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* on 28 January 1893 appeared as follows:

Opening Night/ The Minerva Theatre/ 6 Beadon Street

Saturday, the 28th January, 9 P. M./ Shakespeare in

Bengal/

MACBETH

I have got the piece mounted by European Artists and

Dressed it under European supervision and “make up”

by Mr. J. Pimm.

G. C. Ghosh

Manager

The set was mounted by one Mr. Weelard. Ghosh himself played the part of Macbeth with Teenkouri as Lady Macbeth. The production proved to be a boon for Teenkouri's career as she left an impression on the minds of the audience. The *Indian Nation* of 20 February 1893 praised Teenkouri's histrionics and commented, “[I]t is impossible to say of a Shakespearean play that it has been acted to perfection, but we can say of this play that it was acted very well at the Minerva. The parts that were especially well done were those of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, who had a Mrs. Siddons- like appearance”. Mukherjee provides the names of other members of the cast: Malcolm (Surendra Nath Ghosh/Dani Babu), Macduff (Aghore Pathak), Lady Macduff (Pramada), Porter, Old Man, First Witch, First Murderer and Doctor (Ardhenu Mustafi) and Banquo (Kumud Sarkar) (82). The failure of this production is significant as it throws light on the Bengali taste of the time. While it was well received by the elite Indians and the Anglo-

Indian newspapers, the masses rejected it. *The Englishman* (8 February 1893) commented,

The Second performance of *Macbeth* was shown before a large audience including several European gentlemen. Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh, the manager, played the part of Macbeth and the play as a whole was well rendered. A Bengali Thane of Cawdor is a living suggestion of incongruity, but the reality is an astonishing reproduction of the standard convention of the English stage.

The *Hindu Patriot* published a lengthy review of the production:

The representation of *Macbeth* in the Minerva Theatre on Saturday last as the opening piece, marks a new departure in the dramatic history of Bengal. The novelty of the representation, as well as the excellence of the general get-up, had attracted a large audience which turned out to be an appreciative one. Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh, the father of the modern stage of Bengal, as he may be rightly called, had the whole work under his personal supervision, commencing with the translation of the masterpiece and including the scenery and dresses which were as correct and effective as might be desired. The success became, therefore, a foregone conclusion, when Babu Girish Chandra took the leading character. The part of Lady Macbeth is always one of great difficulty, even in the hands of accomplished actresses, and it is not much of surprise if it was not so well done as might have been desired. But as time wears on, better results may be expected. The other actors sustained their parts very well and the witch-scene was full of mystic

terrors that impressed themselves deeply upon the audience. It is difficult to predict whether translations of Shakespearean masterpieces will be favourably received as a rule. If this does not turn out to be the case, Macbeth bids fair to prove an exception. The pavilion has been built and fitted up at enormous cost and the best dramatic talent of the city has been engaged (cited in Dasgupta 1944, 116).

However, the play had to be withdrawn from the boards after ten productions. The reason for the failure of the production on the box-office might have been many. However, the most important among the many reasons, which Ghosh himself admitted, was the lack of songs and dances. In a letter addressed to a friend of his, he wrote, “most go to see songs and dances, few for drama. The public are [*sic.*] too uneducated to appreciate Shakespeare” (cited in Raha 41). However, there was more to that. Although Ghosh had translated the play from English to Bengali, he did not take away the ‘foreignness’ from the text. The stage was English, the costumes were English, the make-up was English, the locale was Scotland, in fact the whole context was foreign. Ghosh had failed to notice that the Bengali desire of imitating the Western canon of drama and theatre by the late nineteenth century had given way to the more local aesthetics. The Bengali audiences of public theatres did not want mere substitution of names or locales in Bengali but wanted a genuine Bengali play steeped in Bengali culture. In fact, during the late 19th century there was a debate regarding as to how Bengali theatre should develop. *Madhyastha*, a literary journal, published an article by Nripendra Saha emphasizing the need to include songs in Bengali theatre:

Some members of our modern educated community believe that theatre does not require songs at all. They have subjected themselves to such a belief having noted the lack of songs in the European theatre.

However, they have failed to contemplate that India is not Europe, European society and our own society are very different, European tastes and our tastes are credibly independent of each other (cited in Chatterjee 2007, 160-1).

There was only one way for foreign playwrights to be accepted by the general public. As Sudipto Chatterjee argues:

[...] when the principles of Shakespearean drama were applied unannounced to indigenous dramas, the plays were well received. In other words, the Bengali audience did not object to hybridity, but disliked direct imports. The blind respect for everything Sanskrit and/or Shakespearean had given way to a firm basis for an indigenous aesthetics that fed on both the foreign and the native (2007, 159).

This brings me to another production of Shakespeare by Amrendra Datta on 21 June 1897 which was a huge success with the audience. The production was *Hariraj*, an adaptation of *Hamlet* by Nagendra Nath Chaudhuri for Classic Theatre (1897-1906). The play ran for almost three years in Calcutta theatres. Amrendra Nath played Hariraj while Tarasundari acted as Aruna and in later productions as Srilekha. The play had a huge success unlike Ghosh's *Macbeth* and many others that met the same fate. The *Indian Mirror* of 22 May 1900 praised Amrendranath extravagantly and wrote, "[W]e must confess that Babu Amrendranath, rightly called by the theater going public the Garrick of the Bengal stage, absolutely surpassed himself in it (*Hariraj*)". Another review in *The Hindu Patriot* of 20 June 1899 praised the performance: "The popular and evergreen tragedy *Hariraj* was put on the stage of the Classic Theatre on Sunday last ... The management of the Theatre is excellent and it has spared no expense in the

direction either of dress or scenery to make the play attractive ... The parts played by Hariraj (Amrendranath Dutta) and Aroona (Sreemutty Tara Soondary) are undoubtedly praiseworthy". Amrendra Nath succeeded where Ghosh had failed—in 'indigenizing' Shakespeare. Raha notes Amrendra Nath's anticipation,

Amrendra Dutta foresaw that unless served as Bengali plays with names, locales, characters and situations metamorphosed into native equivalents—unless, that is, they were free adaptations—Shakespeare or, for that matter, any foreign playwright had little chance with the audience (76-7).

Another reason for the easy acceptance of *Hariraj* with the audience was that, to follow Chatterjee's argument, it did not acknowledge any relation with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thus, for the Bengali masses *Hariraj* was a genuine Bengali play without any foreign air about it. Moreover, catering to the demands of the audience, Datta had incorporated a number of songs and dances. Shormishta Panja notes, "Bengali theatre historians revere Ghosh as a giant of nineteenth century Bengali theatre and have mostly uncharitable things to say about Dutta, criticizing him for trivializing the dignity of the theatre. Still, Dutta's efforts to attract the average Bengali to the theatre presented an alternative to colonial staging practices and brought the theatre much closer to the relatively informal and interactive staging of Shakespeare's plays in Elizabethan England" (219).

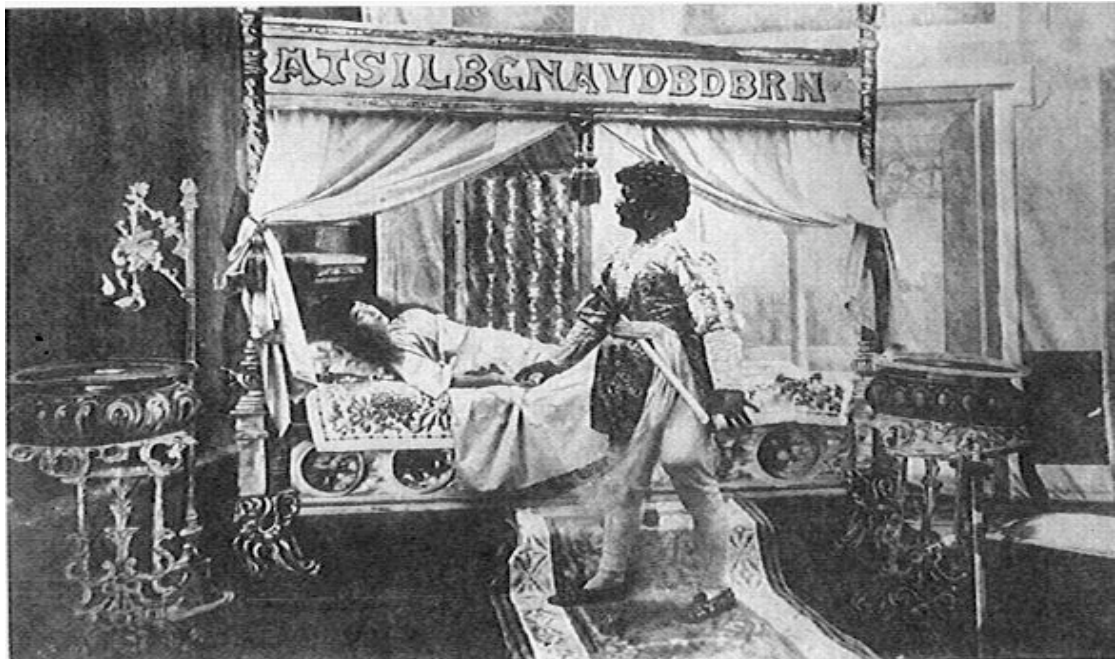
The period from 1912 to 1922 in Bengali theatre is generally regarded as the period of decline. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee argues that with the death of Girish Ghosh in 1912, the Bengali theatre started declining (126-47). By 1912, the well-known dramatists and actors of the Bengali public stage had gone. The decade did not produce

many plays of merit. It was probably due to the absence of worthy plays in Bengali that the one finds some adaptations of Shakespeare during this period. However, these adaptations did not go very well with the audiences. In 1913, Minerva Theatre staged *Cleopatra*, an adaptation of the original by Pramathanath Bhattacharya. The play had Tarasundari in the title role and Dani Babu as Antony. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (5 Sep. 1913) advertised the play having, “new princely costumes and superb sceneries made in accordance with Western ideals, which with a very rich cast and loved songs and dances will certainly prove to be a unique display”. Nothing much is known about the performance. However, a guess can be made by looking at the title which suggests it to be a ‘faithful’ translation of the original. It might not have succeeded much as there is hardly anything documented about the performance. Another performance of Shakespeare entitled *Saudagar* featured Amrendranath again in 1915 at Star Theatre. *Saudagar* was an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* by Bhupendranath Banerjee. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee provides the list of the actors in the production (130-1):

KULIRAKA Amarendra Nath Dutt
 BASANTA KUMAR Kunja Chakraverty
 NATABAR Kasinath Chatterjee
 PRATIVA Kusumkumari
 NIRAJA Narayani
 ANIL KUMAR Dhiren Mukherjee
 NIRANJAN Manmatha Pal
 MOHANLAL Surendra Nath Ghosh
 JUTHICA Ascharyamoyee

The performance at the Star Theatre, unfortunately, turned out to be the last performance of Amrendra Nath. While performing the role of Kuliraka, Amrendranath vomited blood and later on died.

After Amrendranath's death, it was only in 1919 that a Shakespeare play was staged at Star Theatre. The play was a Bengali translation of *Othello* by Devendranath Basu and had the following cast: Othello (Palit), Iago (Aparesh Babu), Cassio (Probodh Bose), Desemona (Tara Sundari) and Nerissa (Neroda Sundari) ((Dasgupta 1944, 176). *The Bengalee* (15 March 1919) praised Tarasundari: "We were assured by more than one critic that the acting of Desdemona approached perfection and the heroine had shown a remarkable power of adaptability which extorted unstinted praise from the audience". However, except Tarasundari and Dani Babu, the production could not capture the attention of the audience. H. N. Dasgupta notes, "[T]he sales in the first night were good, but fell down from the second. None of the parts except that of Tarasundari was done to the spirit of the dramatist" (1944, 177). *Othello* shared the same reason which was responsible for the failure of Ghosh's *Macbeth*. The translator had tried to be 'faithful' to the original which did not match the expectations of the audience.



Othello prepares to kill Desdemona: Bengali Othello, Star Theatre, Kolkata, 1919. Translated by Debendranath Basu. Tarkanath Palit as Othello, Tarasundari as Desdemona.

1920s witnessed a sea change in the Bengali theatre. Sushil Kumar Mukherjee notes, “the public theatre in Calcutta underwent a radical change in drama and production, scenes and lighting arrangements, dress and properties, as well as in external arrangements and administrative matters” (152). As far as the content of the drama is concerned the focus once again shifted to the social and the political instead of mythological or supernatural which later found manifestation in Indian People’s Theatre Association (IPTA). It was the availability of Bengali dramas now that might have pushed Shakespeare to the margins as there were not many Shakespeare plays being staged in Bengali theatre after the 1920s. Another reason might have been the growing fervour of nationalism when a foreign playwright would need to struggle to find a place. The flip side of this view could be that through the process of its ‘indigenization/Indiannizing’, Shakespeare plays were also used as social critique as well as for nationalistic comments. With the growing momentum of the freedom movement, Shakespeare plays lost ground to more overt and fervent nationalistic articulations. Sarottama Majumdar argues that “the public stage and Bengali playwrights consciously attempted to free themselves from his [Shakespeare’s] influence in order to find an individual voice and identity in keeping with the growing flavour of nationalism in the country” (237). It was only after the Independence that Shakespeare was taken up by the Bengali stage for production with a new zeal evident in Utpal Dutt’s productions of Shakespeare’s plays. The latest Shakespeare production in Calcutta is Suman Mukhopadhyaya’s *Raja Lear* (2011) with Soumitra Chatterjee in the title role.

Notes

¹ 1813 was the year when Chowrangee Theatre was opened and was the first to have an Indian, Dwarka Nath Tagore as one of its founders.

² It was not as if there were no Bengali plays ever staged. About half a century ago, Gerasim Lebedeff, a Russian adventurer, had started The Bengalee Theatre at Doomtoolah in Calcutta in 1795, '[D]ecorated in the Bengalee style' where a Bengali translation of *The Disguise* was performed with a Bengali cast. Again in 1835, at Nabin Chandra Basu's private theatre a play based on *Bidya Sunder*, a Bengali poem by Bharat Chandra (1712-1760) was staged. However, these sporadic efforts could not produce immediate results. It was during the second half of the century that Bengali plays were staged.

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Chapter III

Appropriating Shakespeare in Parsi Theatre

There is but one country in the world, to the best of my knowledge, except possibly Germany, where the plays of Shakespeare have of recent times formed the safest and surest attraction to the indiscriminate masses who attend popular theatres, where the proprietor of a theatre could count on a profit on a Shakespeare production. That country is India, and the theatres in question are a group of theatres in the city of Bombay, clustered together in the heart of a poor Indian population (Sisson 7).

This chapter looks at the way Shakespeare's plays were appropriated by Parsi theatre, one of the major theatre movements in the history of modern Indian theatre. The chapter is divided into five sections. Section I, "Some Research-Related Problems" discuss various problems involved in dealing with Shakespeare in Parsi theatre. Section II, "Parsis and the Public Sphere", discusses the emergence of public sphere in Bombay and the role played by the Parsis. Parsi theatre too emerged as a part of Parsi philanthropy that regarded theatre as a civic and cultured activity. The failure to locate Parsi theatre in this context has led many theatre scholars to argue that Parsi theatre from its very inception was 'commercial' with profit as its sole motive. I argue that this aspect holds true for the later Parsi theatre and not in the beginning. Only in the 1870s Parsi theatre became thoroughly professional and 'commercial'. Section III, "Locating Parsi Theatre" defines Parsi theatre and provides a short history of its emergence and development. Section IV, "Parsi Theatre and Shakespeare Productions" deals with

various productions of Shakespeare in Parsi theatre which were largely free adaptations. In adapting Shakespeare's plays, plots, characters, locales, situations were 'Indiannised' sometimes to such an extent that the productions hardly resembled the originals. Section V, "Parsi Theatre and the (Post-)Colonial 'Hybridity'", discusses the problems involved in locating Parsi theatre within the discourse of postcolonial "hybridity". The eclectic nature of Parsi theatre and its free borrowings from various sources might make it seem "hybrid" in the sense of Bhabha's notion of "hybridity". However, a close study of Parsi theatre reveals that there was no desire to 'mimic' European theatre in order to "*become like that*" which is so central to Bhabha.

Parsi theatre has played an important role among various factors that assisted the birth of modern Indian theatre. Although Parsi theatre like its predecessors looked towards the Western theatre, especially Shakespeare for its inspiration and development yet it appropriated both the Western theatre and Shakespeare. The young English-educated Parsis were already familiar with Shakespeare and led by their British teachers had been performing his plays during their school and college days as amateur activity. Hence, once Parsi theatre began its activities it was no surprise that Shakespeare would be one of the major sources in its repertoire. Probably the most important factor in popularizing Shakespeare in India was Parsi theatre. Shakespeare and Parsi theatre worked well for each other. While Shakespeare helped Parsi theatre to establish itself as an important theatre movement Parsi theatre helped popularise Shakespeare in India by taking theatre beyond the educated elite circuit of the metropolis to the masses of the mofussil. Shakespeare provided the necessary material to cater to the needs of the audience — action, spectacle, rhetoric, declamation and thrill. In short, Shakespearean melodrama helped Parsi theatre find a potential and secure industry.

Parsi theatre, however, was quite a complex phenomenon which requires an understanding of the socio-economic and cultural developments that were taking place in the 19th century Bombay. The beginnings of Parsi theatre lie in the emerging discourses on public sphere, civic activities, cultural philanthropy and social reform that the 19th century Bombay was witnessing. The failure to locate Parsi theatre in this context has led many theatre scholars to argue that from its inception Parsi theatre was ‘commercial’ with profit as its sole motive. I argue that this aspect holds true for the later Parsi theatre. Early Parsi theatre was promoted by the Parsis as a civic and cultured activity. Only in the 1870s Parsi theatre became thoroughly professional and commercial. Therefore, it is important to locate Parsi theatre in these emerging discourses of the 19th century. However, before going into the study of Parsi theatre and Shakespeare, let me list some research-related problems that are involved in dealing with Parsi theatre.

I. Some Research-Related Problems

1. To trace the beginnings of Parsi theatre one needs to rely on newspaper advertisements and reviews, play-scripts, memoirs, song-books, biographies and letters. This is troublesome as the reliability of some such documents is doubtful. Relying on a newspaper review is problematic as it is quite probable that the reviewer’s own prejudice depending upon the ideology that newspaper may have influenced his comments. For example, the ‘colonial’ agenda of the Anglo-Indian newspaper *Bombay Telegraph and Courier* or the reformist agenda of Parsi-Gujarati weekly *Rast Gofar* determined the nature of the review of a particular production in the mid-19th century Bombay theatre.

2. Many of the extant play-scripts may not be the ‘original’ plays written by the Parsi playwrights but afterthoughts.
3. Another problem arises due to the fact that plagiarism was a common practice. A popular play was quite often published by another playwright with some alterations. One such example is the extant play-script of *Khudadad* in Urdu which is a translation of Shakespeare’s *Pericles, the Prince of Tyre*. Javed Malick notes that although the play was originally written by a playwright called Karimuddin Murad, the extant version bears the name of Mahmood Mian Zarif (2009, 170). In all probability, the extant play is a pirated version of Murad’s *Khudadad*. Also, *Dil Farosh* (1900) is an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* by Agha Hashra Kashmiri. But there is another play by this name which is attributed to Munshi Mehdi Hasan ‘Ahsan’ by Ganga Prasad Arora who re-presented the play in Devnagari script. J. P. Mishra argues that perhaps due to the similarities of Kashmiri and Urdu scripts it is very probable that it was the same play and Arora had mistakenly named ‘Ahsan’ as its adapter (41).
4. Yet another problem is that the source material on Parsi theatre is spread across a number of regional languages like Gujarati, Urdu and Marathi in addition to English and Hindi, limiting the access to the non-speaker of the regional languages.

II. Parsis and the Public Sphere

The early history of Bombay shows it to be a cluster of seven separate islands ruled by different rulers.¹ In the 16th century the Portuguese arrived in Bombay and controlled it till the mid 17th century. In 1661, Bombay ceded to the British consequent to the marriage treaty between Charles II and the Infanta Catherine of Portugal (Shroff 3). In the year 1668, the British Crown transferred the control of Bombay to the East

India Company (Shroff 3). After the Portuguese pullout, the British started developing Bombay as a commercial centre. Thus began the history of Bombay's 'capitalisation' and 'imperialisation'.² It was at this point of time that many Parsis migrated from Surat to Bombay.³ By the end of the 17th century there were several Parsi families in Bombay as it appears from the following account by Sir Streynsham Master:

Here is allsoe some Parsees, but they are lately come since the English had the Island, and most of them are weavers, and have not yet any place to doe their Devotion in or to Bury their Dead
(cited in Yule 2001, 9).

As the result of the British imperial project, Bombay underwent significant number of social, economic and cultural changes. Parsis in Bombay played a major role in ushering these changes. From the beginning the British relied on the Parsis for trade and commerce. An important reason for this may be their recognition of the enterprising nature of the Parsis and their readiness to accept English language and culture. Parsi merchants worked in close conjunction with the British which led to this mutual prosperity. The material prosperity of the Parsis can be estimated from the information published in the *Gazetteer of Bombay (1900-1910)* that by 1805, 'Bombay had 16 leading Parsi firms and 2 Parsi China agencies, as against 3 Portuguese, 4 Armenian, 15 Hindu and 4 Bohra firms' (cited in Shroff 12). The commercial partnership with the British also helped the wealthy Parsi merchants to forge socio-political links with the latter that helped them to create a cultural and public space for themselves in the colonial society of Bombay. Jesse S. Palsetia explains that under the colonial regime the wealthy Indians in proximity to the British "drew upon a set of new words and phrases ... the public good, good governance, humanitarianism and loyalty" (82). However, the meanings of these words and models were appropriated that created "a colonial civic

culture receptive and sensitive to Indian requirements” (82). I contend that Parsi theatre too was an outcome of this civic culture as discussed in the chapter. In order to create a public space for themselves, the wealthy Parsi merchants engaged in public welfare. Such civic activities undertaken by various Parsi merchants like Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy, Dadabhai Naoroji and others have been documented at length. An important reason for the Parsis to gain power in the public sphere of Bombay was the cosmopolitan nature of the city itself. In other words, the absence of any dominating tradition encouraged a minority group like the Parsi community to gain an important position at the centre of the social, economic, cultural and public life of Bombay. David Willmer notes:

Unlike older Indian cities, such as Delhi with its Mughal culture or Benares with its Sanskritic tradition, or other imperial cities, such as Calcutta and Madras, which were distinctly Bengali or Tamil in character, Bombay was characterized by an ecumene that was markedly more cosmopolitan or ‘ethnically diverse’ in nature. Although Bombay was situated in the province of Maharashtra, the Marathi tradition was by no means the only influence on the city’s public formation. Gujarati (Hindu, Muslim and Jain as well as Parsi) traditions were at the very least equally as prominent at all stages in Bombay’s history. Furthermore, this absence of a single dominant cultural tradition meant that other, numerically smaller communities (such as Goan Christians and Baghdadi Jews) had greater access to public space (48).

Thus the role of Parsis in developing a public space in Bombay is an immensely significant one. An appropriate example here would be that of Sir Jamsetji Jeejeebhoy who besides being a wealthy merchant played a crucial role in the development of

public culture in early colonial society of Bombay. He was also one of the earliest patrons of modern theatre in Bombay. Having made fortune in various business ventures in collaboration with the British, Jeejeebhoy was able to carve out a space for himself in the British society of Bombay. His proximity to the British allowed him to use British contacts to “shape his image as a great philanthropist and eminent citizen and to enhance the potentialities of Indians in the public culture of colonial urban Bombay” (Palsetia 83). He engaged in welfare activities and collaborated with the colonial government on various public projects like establishing western India’s first civil hospital, educational institutions for the native students, and various public charities. Recognising his role in the public welfare of India, the British government conferred upon him for the first time on an Indian the title of baronet in 1842.

Theatre, too, was a part of this public discourse as it was seen “as the public manifestation of the respectable, ‘gentlemanly’ civic culture of the mercantile and administrative elite in that city, and not merely as a source of popular entertainment for the masses” (Willmer 104). This is evident from the fact that the English and Gujarati newspapers of Bombay supported the cause of Parsi theatre and played an important role in its establishment and consolidation. There was extensive coverage of Parsi performances in the form of advertisements, reviews and previews. Kathryn Hansen maintains, “[T]his coverage established a bourgeois, public space for theatre, linking it to adjacent discourses of respectability, civic order and moral reform” (2008, 63). There is ample evidence of equating theatre with civic-mindedness. For instance, *Rast Gofar* of 15 December 1867 informs its readers about a performance of Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors* emphasising that the proceeds would go to a public gymnasium. Another notice of a play called *The Tale of Padshah Faredun* by the Parsi Theatrical

Company published in *Rast Gofar*, 25 February 1855 informs the readers that the earnings would contribute to the patriotic fund:

PARSI THEATRE

For the benefit of the Patriotic Fund

The Parsi Theatrical Company

wishes to inform the public that its twelfth show

will take place

on February 27th in the Grant Road Theatre

during which the following plays will be performed:

The Tale of Padshah Faredun

and an amusing farce entitled Uthaugir Surti.

Ticket prices: Rs 2.50, 1.50, 1.25, pit Re 1.

It is clear that the rich Parsi merchants promoted theatre as cultural philanthropy. Due to the efforts of Jeejeebhoy and a fellow Parsi Framji Cowasji the Grant Road Theatre was opened in 1846, the first public theatre of Bombay, with the help of one Shankarseth. It was due to such acts that “Indian financial and civic leaders embraced theatre as an object of cultural philanthropy and demonstrated their status and taste, laying the foundation for much broader participation by the Bombay populace in years to come” (Hansen 2008, 65).

The contribution of wealthy merchants like Jeejeebhoy also presents an example of colonial ‘agency’. The question of colonial ‘agency’ has perplexed many contemporary theorists. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin define ‘agency’ as

the ability to act or perform an action. In contemporary theory, it hinges on the question of whether individuals can freely and

autonomously initiate an action, or whether the things they do are in some sense determined by the ways their identity has been constructed. Agency is particular important in post-colonial theory because it refers to the *ability of post-colonial subjects to initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power* (8; italics mine).

If one takes ‘agency’ to be the ability of (post)colonial subjects to ‘initiate action in engaging or resisting imperial power’, then colonial subjects like Jeejeebhoy were able to create a space within the colonial society where they could ‘choose’ to act as agents of social, economic and cultural change, if not (at least initially) political. Moreover, their ‘resistance’ to imperial power can be located not in the outright rejection of colonialism but in the appropriation of Western beliefs, values and models to suit their own requirements. An example of this appropriation as resistance is the way Parsi theatre appropriated western theatre and drama, especially Shakespeare, to suit the audience sensibility. It was this appropriation of the western theatre conventions that inverted the (post)colonial ‘hybridisation’ of Parsi theatre which many post-colonial critics would not agree with. For such scholars, Parsi theatre was essentially ‘hybrid’, in the sense of Bhabha’s notion of ‘hybridity’, which I refute in the later section of this chapter. It is in recognition of the ‘agency’ created by the Parsis that Eckehard Kulke in the title of his work refers to the Parsis as ‘a minority as agent of social change’.

III. Locating Parsi Theatre

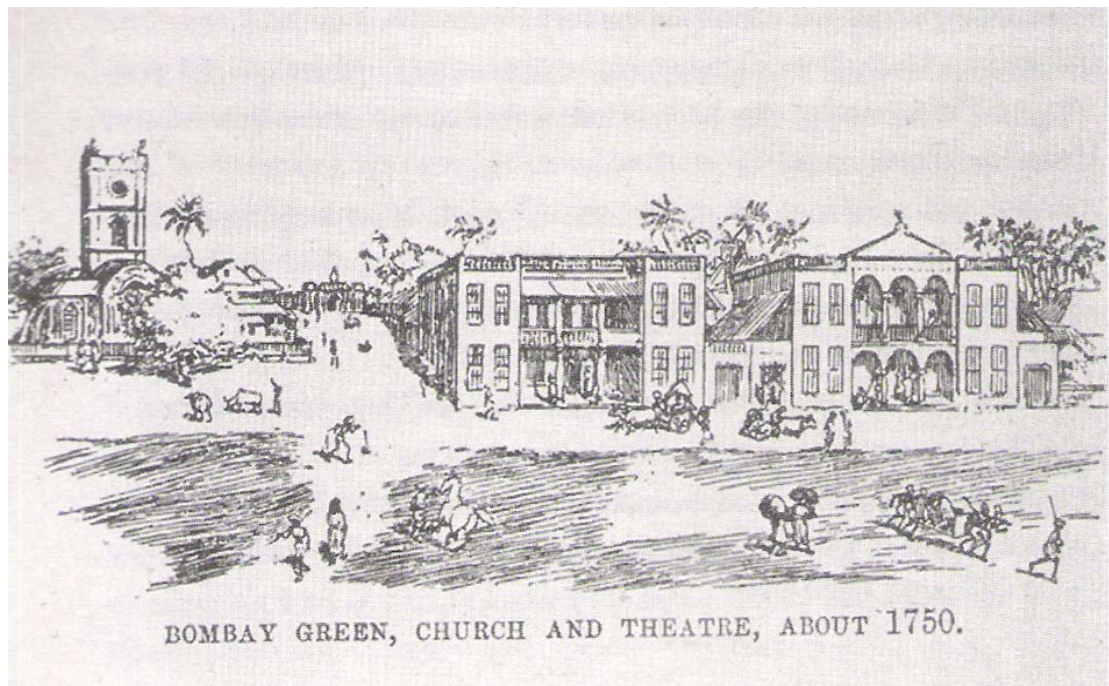
Parsi theatre came into being in the 1850s in Bombay. However, this does not mean that there was no theatre prior to that in Bombay. The earliest institution established around 1776 was the Bombay Theatre located on the Bombay Green. It was the first colonial theatre of Bombay. In 1835 the theatre was sold to Jamshedji

Jeejeebhoy due to the increasing debts. After paying off the debts the balance was deposited in the government account. The theatre remained closed for the next 10 years. However, the increasing pressure of the public to open a playhouse led the government to allocate the money generated by the sale of the old theatre for constructing a new theatre. A new theatre named the Grant Road Theatre was built with a generous contribution by Jeejeebhoy on the land donated by Shankarseth in 1846. This theatre has been variously referred to as the Grant Road Theatre, the Royal Theatre and Shankarseth's Old Playhouse. For the sake of convenience I refer to it as the Grant Road Theatre throughout the chapter. It was during this time that Parsi theatre was born.

The relocation of the Bombay Theatre from the Green to Grant Road proved a blessing for Parsi theatre. The Green had been the centre of cultural and social life of the Europeans as it was easily accessible from the 'Fort' where most of the Europeans resided. The new theatre at Grant Road was farther away. It became increasingly difficult for the Europeans to travel that far. Consequently the volume of the European audience gradually declined. On the other hand, the wealthy Indian merchants who inhabited the 'Native Town' comprised the 'new' spectatorship. The neighbourhood had become an important commercial centre for Indians which provided impetus to the growth of population in this area. The Grant Road neighbourhoods like Kamthipura had already been populous with the working classes. The inconvenience thus caused due to the long distance that the English had to travel and the increase in the native population in the area worked well for the Indian theatre-going public. As Kathryn Hansen writes:

Grant Road was shortly populated by a number of other theatre houses including the Elphinstone, the Victoria Theatre, the Hindi Natyashala, the Grand Theatre, the Ripon and others. This district, separate from the better neighbourhoods of South Bombay, suited theatre managers

intent on attracting a larger, more heterogeneous audience. Proximity to Khetwadi, Mazagaon and Girgaum ensured that the Hindu middle class would have ready access, just as the location of Market, Umarkhadi and Mandvi nearby invited Muslims. As textile mills mushroomed in Tardeo adjoining Grant Road to the west, workers availed of the chance to amuse themselves after long hours of employment (2002, 43).



The Bomay Theatre in the eighteenth century. Source: Vidyavati L. Namra, *Hindi Rangmanch aur Pandit Narayanprasad Betab* (1972) (Illustrated in Gupt 10).

The Grant Road Theatre succeeded in thus broadening the audience base by including working classes. It is here in the Grant Road Theatre that Parsi theatre's origins lie.

Although Parsi theatre emerged in the 1850s, the wealthy Bombay merchants, many of whom were Parsis, had been watching English theatre at the Bombay Green. Kathryn Hansen comments that these wealthy merchants might have been invited by the

English “in return for hosting their colleagues at entertainments such as nautch parties” (46). The role of the wealthy Bombay merchants as is evident from the fact that they contributed to the renovation of this theatre in 1830. These Parsi merchants submitted the following petition in 1840 to the Governor Sir James Carnac for a new playhouse:

The Humble Memorial of the undersigned Inhabitants of Bombay and others — Sheweth That your Memorialists are of opinion that the General public feeling in Bombay is Favourable to the erection of a Theatre for the purpose of Dramatic entertainment. There being no place of public amusement in the Island and that such a measure would promote good humour and tend to induce a desirable tone of feeling in Society at large, Your Memorialists regret deeply that the former Bombay Theatre which was identified with so many pleasant recollections should have been destroyed, and fallen a sacrifice to debt and want of efficient patronage (cited in Hansen 2002, 40).

It was due to the efforts of these merchants that the Grant Road Theatre was constructed and later paved the way for Parsi theatre. The above account is also indicative of the growing civic leadership, the need for public sphere and cultural philanthropy.

Somnath Gupt argues that the growth of Hindu theatre in the neighbouring areas had an important role to play in the development of Parsi theatre (27). The Khetvadi Theatre established in 1846, for example, had started performing Sanskrit plays translated into Marathi. Unlike the Grant Road Theatre, this theatre, in all probability, was “an open-air theatre, with the stage constructed after the traditional folk style and folk traditions followed for audience seating, entrance of characters, etc.” (28). *The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce* of 1846 reported about this theatre in the following words:

Our readers are not generally aware that an attempt which has hitherto proved eminently successful, has lately been made to revive the legitimate Hindoo Drama in Bombay. The theatre in Khetwaddy, where this has been attempted, is as yet without moveable scenes and ... what is usually reckoned the pit serves the purpose of the stage, benches all round rise tier about tier, and are occupied rightly by hundreds of respectable, well-conducted, and most attentive natives of all classes and creeds (cited in Gupt 27).

This theatre, asserts Gupt, must have given impetus to Parsi theatre.

It is a challenging proposition to define Parsi theatre because the process of which Parsi theatre was the result is itself quite complex. There are two main problems in defining Parsi theatre. Firstly, there are scholars who do not focus on the Parsi origins of the Parsi theatre. Such scholars, whether in Urdu literature or in Gujarati and Hindi literatures, either neglect Parsi playwrights or subsume them under their respective literary traditions. For instance, R. K. Yajnik equates Parsi theatre with Urdu theatre. Somnath Gupt finds fault with Abdul Ali Nami who includes Parsi theatre under ‘Urdu theatre’ in his volume on *Urdu Theatre* (7). David Willmer calls this tendency to define Parsi theatre without even acknowledging the Parsi origins as “dehistoricizing the whole context of the term, ignoring as it does the actuality of an originative moment for the concept of ‘Parsi theatre’” (1). Secondly, some scholars define Parsi theatre etymologically as belonging solely to the Parsi community even though Parsi theatre flourished with Gujarati, Urdu and Hindi playwrights and actors. Thus any attempt at defining Parsi theatre must take these considerations into account. Willmer argues, “to comprehend properly the meaning of the term ‘Parsi theatre’ it is necessary to seek out its origins within the specific social and historical context which produced it. Without

necessarily adopting an ‘ethnographic’ approach to the subject, we must nevertheless recover those particular factors that were internal to the social context of the original Parsi theatre and which led to its transcending its originative moment” (1-2). Somnath Gupta’s attempt at defining Parsi theatre is probably the most comprehensive one. He defines Parsi theatre as follows:

The phrase ‘Parsi theatre’ signifies the playhouses built and operated by the Parsi community, along with Parsi playwrights, Parsi dramas, Parsi stages, Parsi theatrical companies, Parsi actors, Parsi directors, and so on. Also included are those playwrights and actors who were not Parsis, but who worked on a salaried basis for the Parsi theatrical companies. Further, those companies, owners, and actors are counted who, while not being from the Parsi community and not being residents of Bombay, added the words ‘of Bombay’ to their theatre companies in order to show their connections to the Parsi theatre (24).

Thus Gupta takes the definition of Parsi theatre away from its narrow confines and expands its domain acknowledging the factors that helped to establish it. In this sense then Parsi theatre should be understood as a genre rather than an etymologically-defined community-specific affair.

In the 1850s, some Parsi students of Elphinstone College were holding theatre performances on Saturday nights. Since these performances proved profitable, many others were encouraged to follow suit. The recognition of theatre as a viable commercial enterprise led to the development of several Parsi theatrical companies. Gupta corroborates Dhanjibhai Patel’s view that the Parsi Theatrical Company was the first company to be established by the Parsis in 1853 (cited in Gupta 24). There were newspaper advertisements that referred to this company by many names such as Parsi

Dramatic Corps, Parsi Theatrical Committee and Parsi Theatre (Gupt 26). Within one season, six plays were performed by the company which comprised young Parsi actors (Gupt 25). This is generally regarded as the beginning of Parsi theatre. However, S. K. Das opines that 'Parsi theatre' as it came to be known later came into existence in the 1870s as a commercial venture with Pestanji Framji's company (183-4). Although Das does not mention the name of the company, Gupta refers to this company as Persian Zoroastrian Club (129). Das ignores the contribution of companies like Parsi Theatrical Company (established 1853) and Zoroastrian Theatrical Club (established 1866). Moreover, his reference to Framji's company as the first commercial Parsi company is equally untrue. The two companies mentioned above were professional and commercial ventures. Another misinformation found in Das is about Victoria Theatrical Company being founded by Ballivala in the year 1877 (183-4). Gupta records that the Victoria Theatrical Company was founded in 1868 and had four owners: Dadabhai Ratanji Thunthi (Dadi Christ), Framji Gustadji Dalal (Phalughus), Kavasji Nasharvanji Kohidaru (Kavasji Gurgin), and Hormasji Dhanjibhai Modi (Kakaval) (12). The company underwent many changes of owners and directors. Ballivala became the director in 1877. Das has overlooked a decade in the company's history.

Several Parsi theatrical companies mushroomed after 1877. Dhanjibhai Patel lists the following Parsi companies: Parsi Theatrical Company, Amateurs Dramatic Club, Elphinstone Dramatic Club, Elphinstone Amateurs, Parsi Stage Players Gentlemen Amateurs, Zoroastrian Theatrical Company, Zoroastrian Dramatic Society, Persian Zoroastrian Theatrical Company, Persian Theatrical Company, Oriental Theatrical Company, Baronet Theatrical Company, Albert Theatrical Company, Shakespeare Theatrical Company, The Volunteers Club, Victoria Theatrical Company, Original Victoria Club, Hindi Theatrical Company and Parsi Victoria Opera Troupe

(Patel cited in Gupt 29). The companies were different, yet all of them shared some characteristics in their choice of subject and production style like melodramatic and sensational plots, song and dance sequences, spectacle, display of technology. Most of them followed the repertory system and painted curtain. Professional rivalry was common and there are many instances where a successful play by a company was copied with minor alterations by another company and staged. The managers would lure the good actors of other companies. On some occasions, a company manager would hire a band of clagues to applaud his play to gain publicity. At other times, these clagues were used to jeer the performance of another company in order to create the impression of the production as a failure (Yajnik 116). Such fierce competition among these companies led their owners to spend huge amounts of money on making their productions attractive.

Parsi theatre survived on melodramatic plots and their emotional appeal, expansive sets and costumes, songs and dances, and wonderful stage effects. Somnath Gupt observes,

If the taste of the Bombay audiences can be guessed from the dramas performed, then it seems they preferred melodramas and farces. This was the influence of the contemporary English theatre. In London in the mid-nineteenth century, these were the kinds of drama that were most frequently performed. [...] This influence had come to England from Germany. The plays of Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller were influential throughout the European world. Their dramas contained an excess of sentiment in lieu of logic and thought (19).

Shakespeare seemed to provide the necessary material to cater to the needs of this audience in terms of action, spectacle, rhetoric, declamation and thrill. However, a

production cannot survive on indiscriminate borrowing of material from another culture. Theatre scholars like Patrice Pavis, Dennis Kennedy and Hannah Scolnicov have all emphasised the need to look for appropriate cultural and gestural parallels in addition to linguistic parallels while translating a play into another culture. Here lies the success of Parsi theatre in making Shakespeare relevant and popular among the Indian masses. Unlike the English performances of the Bard's plays staged by educated Indians, Parsi theatre indigenised them. Although the Parsi theatre playwrights borrowed a great deal from Shakespeare but they aimed not only at linguistic translation or adaptation but also cultural adaptation. The characters, locales, stories, costumes and form were all indigenised. Even while performing in the proscenium, folk forms like *bhavai* or *lavani* were used. This is well acknowledged by C. J. Sisson in his 1926 lecture at King's College, London when he says, "Shakespeare is here [in India], not translated formally, not imitated, but transplanted as a living organism" (8).



Scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. Source: C. J. Sisson, *Shakespeare in India* (1926) (Illustrated in Gupta 178).

Parsi theatre used English, Gujarati, Urdu/Hindustani and Hindi in its productions. English was largely confined to the Shakespeare productions by college students. The Parsi Elphinstone Dramatic Club, for instance, which was a Parsi student club founded by Kunvarji Sohrabji Nazir in 1858, performed English plays in the college as well as in the Grant Road Theatre on Saturday nights (Mehta 178-85). These students were trained by European professionals and performed Shakespeare and other English playwrights. David Willmer quotes a review published in *Rast Gofar*, 25 Feb. 1866 of a production of *Twelfth Night* by the Elphinstone Club “in the presence of a ‘private’ audience (the college governor and other ladies and gentlemen)” to praise the students’ efforts in trying to put up the original English version of the play (204). Another student group called the Shakespeare Society also performed Shakespeare plays annually in their college (Mehta 188-92). Willmer sees “[T]he initial adoption by the Parsi middle class of the public ritual of the English amateur theatre ... as a desire to assimilate the cultural values of the colonialists with whom they were economically interdependent” (84-5).

However, Parsi theatre, being a public theatre, had to cater to the demands of the audience which largely comprised the working classes from the neighbouring areas of the Grant Road Theatre and who did not know English. Thus, the earlier vogue for English productions gradually gave way to Gujarati and Urdu/Hindustani productions. Kathryn Hansen provides the following account that reflects upon the shift from English to Urdu/Hindustani productions:

Although a contest might have developed between English and the Indian languages, English was quickly sidelined. The central rivalry that emerged was between Gujarati and Urdu, and this is well documented by the body of play texts published between 1865 and

1890. Out of a total of 80 printed plays identified in The British Library and newspaper notices, 35 are in Gujarati and 45 are in Urdu/Hindustani. However, the ‘Urdu’ category includes 17 plays published in Urdu language written in the Gujarati script. This sample undoubtedly under-represents the number of published plays. Nonetheless, of the 80 play texts, 44% were published in Gujarati, 21% in Urdu printed in Gujarati script and 35% in Urdu in Arabic script (2008, 64).

Even the Parsi Elphinstone Dramatic Club was later transformed into a commercial company called the Elphinstone Theatrical Company and started performing plays in Gujarati and later on in Urdu. Their most favoured playwright Shakespeare too was adapted into Gujarati and Urdu/Hindustani in the 1870s. David Willmer refers to the early Gujarati-Parsi theatre as “Janus-faced, looking back to the semi-mythological Persian history of the Parsi community and, at the same time, looking forward to the Parsis’ role as mediators of the process of modernization in the new India” (178-9). It is noteworthy that the Parsi-Gujarati playwrights wanted to present Parsi culture to its audience and also ‘recover’ the lost Parsi past. This pursuit of recovering the past is evident in the prefaces to the plays written during this period. Gupt cites the preface written by Kaikhushro Navroji Khabra, the well-known journalist, for his play *Faredun* where he stresses his objective for writing the play:

My main objective is only now, when Parsis have begun to forget their land, their power, their glory, and their feelings towards their people, to freshen the memory of previous glory by presenting before them a picture of that previous rule mingled with amusement and knowledge. And if my feeble efforts are of any help in increasing an enthusiasm

for these matters among Parsis, I will consider myself amply repaid

(cited in Gupt 48).

Similarly, other early Parsi playwrights like Edalji Jamshedji Khorī, Nanabhai Rustamji Ranina, Nasharvanji Mehrvanji Khansahab Aram, Bahmanji Navroji Kabra, Khurshedji Mehrvanji Balivala, Dadabhai Edalji Ponchkhanevala Bandekhuda, Jahangir Khambata and Khurshedji Bahmanji Framroz drew inspiration from Parsi history, culture and works like *Shahnama*. Some of the Parsi playwrights not familiar with the Persian language turned to the English translations. Kathryn Hansen mentions Edalji Khorī who drew upon Mathew Arnold's and Atkinson's translations of *Rustom and Sohrab* (2008, 69). Shakespeare was also an important influence and his plays were quite popular from the inception of Parsi theatre. They were translated and published in Gujarati. Willmer mentions Gujarati translations of *Comedy of Errors* as *Jedia Bhai — Adhle Beheru Kutavu* ('The Twins — The Blind and the Deaf') and *Othello* as *Kasrivaj na Karstan* ('Scheming Kasrivaj') by Nahanabhai Rustamji Ranina published in Dec. 1865 in *Rast Gofar* describing the translator as "the foremost Gujarati translator of mahaguru Shakespeare's plays" (cited in Willmer 206). Plays like *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Timon of Athens* were produced in the early years of Parsi theatre, between 1857 and 1859, in Gujarati (Hansen 2008, 66). A playbill published in *Rast Gofar* dated 15 Dec. 1867 for *Comedy of Errors* in Gujarati is given below (Cited in Willmer ix):

ગરાંટ રોડ ઠીએટર
નીરદોશ ગમતના શોખીઓનો ખબર.
જાણીતા નાટકકારોનો ભેગો પારસી નાટક
હિંદુસ્તાની શૈલિ મંગલદાસ નયુભાઈનાં માંત્ર ભરેલા
આસરા તલે ઉત્તમ ખેલ,
મેદાંત માહેલી કસરતશાલાનાં નફા માટે
તા. ૨૧ મી ડિસેમ્બર ૧૮૭૭ ને સત્તરવાર
તો રાતના થયે, તે વેલા,
નામાંદીત નાટકગુરુ શ્રેષ્ઠપીઆરનો રચેલો
“કાંતેહી આપ્ એરસ”
જીઆને
“જુલ યુકની હસાહસ”
નામનો ઘણો રમુજ તથા સરવેને જાણીતો મેલ ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં ઇલાલીઆન
એઆસે તથા હુસુ મેહેતાની નીશાળ—તાંત્રનો એક અતીઆંત રમુજ
લોકલ પ્રારસ
કરી બતાવામાં આવશે.
ઉપરોક્ત એલ અતરેની જુદી જુદી જાણીતો શેલોઆતા આગેવાંત એલાડીઆએ એ
કલા મલો તદ્દઆર કીચોછે તથા સઘણો નફો ઉપલાં ઉપયોગો ધરમ ખાતાંમાં આપવાનોછે.
ટીકીટોના ભાવ.
બાકસ..... રૂ. ૩) | ગાલેરી..... રૂ. ૩)
ઈસટાલસ..... રૂ. ૪) | પોટ..... રૂ. ૨)
* * પેહેલા વરગતી મેડોઃ ઉપર નમઅર યાદગામાં આવશે અને ટીકીટ ખરીદ કરનારાઆને
મેકકનાં નમઅરની ટીકીટ મલશે કે જેથી મેડોઃ કીચે ગુચમણ પાપ નહી.
પેહેલા વરગતી ટીકીટો ઘણો સેવાઈ સુકોઢે, માટે જીઆને જીહાએ તેઓએ ટીક
કરવો નહી.
ટીકીટો કોટનાં દફતર આશકારા પરેસમાંથી તથા આડારકોટ મેદાંતમાં દરરોજ સ
હવાર સાંજ કસરતશાલામાંથી આને એકને દોને નાટકશાલામાંથી મલશે.
એક એંડ હાજર થશે.
દરવાજો ૮ કલાકે ઉંઘડશે, એલ દાઃ વાગતે શરૂ થશે.

(Fig. i)

The trend started changing after the 1860s when Parsi theatre adopted Urdu/Hindustani instead of Gujarati for playwriting and production. The first Urdu adaptation of a Shakespeare play was Edalji Khori's *Sone ke Mul ki Khurshed* in 1871,

directed by Dadi Patel for the Victoria Theatrical Company at the Victoria Theatre. The play was initially translated into Gujarati by Khorī as *Sunana Mulni Khurshed* and then into Urdu by Behramji Firdunji Merzban. There were two major reasons for the shift from Gujarati to Urdu/Hindustani. The first being the economic compulsion of the Parsi theatre. Urdu/Hindustani, unlike Gujarati, had wider appeal. Plays in Urdu could be taken to other parts of India which meant more business. In fact, Parsi theatre earned much of its reputation by touring with its productions. This was possible because of the use of Urdu. The influence of Parsi theatre was so strong that soon various companies mushroomed throughout India. The second reason was related to the reformist discourse that colonial modernity had introduced. It is well-known that songs formed an integral part of the Parsi plays which utilized folk forms like *khayal*, *bhavai*, *garba* and *lavani*. These songs were immensely popular yet these folk form inclusions posited a problem. Hansen comments that the association of the traditional folk performers seemed a ‘threat’ to respectable and civic activity of the emerging middle-class (2008, 72). This concern is evident on part of some of the Parsi playwrights who addressed this issue in the prefaces of their plays. Delta wrote in his preface for *Romeyo ane Julyat*, “rather than the black stamp of immorality that is slapped on the mind of the viewer by the dance of prostitutes, the shows of Mahlaris, and the Bhavai of the folk-players, the blameless amusement of theatre enlarges the mind, gladdens the heart, cools the eyes, and speeds morality” (cited in Hansen 2008, 72). Urdu seemed to provide the solution to this problem as it had a rich tradition of poetry and lyric. Adopting Urdu would therefore impart respectability to Parsi theatre. Parsi theatre, thus, adopted Urdu/Hindustani as its language of production from the 1870s onwards. In fact, the most productive and well-known period of Parsi theatre was when Urdu playwrights like Raunaq, Betab, Agha Hashr Kashmiri and Ahsan Mehdi wrote for it. The use of

Indian languages, then, right from the beginning challenged the theatrical modernity brought by the West by appropriating the western plays in Indian languages.

IV. Parsi Theatre and Shakespeare Productions

In India, prior to Parsi theatre, theatre production was a private affair of the rich and the educated. Parsi theatre created a rupture in this kind of theatre practice expanded its domain as a public activity. The various sources that Parsi theatre drew upon were Persian and Sanskrit mythology, medieval legends, histories, English plays. However, the greatest influence on Parsi theatre was Shakespeare. As mentioned before, Shakespeare and Parsi theatre worked well for each other. Shakespeare provided the Parsi theatre playwrights with the raw material to build the dramatic plots and Parsi theatre popularized Shakespeare among the masses. The vogue of translating, adapting and appropriating Shakespeare, especially by the Urdu playwrights of Parsi theatre, can be judged by the fact that almost every major playwright of Parsi theatre drew upon Shakespeare for their plays. Because of his successful adaptations of Shakespeare's plays Agha Hashr Kashmiri, one of the most prominent Urdu playwrights of all times, earned for himself the title of *Shakespeare-e-Hind*. So overwhelmed was Kashmiri by Shakespeare that he launched his own company called the "Indian Shakespeare Theatrical Company". Ramu Ramanthan informs that Narain Prasad 'Betab' ran a magazine titled *Shakespeare* to publish his adaptations of the Bard's plays (Website 1). Although there is no record of the number of Shakespearean productions by Parsi companies, one can guess by their growing number of plays performed and the translations and adaptations made for the Parsi theatre. Javed Mallick lists at least 75 extant play-scripts (2005, 82). Also, R. K. Yajnik lists over 200 Shakespeare

adaptations in various Indian languages by 1934. There may have been many more Shakespearean adaptations since most Parsi play-scripts are lost.

Parsi theatre adaptations of Shakespeare, especially in Urdu/Hindustani, followed generally a set pattern. Javed Malick identifies the following as the main strategies in adapting Shakespeare (2009, 160).

1. interpolation of songs and later dances into the original text
2. rewriting and/or rearranging scenes of the original by jettisoning sequences and interweaving motifs derived from other Shakespearean texts into the chosen play with a view to simplify and streamline the bard's highly diversified and complex narrative patterns besides pandering to indigenous tastes and values
3. changing the Elizabethan blank verse into standard Urdu forms of rhymed 'shers' and ghazals or into rhythmic, ornate and stylized (often stilted) prose known as *nasr-e-muquaffa* and *musajja*
4. in the case of tragedies, refashioning the final sequences into happy ending.

Some more may be added to the list like indegenising the *mise en scene* and the use of dazzling sets and costumes to augment the spectacle.

As mentioned earlier, songs were integral to Parsi theatre.⁴ Somnath Gupt notes that even fighting heroes and dying heroines would sing on the Urdu stage (115). Parsi theatre has also been referred to as opera because of this musical character that. Parsi theatre scholars like Gupt credits Dadi Patel for introducing music on the Parsi stage. Gupt notes, "the addiction to songs grew to such an extent that occasions of joy, deaths, wars, and dialogues were all accompanied by singing" (182). Lyrics printed on the 'opera book' or programmes were given to the audience and one could find audience singing their favourite songs from the 'opera book'. Gupt informs us that Parsi theatre ghazals used classical Indian music like *thumri*, *dadra*, *jhinjhoti* and *kalingara* besides

ghazals (181). One could also find pieces of Western music. Love scenes were often depicted through songs. Ania Loomba observes that a production of *Sher-Dil* (an Urdu adaptation of *Othello* by Najar Dehlvi) staged by the Parsi Alfred Company in 1918, opens with “Brabantio entertaining Othello with dance and music. The Desdemona-Othello’s courtship was often depicted through songs. Roderigo and Iago sing in duet to awaken Brabantio and his kinsmen with the news that the ‘peacock is in the house of the thief’ or that Desdemona and Othello have eloped” (1997, 119). *Khun-e-nahaq*, an Urdu adaptation of *Hamlet* by Munshi Mehdi Hasan for Parsi Alfred Company (1898) was transformed into a musical. The play opens in the court of Claudius “celebrating the nuptials of Claudius and Gertrude with dance and music” (Yajnik 161). The audience response to the songs sung on stage is described by Gupt in the following words:

The audience, when pleased with the actors’ songs, would shout ‘Once more!’ Sometimes, ‘once more’ was demanded even after the drop scene had fallen. If ‘once more’ was declared two or three times, the manager would satisfy the audience’s desire by having the scene repeated. Sometimes this created the ridiculous effect of slain characters, recently killed in combat, rising from the floor and beginning to fight all over again (174).

This fad for music increased the demand for trained classical singers. Gohar Jan and Munnibai, for example, who were trained semi-classical singers became the most popular singers and actors of Parsi theatre.

Most of the Parsi productions of Shakespeare were free adaptations with extreme liberties taken. New scenes were introduced and those which did not fit into the design were dropped. An example of the later case can be found in Karimuddin Murad’s adaptation of *Pericles* as *Khudadad* in which the father-daughter incest motif was

dropped for its incompatibility with the ‘Indian’ sensibility. Instead, the king is poisoned against his son Khudadad by the minister Azlam which makes Khudadad flee from his kingdom (Malick 2009, 165). Thrill, intrigue and murder were added to the plots. Yajnik argues that a play like *The Taming of the Shrew* was probably not adapted by the Urdu stage due to the absence of bloodshed and sentimental pathos (135). On the other hand, a play like *Titus Andronicus*, which no other theatre approached because of blood and gore in the play, was adapted in Urdu by A. B. Latif ‘Sad’ as *Junune Vafa* (*Mad Fidelity*, 1910) and staged by the Shakespearean Theatrical Company in 1910. Although a whopping sum of 1000 pounds was spent by the manager V. K. Nayak on the production for the elaborate Roman costumes and scenery yet the production was a failure, as Yajnik notes, possibly because: “(a) the high-sounding Roman names did not appeal to the people; and (b) scholastic touches given by many Arabic words fell flat on the ears of the illiterate playgoers” (156). Scenes of pathos were exploited to the fullest. Often new pathetic scenes were interpolated showing the characters facing “even greater misfortunes than are to be met with in the originals in order that their virtue might shine the more” (Yajnik 233). Also, in some cases, scenes from various Shakespeare plays were incorporated within a single production. For example, Agha Hashr Kashmiri’s adaptation of *Richard III* as *Saide-havas* for Parsi Theatrical Company incorporated scenes from the last two acts of *King John*. Similarly, scenes from two plays are mixed in *Dil Farosh*, an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* by Kashmiri. J. P. Mishra notes, “After a conventional song, Bassanio (Kasim) in the position of Orlando is presented praying to God to protect him from the evil designs of his elder brother Mahmud, who not merely seeks to deprive him of his rightful share in property but also rivals him in his love for Portia” (41).

Some of the Bard's plays were adapted or appropriated by different playwrights for different companies. *King Lear*, for example, was adapted by Munshi Murad Ali for Victoria Theatrical Company (1905) as *Hara-Jita* and by Agha Hashr Kashmiri for Parsi Company as *Safed Khun* (1906). Similarly, *Othello* was adapted by Munshi Mehdi Hasan for The Empress Victoria Company as *Shaheede Vafa* (1898) and by Najar Dehlvi for Parsi Alfred Company as *Sher-Dil* (1918).

Most of the Shakespearean tragedies were transformed into happy endings probably because of the absence of tragedy as a genre in the classical Indian theatre and in folk theatre(s). Thus, although both the versions of *King Lear* as *Hara-Jita* by Munshi Murad Alli for Victoria Theatrical Company (1905) and *Safed-Khun* by Agha Hashra Kashmiri for Parsi Company (1906) follow the original text but end happily by uniting Lear and Cordelia and the latter being crowned (Yajnik 171). Similarly, *Romeo and Juliet's* adaptation by Mehar Hasan as *Bazme Fani (The Fatal Banquet, 1897)* is transformed into a tragic-comedy in three acts. Also, *Kali Nagin* (1906), an adaptation of *Antony and Cleopatra* produced by one Joseph David for New Parsi Victoria Company, ends happily with Antony regaining his throne and uniting with his family.

Parsi theatre in its early phase used few props or furniture on stage like the early colonial theatre of Bombay probably due to financial constraints. Instead, as in English theatre painted curtains were employed to make the stage seem 'real'. Later, when Parsi theatre became commercial, professional rivalry among the theatre managers led them to spend huge amounts of money on creating stage spectacle. Company managers would spend thousands of rupees for scenic effects and dazzling costumes in a single production. Painted curtains retained their importance and painters were commissioned from Europe to paint them. Later, Indian artists were employed and names of celebrated painters like Hussain Buksh were advertised in the playbills. In order to attract the

audience playbills advertised spectacles like ‘Transformation Scenes’ that the audience could see. Stage effects of storms, seas or rivers in commotion, sieges, steamers, aerial movements and the like were generally employed and enjoyed by the audience (Yajnik 113). The following playbill for *Nala and Damyanti* by Pandit Shaida is advertised as “A Spectacle of Super-Extravagant Splendour in Three Acts” (cited in Yajnik 114):

NEW PLAY!

NEW PLAY!

AT THE
CORINTHIAN THEATRE
ETC.
THE LOVE STORY OF THE AGES
NALA AND DAMAYANTI
A Spectacle of Super-Extravagant Splendour
in Three Acts
etc.

With an All-Star Cast Featuring India’s
Popular Stage-Star
MASTER MOHAN
in the principal role of ‘Bidushak’

The play is replete with gorgeous dresses, wonderful transformation scenes and weird
and enchanting effects. ...

The entire gorgeous scenery designed and painted by
India’s Greatest Living Artist

Mr. K. HUSSAIN BUKSH, of Lahore

See? See? See?

The sleepy Lotuses transform themselves into Fairy visions.

The Vision of Princess Damayanti.

The bursting of a lotus and the appearance of Goddess ‘Saraswati’ therefrom.

The flight of the Swan.

The ‘Swayambara’ of Damayanti.

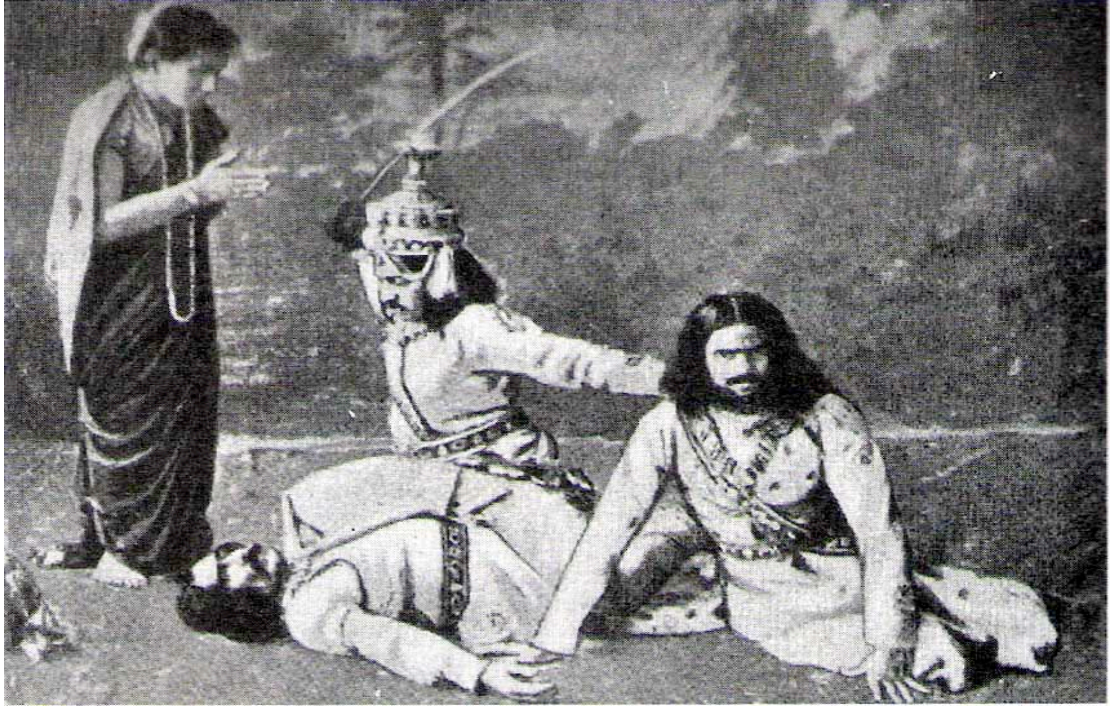
Narad's descent from the clouds.
The miraculous appearance of Kali with the Flaming Sword.
The transformation of five Nalas.
The transformation of 'Karkota' in a forest fire.
The Durbar-Hall of King Nala.
The transformation of seven Fairies, etc.

The vogue for the spectacle was such that some companies even ordered machinery from England. This fashion for 'spectacle' interestingly gave birth to a new genre called 'mythological' drama. As Anuradha Kapur suggests, stories of gods and miracles that contained supernatural elements could now be presented easily on stage with the help of machinery (86).

Costumes were another elaborate affair with the Parsis that added to the spectacle. The early Parsi theatre used dazzling costumes regardless of the specificity to the periodical or cultural contexts in which the plays were set. Sometimes costumes were indigenised to suit the setting though this was not always the case. For instance, the playbill for *Ek Bevapha Mitr (A False Friend)*, an adaptation of *Othello* staged by The Parsi Stage Players, advertised in *Rast Goftar*, 10 Oct. 1865 mentioned that the play would be staged in Gujarati language and Spanish costume (cited in Willmer 200). Another playbill for a production of *As You Like It* by Gentleman Amateurs Club published in *Rast Goftar* (2 April 1865) advertised the play to be staged in 'Gujarati language and Italian costume' (Cited in Willmer, vii):

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Due to such mixture in costumes Ania Loomba describes the ‘result’ as “a strangely hybrid dress, sometimes more Indian than Victorian, sometimes the other way around, and a theatrical look that was common in early Indian cinema as well” (1997, 121).



Typical costumes used in Shakespeare adaptations. Source: C. J. Sisson (Illustrated in Gupt 182).

However, more attention was given to the appropriateness of costumes in the later period. For *Khune-Nahaq* an adaptation of *Hamlet*, Kavasji Khatau followed “Henry Irving’s model for dress and scenery” (Yajnik 161). Later, in order to preserve the ‘original’ flavour of Venice and Cyprus, his son spent huge sums of money on painted curtains and costumes for *Sher-Dil*, an adaptation of *Othello* (Yajnik 167). The production of *Hara-Jita*, an adaptation of King Lear by Munshi Murad, uses elaborate and spectacular Egyptian costumes and scenery. Sometimes scenes were added into the scripts for the sake of spectacle and costume. One such case was the opening scene in *Bhul-bhulaiyan*, an adaptation of *Twelfth Night*, by The New Alfred Theatrical Company. The scene opens in the Court of Safdarajang, the King of Bokhara, which

provides an opportunity to flaunt the grand and spectacular set and also dance and song. Yajnik informs us that the scene was dropped in the later production (140). Many Shakespeare plays in Parsi theatre opened with such grand court scenes which provided the theatre-managers an opportunity to display their technological superiority over the other companies. The Alfred Theatrical Company (1871) of Framji Joshi was specially known for its spectacular productions. Within its short life span, the company staged several spectacles. Gupt informs us that in its play *Jahanbakhsh ane Gulrukhsar* “mechanical scenes were employed for the first time. The eruption of a volcano, the emergence of a giant from the earth, and the descent onto the stage of flying fairies and other scenes were shown to good effect” (128).

C. J. Sisson mentions this fact in his 1926 lecture to the Shakespeare Association at King’s College, London:

The orthodox Shakespearian would experience many a shock if he ventured into this strange temple of his idol. He might accustom himself to the Oriental costume and *mise-en-scene*, to the disturbing medley of the audience, even, with some study, to the foreign language. But he would be amazed to find that he was being provided with an opera, and a ballet as well as a play, [...], and horrified when he realized the extreme liberties that were being taken with the text and plot (8).

He quickly adds that “A wise Shakespearian ... would rejoice that Shakespeare is here, not translated formally, not imitated, but transplanted as a living organism” (8). Although Sisson acknowledges the achievement of the Parsi adaptations, his agenda is

to reinforce the colonial myth of ‘universal’ Shakespeare that could fit anywhere and everywhere. Javed Malick argues that these appropriations gain significance

in the context of the dominant cultural politics of the period—particularly in the light of the colonial constructions and propagation of the “iconicity” and the “universality” of “the Bard”. In contrast to the culturally monolithic icon that was taught in schools and colleges, the Parsi theater’s Shakespeare was often a *deviant, multilayered*, and, sometimes, *fractured* text. This deviation from the canonical model seems to have characterized the attitude of the founders of Parsi theatre companies from the very beginning (2005, 93).

These adaptations, then, did not uphold the ‘universality’ of Shakespeare, as Sisson would like to believe, but in fact located a rupture in the discourse of ‘universal’ Shakespeare.

V. Parsi Theatre and the (Post-)Colonial ‘Hybridity’

Dennis Kennedy in *Foreign Shakespeare* observes,

Whereas in Europe the Shakespeare project embraced the translation and outright appropriation of the texts, in Asia the imperial mode tended to bring them in the original language as a demonstration of the linguistic and the cultural superiority of the conqueror. This was most notable in India, of course, where the insertion of the Shakespearean text into native life paralleled the insertion of the power of the master race (291).

This is but partially true. There is no denying the fact that Shakespeare, as part of English literary studies, was a forced assimilation imposed upon the ‘natives’ to

demonstrate the British cultural and moral superiority. Not only the academic Shakespeare as he was taught in schools and colleges, but also the earlier Shakespeare productions attempted to be ‘faithful’ to both the text and the conventions of English theatre. An example of this attitude gets reflected in the students productions in educational institutions who staged plays like *The Merchant of Venice*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello* and *Henry IV* “in English in a *proper European style*, the most notable English actors in Calcutta being occasionally invited for training and advice in production” (Yajnik 86; italics mine). But Shakespeare was gradually assimilated into indigenous theatrical activity. The plays were translated and performed in regional languages. Poonam Trivedi observes that the earliest local adaptation of a Shakespeare play in India was *Nathari Firangiz Thekani Avi* (A Bad Firangi Woman Brought to Sense), a critical adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew*, “for it distanced and labeled the shrew as non-Indian, a *firangi*”, performed in 1852 in Gujarati (153). As discussed in the previous section, Parsi playwrights like Agha Hashr Kasmiri, Munshi Mehdi Hasan and Narain Prasad Betaab appropriated Shakespeare’s plays freely and took liberties with plots, characters and structure. Dances and songs based on Indian classical music and occasionally on western music were added, scenes were interpolated or discarded, new characters and plots of murders and intrigues were introduced. In fact, Parsi theatre made every effort to fit Shakespeare’s plays into an ‘Indian’ context. Such ‘illegitimate’ Shakespeare, as some may call it, was the hallmark of Parsi theatre. This might appear as ‘hybrid’. However, one should be cautious in locating Parsi theatre in general and Parsi adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays in particular in the discourse of (post)colonial ‘hybridity’ for the reasons elaborated below.

‘Hybridity’ is one of the most contested and widely (mis)used concepts in postcolonial theory. In recent years, the concept has been linked with Homi Bhabha

who was inspired by Franz Fanon's view to develop his theory of 'hybridity', 'mimicry' and 'ambivalence'. Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* theorizes that the colonized subject is necessarily hybrid as (s)/he attempts to mimic the colonizer but fails in the attempt and in the process becomes hybrid (44-5). For Fanon, 'hybrid' means rootless. In his view, this psychic schism leads to the erasure of the identity of the colonized subject as (s)/he disowns his/her roots and attempts to become white. For Fanon the colonial world is "a world divided into compartments ... a world cut into two" where the colonizer and the colonized are two clear-cut binaries (30-1). Unlike Fanon, Bhabha argues that the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer is 'ambivalent', a constantly fluctuating love/hate or attraction/repulsion relationship. He elaborates that it is because of this 'ambivalence' in the colonized subject that (s)he 'mimics' the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's tastes, opinions, assumptions values and culture. The result is, however, not an exact copy of the colonizer but a colonized subject who is "almost the same, but not quite" (Bhabha 1994, 86). For Bhabha, mimicry is not a tragic failure as viewed by Fanon. On the other hand, mimicry enables agency in the colonized subject. This is so because according to Bhabha, mimicry is not far from mockery, a kind of parody, thus, making mockery "at once resemblance and menace" (86). According to him the effect of mimicry on the authority of colonial discourse is "profound and disturbing. For in 'normalizing' the colonial state or subject, the dream of post-Enlightenment civility alienates its own language of liberty and produces another knowledge of its norms. ... The menace of mimicry is its double vision which in dislocating the ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority" (86).

If one considers the early English productions, notably the Shakespearean productions, by the Parsi students of Elphinstone College, one may argue that there was an attempt to 'mimic' the Western theatrical conventions. There was an element of

‘subtle intimacy’ which is so central to postcolonial theory. The actors of these performances were English educated students performing under the tutelage of their English teachers. But these productions were confined to the exclusive domains of the colleges. Even when these performances were staged at Grant Road Theatre, the audience comprised educated Indians and the European gentry. Later, the commercial imperatives forced the Elphinstone Dramatic Club to perform in Gujarati and Urdu by the 1870s.

Bhabha, unlike Fanon, acknowledges the colonizer-colonized relationship as ‘ambivalent’ and ‘unfixed’. He generalizes this state as common to the colonial subject anywhere in the world. According to Bhabha every colonial subject is ‘hybrid’ and every cultural identity is negotiated and formed in the “third space of enunciation” (37). He does not take into account various factors like gender, nation or class/caste that could nuance the colonizer-colonized relationship and make it different. Ania Loomba raises this important question and argues that

The colonialist presence was felt differently by various subjects of the empire some never even saw Europeans in all their life, and for them authority still wore a native face. For others, but even for some of the elites ... the foreign presence was daily visible, but physical as well as cultural space was still divided into ‘their’ sphere and ‘ours’. In other parts of the world colonialism had penetrated much deeper into the everyday existence of natives of all classes. These patterns also shifted over time. Thus the resonances of both ‘hybridity’ and mimicry are enormously variable and we need to peg the psychic splits engendered by colonial rule to specific histories and locations (1998, 147-8).

Both Bhabha and Fanon argue that the colonial subject undergoes the split in identity in the colonial world. Such an argument is based on the assumption that there is an intimate and interdependent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. It may be true for the educated elite subject who might have shared an ‘element of intimacy’ which is central to the postcolonial view of hybridity. However, this argument may not be applied to every colonial subject anywhere. Not every colonial subject shared an ‘intimate’ relationship with the colonized. The post-1970s Parsi theatre explains this refusal of ‘hybridity’ on behalf of the colonised subject. Moreover, there is no deliberate effort to subvert the Shakespearean authority by appropriating it. There is no doubt that Parsi theatre took a great deal from the western theatre including Shakespeare. However, Parsi theatre thoroughly appropriated the European theatre for the native mass consumption. As Rustom Bharucha observes,

[t]hese derivations [i.e. Western theatrical conventions] had been thoroughly ‘Indianized’ through music, song, colour, pathos, melodrama and the histrionic delivery of lines that are intrinsically a part of the popular theatrical tradition in India (193).

It does not seem that there was a desire to ‘mimic’ European theatre in order to *become like that*. Thus, there was no reverence towards either European theatre or Shakespeare on behalf of Parsi theatre. As Rajiva Verma has argued about the early Bollywood films based on Parsi theatre productions that they were not reverential adaptations of a master text but “a matter of taking over a worldview or moral vision and more of one professional playwright borrowing plots and situations and other tricks of the trade from another” (243). Thus, Parsi theatre, driven by the commercial compulsions, took only those elements from European theatre that it deemed commercially helpful and mixed them freely with indigenous theatre. Although Parsi productions were staged in

proscenium with box sets, painted curtains and transformation scenes, they incorporated folk forms like *bhavai*, *yaksgana*, or *lavani* and Urdu, Gujarati or Persian *ghazals*, and *thumris*. As Willmer has argued,

the whole style of performance suggests an established idiom that owes little or nothing to colonial influences. The customary appearance of Ganapati and Saraswati (the latter riding a peacock), usually accompanied by the angelic child gods Bal and Gopal, that opened each performance immediately located the performance within a different tradition, and the incorporation of the songs, acrobatics and jests of the clowns point to another (secular or popular) aspect of this different tradition (127).

Parsi Theatre enjoyed its hey-day till the 1920s after which it started declining. An important reason for its decline was the advent of cinema in Bombay. Many of the actors and playwrights of Parsi theatre joined cinema. Another reason that contributed to Parsi theatre's fall was the growing national consciousness that encouraged social dramas instead of the Parsi entertainers. The manifestation of national consciousness was seen later in the nineteen forties with the emergence of the IPTA. Although, Parsi theatre had gone into slumber by the 30s, its manifestations can still be seen in Indian cinema with its legacy of dance and song. Parsi theatre, without any doubt, succeeded in popularizing Shakespeare in India to the extent that no other theatre has been able to do since then.

Notes

¹Colaba, Old Woman's Island, Bombay, Mazagaon, Worli, Parel and Mahim.

²I use the two terms 'imperialisation' and 'capitalistaion' as used by David Willmer to grant agency to the colonial subject. According to Willmer, "The narrative of imperialisation is one that, rather than the more limited and prescriptive subject-object relationship of colonization by itself, suggests the possibility of a greater degree of participation on the part of the subject/s in question. The latter may be able to participate in the greater project of empire building in an active way, 'collaborative' way, even if they might, arguably, take part objectively in their own repression, whereas the experience of being merely colonized must always be seen as an essentially passive one. Likewise, with the narrative of capitalization, which often comes hand-in-hand with that of imperialisation, but is not necessarily marked by all the same defining characteristics (such as the civilizing mission), the colonized subjects can also be willing and instrumental participants in its unfolding. The narrative of capital in general has an added dimension in that the colonized subject's participation in it can both precede and continue independently of the intervention of empire" (12-13).

³It is not to say that there were no Parsis in Bombay prior to that. As B. B. Patel informs us that the first Parsi resident of Bombay was Dorabji Nanabhai who migrated to Bombay from Surat in 1640 to transact business on behalf of the Portuguese. B. B. Patel, *Parsee Prakash: Being a Record of Important Events in the Growth of Parsee Community in Western India, Chronologically Arranged, Vol. I (Upto 1860)*, (Mumbai: The "Duftur Ashkara" Press, 1888), 13-14, as quoted in Zenobia E. Shroff, *The Contribution of Parsis to Education in Bombay City (1820-1920)*, (Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House, 2001), 9.

⁴It is interesting to juxtapose the fad for song and dance in Parsi theatre in India with the nineteenth century Dutch theatre where the theatre audience would come only after the interval to watch ballet divertissements. See Robert-Henri Leek, *Shakespeare in the Netherlands: A study of Dutch translations and Dutch Performances of William Shakespeare's Plays* (unpublished thesis), 70.

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Chapter IV

Shakespeare in Some Other Theatre Traditions of India

Although Shakespeare's presence was felt the most in Bengal and Bombay, it does not mean that his plays were limited to these regions. Shakespeare's plays travelled across the length and breadth of India. The 1964 survey of Shakespeare translations and adaptations by The Indian National Library, Calcutta, provides the following data: with a total of 670 productions, Bengali had 128, Marathi-97, Hindi-70 and Kannada-66. With so many languages and theatres traditions in India it is quite impossible to trace Shakespeare reception in the whole country. This would need several scholars from various Indian languages to compile such an encyclopedia of Shakespeare reception in India. I do not attempt such a bold step. For the purposes of this thesis, I have limited my area to a few regions with relatively greater theatre activities. Shakespeare's influence on Bengali and Parsi theatre has been discussed at length in the earlier chapters. Other theatre traditions like Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi which are equally rich and have registered a considerable influence of Shakespeare could not be ignored. The chapter is structured into 4 sections dealing with Shakespeare in Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi theatre traditions each. As a non-native speaker of these languages (other than Hindi) I have had to depend on available sources. This is the limitation faced by scholars in India working with Shakespeare performances in the Indian languages.

I. Shakespeare in Marathi Theatre

Like Bengali and Parsi theatres, modern Marathi theatre also began in the 19th century. Scholars like P. G. Sahasrabuddhe believe that the modern Marathi drama began in 1880 when Balwant Pandurang Kirloskar's *Shakuntala* was staged (cited in

Deshpande 2006, 26). Similarly, Vijaya Mehta traces the history of Marathi to the later half of the 19th century (144). However, G. P. Deshpande, a Marathi playwright, theatre scholar and activist believes that modern Marathi theatre began in the 1940s with Vishnudas Bhave's attempts at producing mythological plays using traditional art forms of Maharashtra like *tamasha* and *dasavatara* (26). His plays are usually referred to as 'akhyans' and not plays. It should be mentioned here that Bhave tried to minimize the crude elements of the folk forms like suggestive meanings and the battle scenes to suit the sensibility of the royal court.



Fig. i (Source: http://sangli.gov.in/htmldocs/prominet_personalities1.htm).

Bhave was employed in the court of Sangli in south Maharashtra and wrote plays for the entertainment of the royal court. Bhave produced a musical *Sita Svayamvar* in 1843. The play was an instant hit. Bhave was asked by the king to write more plays. But after the king died Bhave had to move out of the court. He formed his company called Sanglikar Natak Mandali and toured Maharashtra with his plays. In 1853 Bhave reached Bombay and performed there. The musical *Sita Svayamvar* was an

instant success in Bombay also. Inspired by Bhave's success, other companies were formed like Shahunagarwasi Natak Mandali, Amarchand Wadikar Natak Mandali and Mumbaikar Natak Mandali which were the important ones. Thus, modern Marathi theatre began its journey after 1853. It should be noted here that Bhave's company was an important influence on Parsi theatre as well. After watching Bhave's plays, the first Parsi company performed a play in the same year. Bhave's plays were predominantly musical and this was to exert a major influence on the Marathi theatre through the coming years. Although Kirloskar is credited to have developed *sangeet natak* in Maharashtra, the seeds had been sown some forty years earlier by Bhave.

A major change occurred in Bombay with the establishment of University of Bombay in 1857 which played an important role in the development of Marathi theatre. As explained in Chapter I, the introduction of an English curriculum exposed the 'native' students to European literature. Shakespeare was one of the major readings for university students. This exposure to English literature, mainly Shakespeare, coupled with English theatre in Bombay led to the staging of the Bard's plays by students. Like the students from the schools and colleges of Calcutta, students in Bombay and Pune too involved themselves in an annual Shakespeare production. Ramu Ramanathan comments that the students of Vishrambaug High School staged *Julius Caesar* in their school courtyard in 1872 and that the students of Baba Gokhale School presented *The Merchant of Venice* (Website 1). In all probability, these productions attempted to present Shakespeare 'faithfully' (even if they could enact only selected scenes) as the students were guided by their English teachers in such endeavours. Besides such efforts, British Shakespeare actors like Elisa May and Chloe Player were invited by Deccan College (Pune) to read Shakespeare plays to the students for five hundred rupees (Website 1). Along with English education, came a deep nostalgia for

Sanskrit literature. The educated ‘natives’ also looked towards their own classical tradition for inspiration. However, scholars like Sunita Deshpande argue that

[T]he tradition of classical Sanskrit drama lost its hold when Marathi writers became familiar with English and European drama. Between 1870 and 1920 the Marathi stage was dominated by translations and adaptations, most of Shakespeare’s plays being translated during this period, along with some of Moliere, Schiller, Goldsmith, Sheridan and others (250).

This is but partially true. While there was an increase in translations from Shakespeare and other English writers, Sanskrit plays too were translated, though few were successfully staged. Following is a list of Marathi translations of Sanskrit plays provided by H. N. Dasgupta (201):

Play	Year	Translator
<i>Uttar Ram Charitra</i>	1859	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Parvati Parinaya</i>	1872	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Mrichhkatik</i>	1881	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Shakuntala</i>	1881	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Venisamhar</i>	1881	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Viratparva</i>	1884	Parshhurampant Godbole
<i>Mudra Rakshas</i>	1867	Krishna Shastri Rajawade
<i>Malati Madhava</i>	1861	Krishna Shastri Rajawade
<i>Vikramorshivaya</i>	1874	Krishna Shastri Rajawade
<i>Malavikagnimitra</i>	1867	Ganesh Shastri Lele
<i>Vidhashalbhankika</i>	1869	Ganesh Shastri Lele
<i>Prasanna Raghava</i>	1859	Shivaramshastri Palande

The influence of Sanskrit tradition on Marathi theatre can be seen in the development of *sangeet natak*. In fact, Kirloskar made his debut with a performance of Kalidas’s *Sakuntala* in *sangeet natak* in 1880.

To this educated new breed of intellectuals, Bhave's plays seemed crude and unstageworthy. The attitude of the growing educated class towards mythological plays using traditional and folk forms is reflected in the epilogue for the translation of Narayanbhatt's *Venisamhar* written by Krishnaji Parashuram Gadgil a student from Deccan College, Pune:

Though some might laugh us out and set at naught,

Because they see no feats no duels fought

No freakish monkey, no delirious yell,

No Lanka's tyrant fierce with fury fell,

No absurd songs, no din, no wild attire,

No meaningless uproar, no senseless ire;

Let them, what can they, indiscrete tools,

In turn we laugh them down and deem them fools,

Illiterate players have usurped the stage,

With scenes obscene depraved this rising age

(cited in Gokhale 11).

Critical of Bhave-type plays, students registered an important intervention in the development of Marathi theatre by introducing a new kind of drama 'foreign' to Maharashtra. The new playwrights who were influenced by Western drama, especially Shakespeare wrote prose plays or 'bookish' plays which had elaborate written scripts to be rehearsed and performed, unlike Bhave's impromptu productions (Gokhale 11). The

Shakespeare-inspired Marathi playwrights were critical of the musical element of the Marathi theatre and developed prose drama unheard of in Marathi theatre. In 1861, Vinayak Janardan Kirtane (1840-1891) became the first playwright to write a Marathi play *Thorle Madhavrao Peshwe*. A point to note is that this was also the first Marathi play to use history instead of mythology as its subject. The play was performed by Sanglikar Players on 11 December 1865. It was a prose drama and did not have any songs. *Belgaum Samachar* of 11 Dec. 1865 reports that although the play was hailed by the educated Marathi as a landmark in Marathi theatre, the masses, used to watching musical plays of Bhave and folk performances like *tamasha*, did not respond well (cited in Gokhale 13).

Sangeet natak as a form was developed by Balwant Pandurang Kirloskar. Although songs and music were integral to Bhave's plays they were not made integral to the structure. Moreover, the *sutradhar* would sing all the songs. Dialogues were sparse and had to be improvised by the actors. Kirloskar introduced important changes. Maya Pandit observes that Kirloskar "perceived the importance of classical and folk music, the organized structure of Sanskrit and English drama, and the romantic and comic aspects of Sanskrit theatre" (410). Kirloskar combined these elements and developed Marathi *sangeet natak*. He differed from Bhave in that he wrote scripts for his plays. Also, the songs were sung by actors. The first *sangeet natak* to be presented by Kirloskar was *Shakuntala* which had 209 songs. With the success of *Shakuntala*, *sangeet natak* was established as an important genre in Marathi theatre. Soon there were companies following Kirloskar's footsteps of in producing *sangeet natak*s. Natyakala Company, Mahalakshmi prasada Company and Balvant Company were some of the *sangeet natak* companies that opened following *Shakuntala*'s success.

Thus Marathi theatre seems to grow in two directions in the later part of the 19th century: prose or ‘bookish’ plays and *sangeet natak*. The two genres might be different but Shakespeare was common to both. Shakespeare performances on Marathi stage entertained both the educated elite and the masses. However, there was a difference in the way Shakespeare was adapted. The English-educated adapters tried to remain close to Shakespeare’s text but transformed his poetry into prose. *Sangeet natak* moulded Shakespeare into musicals and took liberties with their plot and structure following Parsi theatre. In fact, there were seriously debated issues of translation vs. adaptation during this time. G. G. Agarkar a college principal, wrote in the preface to his version of *Hamlet*: “Does not the mere mention of ‘a free adaptation’ serve as a cloak for all possible licence and abuse of the original” (cited in Yajnik 125)? However, he agreed that the Bard’s plays needed to be ‘modified’ for the Marathi stage. So, his versions along with those of V. M. Mahajani, V. B. Kelkar and others are transcreations rather than literal translations.

Marathi adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays:

An important influence that the English education and the English theatre had on the educated Marathi was that the latter took to theatre in order to ‘improve’ the Marathi stage. One of the earliest attempts in this direction was done by three students of Pune Engineering College — G. B. Deval, A.V. Patkar and Vamanrao Bhawe. They formed a company by the name of Aryodharak in 1879. It was not a commercial enterprise and, as H. N. Dasgupta suggests, aimed at introducing novel ideas and contribute the earnings towards public welfare (205). The company is known to have performed *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Tara* (an adaptation of *Cymbeline* by V. M. Mahajani). Deval himself played the title role in *Othello* and Patkar played Iago. Dasgupta refers to the plays performed by this company as “the best type” (205). However, Yajnik observes

that *Othello* did not fare well on the stage (165). The company closed down as all three founders left it one by one. Deval joined Kirloskar Natak Mandali while Bhave, with support from Mahajani and others, established Ichalkaranjkar Natak Mandali.

Ichalkaranjkar Natak Mandali was known for producing prose plays. Among various plays that the company staged are *Taruni Shiksha*, *Manorma* and *Gunotkarsh*, two were Shakespeare's adaptations—*Tara*, an adaptation of *Cymbeline* by V. M. Mahajani and *Tratika*, an adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew* by V. B. Kelkar. (*Tratika* will be discussed later with reference to another production) *Tara* was a successful comedy on the Marathi stage. The play was performed by at least three companies, Aryodharak (1879/80), Chittakarshak Company (1879) and Ichalkaranjkar Natak Mandali (1880). Ichalkaranjkar Natak Mandali performed the play in 1880 at the joint wedding function of the King of Baroda to a Princess of Tanjore, and his sister Tara Bai to the Prince of Savantwari. An elaborate review of the production that lasted close to six hours by an Englishman Harold Littledale throws light on various aspects of the performance:

The theatre was a temporary structure of bamboo-poles and canvas. The stage, a whitewashed sandbank forming an oval about three feet height, twenty feet in breadth, and forty feet in depth, was partly concealed behind a drop-curtain, on which an elephant and tiger fight was depicted, and by a proscenium of canvas, adorned with full-length portraits of three-headed gods and mythic heroes in strange attire. Three uprights—one of them a growing tree—on either side [of] the stage, sustained the “foot-lights” —some twenty kerosene lamps (65).

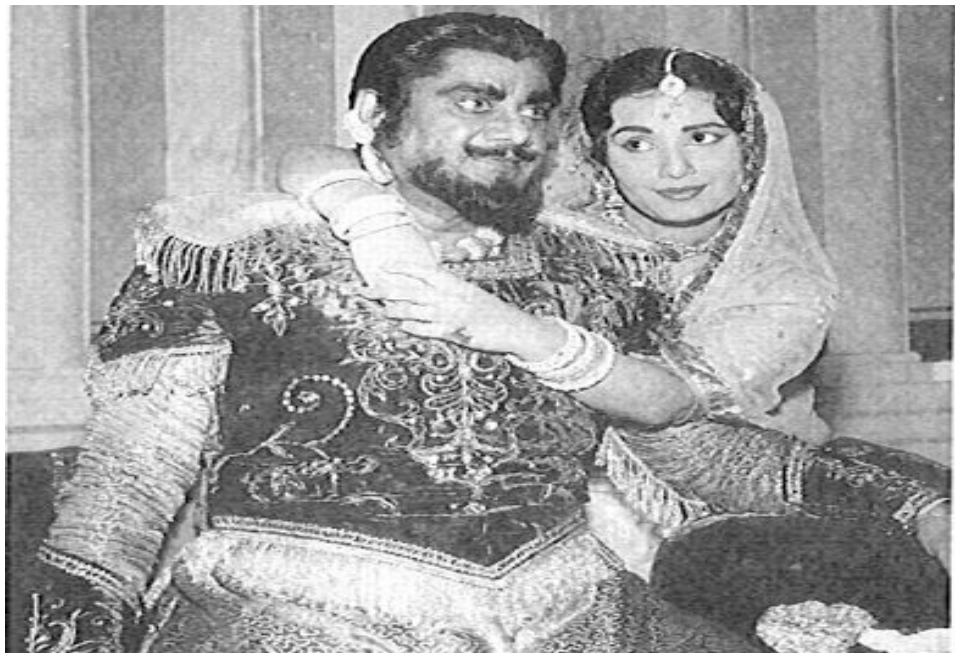
The play, in accordance with Sanskrit theatre tradition, commenced with the *sutradhar* singing an invocation to Narayan to bless the production. After a while Ganesh appears and asks the *sutradhar* to sing in praise of Saraswati. After a little while Saraswati appeared, “dressed in gold brocade, a peacock’s head and neck projecting from her girdle ... appeared ... danced a swift spasmodic hornpipe, and vanished” (66). Littledale then observes the changes that the Indian adapter had incorporated in order to make the play acceptable to the audiences. For example, the soothsayer of Act V. was substituted by a Brahmin astrologer, “who promised victory to Iachimo’s side if they took care to give the Brahmin a feed” (67). Further, in the love-scenes between Imogen and Posthumus, for the traditional Indian wife, far from running to embrace her husband usually veils her face at his approach and “ventures perhaps to peep timidly towards him from beneath the folds of her *sari*, but takes refuge in a corner if her lord become at all demonstrative in his affection” (67). Littledale’s comments on the costumes and make-up reveal that although the costumes were Indianised in order to match the setting, not much attention was paid towards their propriety. Imogen, for instance, wore “a dark green *sari* with gold edges, golden armlets, and earrings. Her face was fair as any English maiden’s and her cheeks bloomed with very conspicuous rouge. Unfortunately, she had not taken the precaution of whitening her arms to match her face, and the contrast was rather marked when she lifted her nut-brown hand, as she frequently had occasion to do, to adjust the cumbersome pearl ornaments which adorned her lily-white nose” (68). The play was a prose translation of the original but the playwright confessed “making certain necessary modifications in the original text” (Yajnik 145). The play is completely ‘Indiannised’ with names of characters and locales substituted with Indian proper names. Imogen becomes Tara, Cymbeline — Sambhaji, Guiderius — Shivaji, Arviragus — Rajaram, Belarius — Malharrao, Cloten —

Murarrao, Posthumus — Hambirrao, Iachimo — Khanduji, Pisanio — Sadoba. Similarly, Britain becomes Suvaranpuri and Italy — Vijaipura (Littledale 66). Also, to suit the audience sensibility, the queen is not a widow who has remarried and Tara (Imogen) too is unmarried. The play is thoroughly indigenised while trying to retain Shakespearean spirit. According to Littledale, other Shakespeare productions by this company were *The Tempest*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Othello* and *Taming of the Shrew* (66).

One of the most well known companies that frequently performed Shakespeare's plays was Shahunagarwasi Natak Mandali but in prose. The company was steered by one of the best actors of the Marathi theatre — Ganpatrao Joshi. Generally called the 'Garrick of Maharashtra', he was famous for playing Shakespeare characters like Hamlet, Othello and Macbeth. The company had a band of brilliant actors that ensured its immense success. Apart from Ganpatrao Joshi, there were Govindrao Supekar and Balvantrao Jog, famous for playing female characters like Lady Macbeth, Katharina, Ophelia. Among various plays that the company produced over a period of 25 years, the more successful were G. B. Deval's *Zunzarrao* (*Othello*), G. G. Agarkar's *Vikarvilasita* (*Hamlet*, 1883), V. B. Kelkar's *Tratika* (*Taming of the Shrew*, 1891), V. B. Kelkar's *Viramani ani Sringarasundari* (*Antony and Cleopatra*, 1893), S. M. Paranjpe's *Manajirava* (*Macbeth*, 1896), L. N. Joshi's *Kapidhvaja* (*King John*, 1904) and *Visvamitra* (*Timon of Athens*, 1905).

Zunzarrao was a stage version of M. G. Kolhatkar's adaptation of *Othello* (1867). Kolhatkar's adaptation was a failure on the stage in which G. B. Deval played the title role. Later, Deval adapted Kolhatkar's version for the stage and called it *Zunzarrao*. Deval's version was staged by Shahunagarwasi Natak Mandali. It was a prose adaptation which remained close to the original although dialogues had a colloquial language. Like other scholarly adapters, Deval too felt the need to make

changes in the original text to suit the audience taste while retaining the spirit of the original (Yajnik 165). The locale is shifted from Venice to Venipur and the characters become Indians. Yajnik notes, “The medieval tragic story of a lovelorn Hindu princess (for Barbara) finds a most melodious expression of its poignant sentiments pertaining to the condition of the banished Sita. These words have been set to an intensely melancholy strain of music. This perfect lyric has become a household song in Maharashtra” (166). The play was quite successful and was staged many times. Two such revivals were in the 1950s, one featuring Baburao Pendharkar a Marathi film actor as Othello and Jeevankala as Desdemona, and the other had Nanasaheb Phatak as Othello and Vijaya Mehta as Desdemona (See fig. ii). The first production was directed by Chintamanrao Kolhatkar. Others in the cast were Durga Khote, Balgandharva, Nanasaheb Phatak, Jayamala Shiledar, Keshavrao Datey and Chintoba Gurav, a veteran actor from Kirloskar Natak Mandali (Website 2).



A scene from a mid-20th-century production of *Zunzarrao*, the classic Marathi version of *Othello*. Featuring Baburao Pendharkar as Othello and Jeevankala as Desdemona (Website 3).

Vikarvilasita, an adaptation of Hamlet by G. G. Agarkar, was staged by the Shahunagarwasi Natak Mandali in 1883. The production went on to become the most sought after due to Ganpatrao Joshi's rendition of Hamlet. Yajnik notes, "despite its having been acted by him [Ganpatrao Joshi] hundreds of times was always in demand wherever the company toured" (159). Balbahu Jog rendered the part of Ophelia well. In fact, both the actors got appreciation not only from Indian audiences but also from some of the English gentlemen who witnessed the performance. L. N. Joshi provides an account of the praises showered upon the actors:

Mr. E. H. Atkin was "taken by surprise" in 1894, as he could follow Shakespeare scene by scene and as the acting was "good and powerful throughout". To Mt. J. R. Roberts, in 1902, it was a "revelation that the dramatic art had attained to so high a pitch in India as that displayed by the Shahu Company. Ganapatrao's rendering of the great characters of Shakespeare is beyond all praise. He is a finished actor of the highest quality and of marvelous talent. I would say the same of Balbhau, who does the female parts". Mr. F. B. Younghusband was "astonished at the ability and talent" of Ganapatrao and Balwantrao in 1902 (cited in Yajnik 160).

Some scholars attribute the success of this production to Agarkar's strategies employed for translation. The text more or less follows the original faithfully but Agarkar replaces the foreign references with episodes well known to the Indian audiences. For instance, Priam's death in the play is replaced by Ashwathama-Drona episode from the *Mahabharata* (Yajnik 160). Also, original lines in the play that were not 'in tune' with Indian sensibility were either omitted or changed. For example, in Act III Hamlet's line "Lady, shall I lie in your lap?" is replaced by "Will you allow me to sit beside you?"

Whether Joshi's acting or Agarkar's adaptation, the play was certainly a hit with the audiences who would come again and again to watch it.

Tratika is a prose adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew* by V. B. Kelkar. Actually, *Taming of the Shrew* had been produced by various companies with different titles like *Sangita Chaudave Ratna* by 'Balvant Company' and *Karakasdaman* by Patnakar Company. Both these productions were musicals in the tradition of *sangeet natak*. *Tratika* is generally believed to be the most successful version. Kumud A. Mehta observes that in the introduction to the play, "Kelkar frankly admits that he has put in a great deal that is his own and he asks the reader not to judge his work as a translation. ... It reproduces the situation of *Taming of the Shrew* but the words in it can under no circumstances be described as Marathi equivalents of the original" (246). Whether a translation of *Taming of the Shrew* or not, the play was a success on the stage. H. N. Dasgupta comments that although *Tratika* was a mediocre play as far as the script was concerned its success was guaranteed by the famous actor-trio — Ganpatrao Joshi, Balwantrao Jog and Govindrao Supekar (207). L. N Joshi notes that *Tratika* did so well on the stage that the company easily cleared its debts (cited in Yajnik 136).

Macbeth has been an all-time favourite with Marathi audiences. The play has been adapted by several playwrights for several companies. However, the two important ones are *Manajirava*, a prose adaptation of *Macbeth* by S. M. Paranjpe in 1896 and *Rajmukut* by V. V. Shirwadkar in 1954. *Manajirava* was staged by the Shahunagarwasi Natak Mandali in 1896 in which Ganpatrao played the title role. The play was a success especially due to the actors involved. L. N Joshi gives an account of a production of this play in Bombay:

When the troupe went to Bombay, on the night of its first production the tumultuous enthusiasm of the audience reached such a high pitch that they continued shouting ‘Once more!’ (meaning repeat the walking scene), declaring that they would not allow the play to continue until they were satisfied. Then the great Ganapatrao, who played Macbeth with distinction, came forward and lectured the audience: “This is not a music-hall, where you can encore a song as many times as you like. If you still persist in your demand, realize that such a consummate piece of acting cannot be repeated devoid of its context. Yes, I shall start the whole play again, and will need three more hours to reach this point. It is already one in the morning; but I have no objection if you get the necessary police sanction’. The effect was instantaneous; the play proceeded (cited in Yajnik 173).

The other adaptation *Rajmukut* was done by V. V. Shirwadkar for Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh. The play was directed by Herbert Marshall, a British director and featured actors like Nanasaheb Phatak as Macbeth and Durga Khote as Lady Macbeth (See fig. iii). The production does not seem to have done well despite leading film actors of the day performing. Dhyaneswar Nadkarni informs, “[O]n the stage of the Sangh’s open-air theatre Marshall created the mock-up of an Elizabethan theatre. There was a big apron stage which, unfortunately, jutted out beyond the essential microphones. In their soliloquies neither Phatak nor Durgabai could be heard!” (18). Nadkarni further argues:

And what does one make of the powerful banquet scene? Does one ask the guests to sit on wooden planks on the floor and serve them *laddoos*? The entire frustrations of this trans-cultural effort came

tumbling down on the heads of director and actors. The debate has since then still been going on whether Shakespeare should be adapted or translated. In the latter case Macbeth's guests will at least eat at the dining table — more stageworthy, more dignified! (18)



Fig.iii. Durga Khote as Lady Macbeth in *Rajmukut*, a Marathi adaptation of *Macbeth*, 1954 (Source: Website 4).

Nadkarni here seems to have forgotten that in India almost all ‘straight’ versions of Shakespeare have failed. There are ample examples of such failures. Girish Ghosh’s *Macbeth* in 1893 failed because he had translated the original text ‘faithfully’ and did not bother to contextualise it. Nadkarni seems to suggest that Shakespeare could be produced in Indian languages with all the ‘Englishness’ of the original text. Perhaps it was for this reason that although there were innumerable literal translations Shakespeare’s plays, not all could be successfully staged.

II. Shakespeare in Kannada Theatre

Kannada scholars have pointed out that a newly developing modern Kannada intellectual community accepted Shakespeare to such an extent that he was popularly referred to as Sekh Pir (Satyanath 2004, 46).

Kannada theatre, unlike various other theatre traditions in India, was late to respond to Shakespeare. There is a general consensus that the first translation/adaptation of Shakespeare was Channabasappa Basavalingappa Dharwad’s *Nagadavarannu Nagisuva Kathe* an adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors* published in 1871, much later than its Gujarati or Bengali versions. It was during this time that Kannada writers were also busy translating Sanskrit dramas though it was only in 1870 that the first Kannada translation of a Sanskrit play was done. This was Shesha Ramachandra Churamuri’s translation of *Shakuntala* as *Sakuntala Natakavu*. Inspired by these two traditions, the Kannada playwrights tried to develop indigenous drama. This period is generally understood to be the beginnings of ‘modern’ Kannada theatre. However, K. V. Akshara says it is a general misconception that the ‘modern’ Kannada theatre began in the 1880s with the emergence of theatre companies and new form of dramatic writing (189).

According to him, the ‘modern’ Kannada theatre began much before when the *yakshagana* troupes started touring outside Karnataka during the early 19th century (189). One needs to remember here that it was a *yakshagana* troupe from Karnataka that had performed in the royal court of Sangli (in southern Maharashtra) in 1842 that sowed the seed of modern Marathi drama. Thus, for a region like Karnataka where the performance tradition was so strong it is no surprise that Shakespeare made inroads into performance. In fact, a Shakespeare play had crept into a *yakshagana* script much before his plays began to be translated or adapted in the rest of India (189). This was *As You Like It* adapted as *Sankalpa siddhiyu* incorporated into a *yakshagana* script in the 1860s (Trivedi 2005, 153). This gradually gave rise to more Shakespeare translations and adaptations in Kannada which, along with Sanskrit drama, played an important role in the development of modern Kannada theatre. Satyanath suggests that

The early precursors of modern Kannada drama, which include several Shakespearean translations, should be seen as an interface that continued the sensibilities of an earlier performing tradition into the newly emerging literary (text-centred) sensibilities (65-6).

Modern Kannada theatre absorbed the influence of the various travelling theatre companies that staged their plays in this region. For instance, *The Handbook of Karnataka* states, “[T]he British colonialists also contributed in a great way for the development of the theatres. They brought with them theatre troupes, which performed plays of Shakespeare and other popular English plays. Encouraged by this, translations of these plays appeared and were staged successfully” (Website 5). However, the most important influence on Kannada theatre was the touring Parsi and Marathi theatre companies. During the 19th century itinerant drama companies travelled from one region to another. It is useful to consider this influence because professional Kannada theatre

companies, which later established a style of their own known as Company Nataka, modelled themselves on the Parsi and Marathi companies. The plays of these companies were well received in Karnataka. For instance, the plays of Kirloskar Natak Mandali like *Sangeet Shakuntal* and *Sangeet Saubhadra* were quite popular in Karnataka. Satyanath informs that a Parsi company, the Balliwala Company, so impressed the Maharaja of Mysore that the King encouraged the establishment of Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha later renamed as Palace Company (67). From another source it is learnt that it was Sangli Nataka Company's performance of *Padmavati Parinaya* in Mysore that impressed the Maharaja to the extent that he formed a company called Shakuntala Nataka Company in 1881 to perform *Shakuntala* and that he company was later named Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha (Website 6). Whatever might have influenced the Maharaja, the point is that the interaction of various companies from different regions created an environment congenial for the growth of new theatre in Karnataka. The point to remember is that Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha with the Maharaja as its patron held the earliest performances of Shakespeare in Karnataka. The Maharaja also invited companies to perform Shakespeare's plays and interested himself in the Shakespeare performances staged by the Palace Company. Vijaya Guttal notes that this company was the first to give public performances of *Shursena Charitre* (an adaptation of *Othello* by Basvappa Sastri) and *Panchali Parinaya* (an adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* by A. Anandarao) in 1882 (97). The Maharaja invited a British officer Frazer for the show who was "all praises for artiste Subanaa, who played Devdatta (Iago in *Othello*) and Veeraraghavacharya who played Mohane (Desdemona). He exclaimed that famous English artiste Henry Irwin's portrayal of Iago's role looks dull before Subanna and no English women can match Mohane in acting" (Website 7). Also, as in schools and colleges of Calcutta, Bombay and Pune, the Manaharaja College

of Mysore often performed either scenes or whole plays of Shakespeare under the tutelage of their English teachers. In fact, the dramatic society of the college, “invested a good bit of money on stage-equipment and period costume – or what would pass for period costume” (Rao 63). The dramatic society was invited by the Maharaja to perform in the court as well. In 1901 after Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV ascended the throne, the theatrical activity of the Palace Company expanded. Like his predecessor, he encouraged theatre and other arts. During his reign various companies visited Karnataka to stage plays. For instance, *Tratika*, the Marathi adaptation of *Taming of the Shrew* by Kelkar, was performed in Dharwar in 1908 (Satyanath 68). Krishnaraja himself was an accomplished actor and made sure that his company did well. A guess can be made about how professional the company must have been by the fact that,

A committee of royal court scholars, musicians like Bidaram Krishnappa, Dodda Ramarya, Chikka Ramarya and others screened the artistes for selection. It was mandatory for the artistes to sing well. The men played the female characters. The rehearsal was also carried out under the supervision of these scholars regularly. Nalwadi himself supervised the rehearsals sometimes when a particular play was to be staged for a royal guest or a British delegate or officers (Website 8).

Thus, Kannada theatre did not grow in isolation but was influenced by the traveling companies. It took, from such companies, elements like “[T]heir distinct theatrical idiom with painted curtains, appealing songs, melodramatic acting, and mesmerizing special effects [which] reigned supreme over the popular imagination of Karnataka till the advent of films” (Akshara 189).

Adaptations/Translations of Shakespeare plays in Kannada:

Shakespeare has been translated and adapted in Kannada for more than 120 years. According to the Indian National Library, Kolkata, the number of Kannada translations and adaptations of Shakespeare were 66 till 1964. According to Satyanath, the number of translations and adaptations covering about twenty plays of Shakespeare, was around 93 by 1964 which reached 111 by 1992. There may be more translations and adaptations that might have gone unnoticed. The point is that there is a huge corpus of Shakespeare translations and adaptations in Kannada since 1871 when the first Kannada adaptation of a Shakespeare play appeared. However, the approach of Shakespeare translators/adaptors in Kannada has not been uniform. As Satyanath notes, “Kannada’s response to Shakespeare represents two ambivalent and parallel streams of sensibilities, one corresponding to the literary tradition and the other to the stage tradition” (48). One is led by the love for Shakespeare and the other by love for the stage. G. S. Amur identifies three generations of Kannada writers who have appropriated Shakespeare: the first generation (1870-1920) writers were engaged in free adaptations of Shakespeare; the second generation (1920-60) attempted ‘faithful’ translations of Shakespeare’s plays; and the third generation (1960 onwards) translated Shakespeare to address contemporary problems and for creative expression (116). One may find exceptions also where the trend of one generation is found in another.

The first generation adaptations of Shakespeare are more transcreations as they, like Parsi adaptations, took extreme liberties with the originals. There is very less archival material available, at least in English, on the performative aspect of the Kannada *nataka* companies. It is therefore difficult to imagine the kind of performances held. Satyanath refers to this fact and states, “[L]ong ago, Kurtakoti (1969) made an appeal for a historiography of Kannada theatre performances, an appeal that has

unfulfilled to this day” (65). However, one can make a guess from the fact that Kannada theatre companies were influenced by Parsi and Marathi theatres. Melodrama, dance and music, spectacle and complete indigenization of plays which were hallmark of Parsi and Marathi theatres would have been followed by the Kannada companies. Some common characteristics of early Kannada adaptations were indigenization of names, places, characters and plot, transformation of tragedies into comedies and the use of songs and music. Music has always been an integral part of theatre in India. Like Parsi, Marathi and Bengali theatres, Kannada theatre incorporated music and songs. The same formula was applied to Shakespeare adaptations as well. Guttal notes that “[O]ften people came to listen to particular songs by particular singer-actors”, who would shout for encores and the actors had to oblige (97).

While dealing with the earliest adaptations of Shakespeare in Kannada, one must remember that these were done with an eye on the performance. During 1870-1920, there were around 57 translations and adaptations available of the Bard’s plays. This suggests that the major bulk of the total Shakespeare translations and adaptations merge from this period — a fact that reflects Shakespeare’s contribution to the development of modern Kannada theatre. As mentioned earlier, these adaptations were done keeping the stage in mind so it became important for the adaptors to render the text in local colour to appeal to the common audience who were unfamiliar with the language and the culture presented in the English text. Ramchandra Dev argues that “it was also a strategy to circumvent the onslaught of an alien culture and preserve self-identity by substituting a construct from their own language and cultural milieu. This belief is reinforced by the fact that Sanskrit plays that came into Kannada almost at the same time did so through literal translations and through adaptations, as the question of alien domination did not arise there” (cited in Guttal 96). I think that the early Kannada adaptors preferred to

adapt rather than translate for theatrical compulsions. Translating and presenting Shakespeare to the audience unfamiliar with the culture of the English text would not have made much sense. Srikanteshagowda and M. S. Puttanna justified the appropriation on the basis of cultural difference in their prefaces. Since they were writing for the stage it was important to make Shakespeare's plays intelligible to the audience. K. G. Kundanagar, for instance, observes in this connection:

Social customs being the same these afforded no difficulty in their translations. Hamlet's mother marrying her brother-in-law a few days after her husband's death, the parting of the hero and the heroine soon after their marriage in the *Taming of the Shrew*, and similar other incidents could not be retained consistently with Indian customs. It was very hard, therefore, to translate the English dramas to suit the Indian stage and to win the estimation of the lovers of literature, and the theatergoing public. Some say that these should be rendered closely, and not adapted to suit Indian customs. In that case the mind trained to view eastern society will not feel at home (321).

Thus, the Parsi and Marathi adaptations of Shakespeare provided the models for Kannada adaptors. Another point that Dev seems to forget is that many of the early Kannada adaptors of Shakespeare were not all English educated university scholars well verse in the language. Writers like Somnathayya S. Bellave, Venkatacharya and G. H. Honnapuramath used Telugu, Bengali and Marathi translations of Shakespeare's plays which were in turn based on Charles Lamb's prose renderings of Shakespeare (Satyanath 54). Similarly, Basvappasastrri used C. Subbarao's translation of *Othello* for *Surasena Charithre* (1895).

Srikanteshagowda's *Pramilarjuniya* (1890), an adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, provides an example of thorough 'indigenization'. G. S. Amur observes:

Srikantesha Gowda borrows his structural plan from *A Midsummernight's Dream* but brings about a total cultural transformation in the content. The story of Theseus and Hyppolita is substituted by the story of Arjuna and Pramila and Greece changes into Kerala. The fairy king and queen are replaced by Manmatha and Rati and the Elizabethan artisans make room for Mayachari and his friends who obviously belong to Karnataka. Interestingly enough the *Pyramus and Thisbe* interlude finds a parallel in *Ramavarma and Lilavati*, the name under which *Romeo and Juliet* had been translated into Kannada. The opening of the play, in the form of a dialogue between *Sutradhara* and *Nati*, follows the conventions of Sanskrit drama (118).

Even close to be considered translations, most notably those of Basvappasastrī and Puttanna, made some changes to the original. Puttana translated *King Lear* as *Hemachandrarajavilasa* (1889) and wrote:

The characters have been given Indian names in order to make the play appear natural to Kannada readers. There are two important changes in the translation. The first relates to English customs and habits for which substitutes have been found deliberately to suit the genius of the Kannada language and facilitate understanding by the Kannada people. The other is a result of misreading or imperfect knowledge of the text (119).

Satyanath makes an interesting observation that not only the content was appropriated, even the genre was “conceived in terms of indigenous genres” (54). The titles of these adaptations were named as “*nataka* (drama), *charite/charitre* (life-story), or *kathe* (story). The comedies usually ended with *vijaya* (victory) or *vilasa* (romance) or *parinaya* (marriage)” (Satyanath 54).

Romeo and Juliet seems to have drawn the attention of many adaptors of the time. There were at least six adaptations of the play prior to 1930. The play under the name *Ramavarma Lilavati* was adapted and staged by at least three different companies. Ratnavali Nataka Sabha led by the actor, director and owner A. D. Varadachar who was known for playing Shakespeare’s heroes used his own adaptation. Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha used Jayarajacharya’s 1889 adaptation *Ramavarma Lilavati Charitre*. And Rajdhani Nataka Mandali used Anandrao’s 1889 adaptation. However, all the adaptors made it a point to transform the tragedy into a happy ending. This transformation has often been criticized by Kannada scholars on account of doing ‘injustice’ to Shakespeare. Shamaraya, for instance, has made the following observation regarding the happy ending in Anandrao’s (1889) adaptation:

The absurdity par excellence is the self-conceived last act of the play, in which Pujiyapada Yogishwara (Friar Lawrence) prays to Lord Vishnu, who appears on the stage, appreciates Ramavarma’s (Romeo) love for Lilavati (Juliet) and Lilavati’s chaste virtues and brings them back to life. The translator, in an attempt to bring Ramavarma and Lilavati back into life, has murdered the great dramatist (*sekspiyar mahakavi*). The saying that ‘translators are traitors/murderers’ has actually become true here. When it is often told that this was a very popular play, we not only need to shake our heads (*taleduugu*; in total

approval; also rejecting something totally) about the dramatic skills of its actors about also have to put a big question mark on the taste (*ras-suddhi*) of the audience who used to enjoy such performance (cited in Satyanath 58-9).

Criticism like this has often been raised by those who take a literary approach towards Shakespeare and forget the fact that these early adaptations were done for the stage. Satyanath is right in arguing that such criticism marginalizes the important contribution of these adaptations in the development of ‘modern’ Kannada drama (58). Instead of taking faithfulness to Shakespeare as an index of their contribution towards Shakespeare scholarship these adaptations should be “understood and appreciated as cultural maneuvers of an interface in transforming culture in which the nature of the text and its performance was in a state of flux and change” (Satyanath 66).

If adaptation was the mode preferred by the first generation writers, the next generation (1920-1960) adopted the mode of ‘faithful’ translation in approaching Shakespeare. Many of the translators of this period were university educated who had read Shakespeare as part of their curriculum. In order to understand this transition from adaptation to translation of Shakespeare one needs to look at various forces in operation during the 1920s. The change was brought about by two main developments in Karnataka: the theatrical and the literary. As mentioned earlier, the first half of the 20th century was dominated by company theatre in Karnataka. However, one can also notice the rise of amateur theatre during the second decade of the century. By the 1920s there had grown a good number of amateur theatre groups and playwrights. Akshara notes that the important role in the growth of amateur theatre in Karnataka was played by T. P. Kailasam in Bangalore, K. Shivarama Karanth in South Karnataka and Sriranga

(Adya Rangacharya) in north Karnataka (191-2). On the one hand, all of them criticized company theatre especially for its “artificiality and anachronism”, on the other they advocated social drama and realism in theatre (Akshara 192). Amresh Datta writes,

As a negative reaction to the pomp, din and festive atmosphere of this [company] theatre, naturalist theatre appeared in the thirties. It was a theatre of the sophisticated, urban middle class. They were too shy to act or write on broad emotions (1077).

Another impulse that was instrumental in framing Kannada drama of this period came from literature. The period between 1920 and 1960 is generally referred to as *navodaya* (Renaissance) in Kannada literature. The period saw the growth of modern Kannada poetry and novel. However, some of the writers also wrote drama mainly as closet plays. These writers also translated Shakespeare following the original faithfully. To mention some of the important ones who translated Shakespeare were D. V. Gundappa, B. M. Srikantia, K. V. Puttappa (Kuvempu) and Masti Venkatesh Iyengar. Most of them were English educated. The English education had made it possible for these writers to render faithful translations of Shakespeare. The representative of this approach to Shakespeare can be seen in Gundappa’s preface to his translation of *Macbeth* (1936):

It is my intention to represent the world of Shakespeare as far as possible as it really is and not merely to tell the story. It is my effort to retain the names used by him, the atmosphere he created, his descriptions ... on the whole his representation of the world as it is. I believe that this is necessary for the enhancement of of Kannada literature and the sensibility of the Kannada people and for the

broadening of their vision of the world. If human civilization and peace are to last, it is of foremost importance that the different races of the earth attain a world vision. In order to achieve this the people of the West should read our epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata sympathetically as we must acquaint ourselves with their poetic tradition (cited in Guttal 98-9).

As *navodaya* was predominantly a poetic renaissance and most of the Shakespeare translators of this period were poets, it was obvious for them to bring out the poetry in Shakespeare in Kannada which the earlier generation had neglected. For instance Masti Venkatesa Iyengar, the renowned poet, fictionist and playwright noted, “[I]t is the duty of the translator to reproduce not just the meaning or the emotion but to the cast of mind behind the poetry” (cited in Amur 121). For this purpose, Vijaya Guttal notes, these translators found out that *Sarala Ragale*, a Kannada meter, could substitute the English blank verse. The result was that most of the translations of the Bard’s plays became more poetic than dramatic. This is probably the reason that with the exception of Kuvempu’s *Raktakshi* (*Hamlet*) no other translation of this period has been staged. There were other reasons as well which prevented the staging of Shakespeare translations during this period. On the one hand the, company theatre was losing its vitality largely due to the influence of cinema. On the other, new playwrights like Kailasam, Sriranga and G. B. Joshi were focusing their attention on social plays with realistic themes and so did the amateur theatre. It was in the 1960s that a young generation of playwrights appropriated Shakespeare for creative expression.

The post-Independence Kannada theatre, like other theatres in India, has seen various forces at work. While the early post-Independence Kannada theatre addressed

existential issues in the plays of P. Lankesh, Girish Karnad and Chandrashekhara Kambar, the 1970s witnessed a revival of folk and traditional art forms to address contemporary issues. Girish Karnad, for example, has incorporated elements from Kannada folk and traditional theatre in writing his plays *Hayavadna* (1971) and *Nagamandala*. By the 1960s, B. V. Karanth had started experimenting with folk and traditional forms of Karnataka in his productions to address contemporary issues. Amidst such theatre developments, the approach towards Shakespeare too witnessed a change. It is neither a mere rendering of the Shakespearean story like the first generation nor a close translation of the second generation. It is rather a reworking of Shakespeare to suit creative and contemporary needs. On his approach to Shakespeare, Ramchandra Deva observes, “I was trying to bring Shakespeare to Kannada through myself, to understand myself and my times through Shakespeare!” (cited in Amur 122). This seems to be the guiding principle of other playwrights and translators as well who have either reworked or translated Shakespeare in the post-Independence Indian theatre in general and Kannada theatre in particular. The representatives of this approach in Kannada theatre are Ramchandra Deva, H. S. Shivaprakash and Nissar Ahmed. Some of the important translations of Shakespeare that have often been staged during this period are Ramchandra Deva’s *Macbeth* (1976) and *Hamlet* (1978) and Shivaprakash’s *Lear Maharaja* (*King Lear*, 1988) and *Maranayakana Drishtanta* (*Macbeth*, 1990). In *Maranayakana Drishtanta* (1990) the playwright moulded the play into a Kannada narrative tradition. According to Guttal it “is the third-generation writers with their conversational idiom and innovative ideas that has given truly stageworthy translations” (Guttal 102).

However, one production of *Macbeth* that has been influenced by Kannada traditional forms and has proved quite successful on the stage is *Barnama Van* (1979),

an adaptation of *Macbeth*. Directed by B. V. Karanth in Hindi for Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal, the play experiments with *yakshagana*, a folk form of Karnataka. I would deal with this production at length in Chapter V.

III. Shakespeare in Malayalam Theatre

Theatre in Kerala has a long history dating back to the 9th century. Kerala can boast of a great number of traditional and folk forms of performance many of which are still in practice. In fact, the oldest performance form of India that is extant belongs to Kerala. *Kutiyattam*, as it is called, is based on the classical Sanskrit plays. Among other traditional forms of performance of Kerala are *teyyam*, *tullal* and *kathakali*. However, it is paradoxical that despite such theatrical activity in Kerala, dramatic literature in Malayalam is a recent phenomenon dating back to the later half of the 19th century. There were of course written texts that *kutiyattam* and *kathakali* used but these were ancient Sanskrit texts.

An important intervention in the traditional theatrical activity of Kerala was made by the Portuguese who were the first foreigners to establish contact with Kerala. As a result of the contact there developed a form of theatre in the late 17th century Kerala called *Chavittunatakam*. The dramas presented Western stories and Christian themes of saints and war heroes translated into Malayalam and interpolated with local music and dance. Some of the popular dramas were *Genoa Natakam*, *Caralman Natakam*, *Napolean Charitram* and *Yakoba Natakam* (Nair 1977, 145). This was the first western influence on the theatres of Kerala. Although this form did not receive much favour from the high-caste Hindus, yet it was quite popular with the masses for some time.

In spite of a good amount of performances in Kerala it is noteworthy that Malayalam drama proper began with the Malayalam translation of Kalidasa's *Sakuntalam* by Kerala Varma in 1882. This was also the time when efforts were being made to develop the idea of the 'stage' in Kerala. During this time *Sakuntalam* was staged in various parts of Kerala by a theatre troupe called Manmohanam Nataka Company under the direction of Thiruvattar Narayan Pillai. K. S. Narayana Pillai observes that this company seems to grow after Tamil commercial troupes visited Kerala and staged musicals in the form of *sangeet natak* (245). The staging of *Sakuntalam* was successful and "the Tamil model influenced Kerala artists to such an extent that they organized troupes to perform similar plays in Malayalam, signifying the commencement of Malayalam theatre as we know it today" (Pillai 245). The success of this translation encouraged other writers to translate more Sanskrit plays. Within two decades there were Malayalam translations of all the major Sanskrit classics. Translations of plays like *Uttarramcharitam*, *Malati Madhavam* and *Malavikagnimitram* became available. Malayalam playwrights did not confine themselves to the translations of Sanskrit plays only but also attempted original plays in Malayalam. The first such attempt was Kochuni Tampuran's *Kalyani Natakam* (1891) set against the background of contemporary society. Thus, the Malayalam dramatic literature was growing in three directions: Sanskrit translations, English translations, and original plays in Malayalam.

Although the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French came to Kerala before the British, they were not able to influence Malayalam literature to the extent the English did. English education in Kerala encouraged the educated Malayalam writers to translate English works and then write Malayalam plays by borrowing the western dramatic techniques. Ayyappa Paniker explains,

The first English school was established by the London Mission Society as early as 1806, by the Church Missionary Society in 1815, and by the Government of Travencore in 1834. This led to the greater use of English for official purposes and closer intellectual contact with England. The work of the Christian missionaries speeded up this process of westernization. With the establishment of printing presses and the publication of newspapers there was a tremendous change in the lifestyles of the native population (232).

Once the educated class of Kerala was exposed to the English literary traditions, it took up the translation of English works and also shape Malayalam literature along Western lines. New genres from the West like the short story, novel, essay and biography were welcomed. As in other regions, Shakespeare exerted a major influence on the early playwrights in Kerala. The first translation of a Shakespeare play came in 1866 as *Almarattam*, an adaptation of *The Comedy of Errors* by Oomman Philipose. Jayasree Ramakrishnan Nair notes that this translation “is the first drama on the Western model to be written in Malayalam” (125). However, this adaptation does not follow a dramatic form but is rather a story much like Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare*. A notable point is that most of the Malayalam translations of Sanskrit or English plays were not performance-oriented. The reason could be that the already available performing forms like *kathakali* and *kudiyattam* satisfied people’s desire for the visual.

Shakespeare has had a relatively lesser presence in Kerala as compared to Maharashtra, Karnataka or Bengal. The number of translations, adaptations and performances of Shakespeare in Kerala have been comparatively less and Shakespeare translations during the colonial period are few. Possible reasons for this conspicuous

absence of Shakespeare in the literary and theatrical tradition of Kerala could be as follows:

i) Unlike in Calcutta or Bombay, the British did not have a very visible presence in Kerala. There were hardly any playhouses set up by the British in Kerala. Probably due to the absence of the Western theatrical model Shakespeare did not receive much attention in Kerala. Nair suggests that “[T]he absence of a proper staging facility and the consequent infeasibility of theatrical realization, had virtually immobilized the Malayalese Shakespeare” (1999, 138).

ii) Another reason for the neglect of Shakespeare in Kerala could be the general indifference towards the ‘stage’. As mentioned earlier, unlike other regions of India, Kerala has strong traditional and folk performance traditions like *teyyam*, *tullal* and *kathakali* which might have discouraged the staging of new plays in general and Shakespeare in particular. P. K. Parameswaran Nair argues,

The one explanation for the sad neglect of the stage would be that the poets were too fond of the *Kathakali* to go in for any other dramatic forms. The repertoire of Sanskrit was always before them, and they were not averse to translating, adapting and imitating a great part of its literature’ (1977, 145).

Unlike other regions of India where folk forms received a blow as a result of the emerging discourses on modernity, the forms of Kerala kept themselves immune to such discourses. The reason could be the deep and firm classical bases of these forms.

iii) An important literary development took place in the first decade of the 20th century in Kerala. This was the development of prose farce which was to have a considerable

influence on dramatic literature as well as on theatrical staging. Writers in the vanguard were C. V. Raman Pillai and later E. V. Krishna Pillai and N. P. Chellappan. Instead of focusing their attention on Sanskrit classics or on Shakespeare, they found inspiration in the English Comedy of Manners of Sheridan and Goldsmith. The new plays that emerged were C. V. Raman Pillai's *Kuruppillakkalari* (1909), *Pandatte Pachchan* (1918) and E. V. Krishna Pillai's *Koallapramanam* (1931) as social critique.

iv) By the 1930s, Malayalam drama like Marathi drama had come under the influence of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen was in fact the most influential western playwright to have affected Malayalam drama. A. Balakrishna Pillai translated Ibsen's *Ghosts* in 1936; C. Narayan Pillai translated *Rosmersholm* as *Mullakkalbhavanam*. These two plays set the trend for serious social drama in Malayalam. The 1930s and the '40s witnessed the rise of political theatre in Kerala. As V. M. Ramchandran observes, "[T]he first world war and its global implications, the October Socialist Revolution, National Independence Struggle under the leadership of Gandhiji and the radical left, and the revolutionary struggles of the working class and peasants became most powerful in Kerala beginning from the thirties" (Website 9). The 1950s were influenced by the powerful Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and several agitprop theatre groups committed to staging progressive plays came up. In a politically charged atmosphere it was no surprise that instead of paying attention to Shakespeare or Kalidasa the Kerala playwrights and theatre practitioners chose to write, adapt and stage radical plays like C. J. Thomas's *Avan Veendum Varunnu* (He Comes Again! 1949) and Toppil Bhasi's *Ningalenne Communistakki* (You Made me a Communist, 1951).

This is not to say that there were no translations or adaptations of Shakespeare plays in Malayalam. Although there were translations and adaptations of the Bard's plays, these were unlike those in Kannada and Marathi as they were not done with an

eye on the stage. While most of the early adaptors/translators in Marathi and Kannada were writing for the stage, the early Malayalam Shakespeare translations were done as a literary exercise by the poets of Kerala. Nair argues,

The early translators of Shakespeare's plays were drawn to the wealth of poetry in the originals and proceeded to render the plays in a medium intermingling verse and prose, exploiting the facilities of metre, rhyme and rhythm for the verse passages. This was during the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the writers were influenced by the style and structure of Sanskrit Dramas such as those of Kalidas, Bhasa and Bhavabhuti which were being translated into Malayalam at that time. The translators of the Sanskrit classics and those of Shakespeare's plays were identical in that both groups concentrated on the poetic beauty of the originals, giving little importance to the theatrical features. Consequently, these versions are more suitable for literary appreciation rather than actual performance (1999, 128).

An example can be Kodungallur Kunjikuttan Thampuran's translation of *Hamlet* as *Hamlet Natakam* (1897). Nair informs us that Thampuran used poetic metres from Sanskrit like 'sardulavikriditam, Kusumanjari and a host of others' to correspond with Shakespearean blank verse (1999, 128).

There were some minor attempts at translating Shakespeare for the stage. As mentioned earlier, Tamil commercial companies would frequently visit various parts of Kerala. The musicals staged by these companies had an influence on the theatre in Kerala. As a result, some writers composed Malayalam musicals on the lines of Tamil *sangeet nataka*. The two *sangeet natakas* in Malayalam that set the tone for further

musicals were T. C. Achyuta Menon's *Sangita Naishadham* (1892) and K. C. Kesava Pillai's *Sadarama* (1903). It is worth mentioning that Malayalam *sangeet nataka* marks the first attempt at evolving professional theatre in Kerala. Like Marathi and Kannada *sangeet natak*, Malayalam *sangeet natak* too was predominantly musical in nature and the main purpose of this kind of drama was entertainment. K. M. George writes about the Tamil *sangeet nataka*,

The [C]hief actors were always first-class musicians. No one bothered about the quality of acting or dialogue. People enjoyed the songs and the colourful costumes and stage settings. Soon their technique was adapted into Malayalam, and a few musical plays came to be written (147).

One can notice similarity among the Marathi and Kannada musical theatres which followed the same pattern. The dramatic style of *sangeet natak* seems to have influenced at least one Shakespeare adaptation. This was Chunakkara Krishna Warriar's *Vasantikasvapnam* published in 1905, a *sangeet natak* version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as adapted by R. V. Krishnamacharya in Sanskrit. Following the norms of *sangeet natak*, Warriar incorporates into the play many songs based on various *ragas* like *kalyani*, *hamsvadhani*, *toti*, *hindustani*, *kinnari* and so on (Nair 1999, 130). Nair gives the following information regarding the transformations incurred by the playwright in the original:

The location is Avantidesam (Athens) ruled by Indravarma Maharaja (Theseus) married to Kanakalekha (Hippolyta). The central characters are Vasantan (Lysander), Makarandan (Demetrius), Kaumudi (Hermia) and Saudamini (Helena). The story follows the original without

change. The supernatural world of the fairies is adapted to the world of the kinnaris and kinnaras who are demi-gods and celestial musicians in the Indian culture. The figures introduced here are Pramohan (Puck), Bhadramukhi and so on. Oberon is Pradosan, the *kinnara* ruler who is at loggerheads with Nimbavati (Titania), his queen. The sub-plot involving the artisans Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout and Starveling is also introduced through the characters Dhanyakan, Adharakan, Dhanakan, Vasuvalitan, Rajasan and Sadhakan. The original play within the play, “Pyramus an Thisbe” is localized as “Bhanumatyasmakendra.” The conclusion of the play is slightly different. When the original closes Oberon, Titania and their train entering on stage to bless the couples, the adaptation picturises Pradosan, Nimbavathy and the *vidyadharas* looking down from heaven and singing joyous songs. Flowers are showered and the play closes with a Bharatavakya by Vasantan, which is a *mangalasloka* for Indravarma Maharaja (1999, 132).

There is however no documentary evidence on the staging of the play.

It is in the post-Independence Malayalam theatre that Shakespeare plays have received attention by various theatre groups of Kerala. There have been attempts at producing at least three plays namely *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Julius Caesar* in *kathakali* besides staging Shakespeare’s plays in schools and colleges. One such theatre club is that of S. B. College, Changanacherry, called The Shakespeare Theatre. The Shakespeare Theatre had staged 18 productions of Shakespeare’s plays between 1937 and 1999 [The list of these productions is given at the end of the chapter].

An unconventional rendering of Shakespeare's *Othello* as *kathaprasangam*, a story telling form in Malayalam was attempted by V. Sambasivam (1929-1996). The origins of the *kathaprasangam* form are not known and opinions differ. For some, "[I]t may have been derived from Tanjore's story telling style in which tales from the *Ramayana* are recounted or the art may have been called *Kathaprasangam* simply because it is a form of story exposition" (Website 10). V. Samabasivam not only rendered his own stories but also adapted those of writers like Vallatol and Asan and of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Pushkin and Shakespeare.

There have also been individual efforts like K. N. Panikkar's production of *Kodumkattu*, a translation of *The Tempest* (2000), Chandradasan's *Chatthankattu* (*The Tempest*, 1995) and *Macbeth* (2002) and M. G. Jyotish's *Macbeth* (2009). *Chatthankattu* is an allegory of colonization. Chandradasan writes in the programme note:

The first colonizer Prospero reaches this island with his daughter Miranda by fate, barely escaping the conspiracy of his brother Antonio. He relieves Azhakan Chathan the primitive 'element' of the island from a magic bondage and converts 'it' to be his trustworthy slave. The other creature Karumadan Chathan, the prospective ruler of the island too has been tamed by Prospero with love, education and punishment. ... Each of the westerner reaching the island after the shipwreck has colonial instinct, which is highlighted in this production. Antonio, Sebastian, Gonzalo, Stephano and even Trinculo are dreaming of converting the island into a colony and are discussing the means to sell the 'tribal sub-humans' of the island in a western market (Programme Note).

For the production the director draws on eclectic sources like folk music, beliefs and myths, and shamanistic and ritualistic traditions to give the production a local colour. For a magical environment required to stage *The Tempest*, *Chatthankattu* presents a highly stylized production before the audiences. Another Malayalam production that deserves mention is *Macbeth* directed by M. G. Jyothish (2009). The production dwells on the theme of overpowering ambition and immorality which lead to the tragedy. Believing in the timelessness and universality of Shakespeare, Jyothish observes,

It [Macbeth] is not the story of a Scottish king and the struggle for the throne. My interpretation of the play was on a different plane. I tried to plumb the minds of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and Banquo. It is a story of ambition, greed and power play (*The Hindu*, 2 March 2009).

The text is edited to a large extent as the director chose to focus on certain incidents in the lives of three characters of Macbeth, Lady Macbeth and Banquo, who in Jyotish's view represent id, ego and super ego (Website 11). Guilt, which is a recurring motif in the play, comes alive on the stage as the director makes use of large mirrors that continuously reflect Macbeth and Lady Macbeth who feel traumatized by what they see. While in Chandradasan's *Macbeth*, Lady Macbeth appears as a "suppressed and weeping presence that is tortured and neglected by Macbeth in his relentless pursuit of power" Jyotish's Lady Macbeth, portrayed by Athira, sticks to the more conventional devilish woman who coaxes her husband to murder the king (Programme note). Jyothish successfully brings out on stage the internal fears, apprehensions and turmoils of Macbeth through powerful visuals and haunting music,

IV. Shakespeare in Hindi Theatre

Unlike Marathi, Bengali and Kannada theatres, Hindi did not have professional theatres during the colonial period. Hindustani was employed by Parsi theatre for its performances but Hindi theatre per se distanced itself from Parsi theatre for its ‘vulgarity’, ‘crudity’ and ‘commercialism’ from the very beginning. It was largely in reaction to Parsi theatre that Hindi drama was established by Bhartendu Harishchandra (1850-85) who is generally referred to as ‘father of modern Hindi theatre’ in the mid 19th century. Critical of Parsi theatre, Bhartendu propagated a theatre which would have an edifying effect on the society. He not only wrote plays but also staged them and often travelled to various towns. Among his important plays are *Vaidiki Himsa Himsa na Bhavati* (Vedic Violence is not Violence, 1876), *Bharat Durdasha* (India’s Plight, 1875), *Satya Harishchandra* (Truthful Harishchandra, 1876), *Andher Nagari* (City of Darkness, 1881) and *Nildevi* (1881). He was also a prolific translator and translated a number of plays from Sanskrit, Bengali and English. His translation of *Merchant of Venice* as *Durlabh Bandhu* (*Rare Friend*, 1880) was the second translation of a Shakespeare play in Hindi, the first being Munshi Imdad Ali’s *Bhram Jhalak* (*Comedy of Errors*, 1879).

Bhartendu translated *Durlabh Bandhu* from the Bengali translation titled *Surlata Natak* (1877) by Pyarilal Mukhopadhyay. In his version, Bhartendu replaces the names of characters and places with Indian names but maintains their phonetic similarity. Thus Antonio is Anant, Bassanio is Vasant, Salerio is Saral, Portia is Purashree, Shylock is Sherlaksh and Venice is Vanshnagar. No changes are made to the original plot. However, foreign references are substituted with familiar ones. For instance, Portio’s lines (72-81) in Act I, sc. ii,

Portio: You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor
I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will
come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth
in the English. ... I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his
round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his
behaviour; everywhere.

are translated as follows:

*Purashri: Who na Hindi janta hai na Braj bhasha na Marwari aur tum
shapathpurvak keh sakogi ki Maithil mein mujhe kitna nyoon
abhyaas hai. Usne apna ang Marwaar mein mol liya hai,
pajama Mathura mein banvaya hai, topi Gujrat se mangani
laya hai (cited in Sood 284).*

Here Latin, French and Italian have been replaced by Hindi, Braj and Marvari. Also, doublet is substituted by *kurta* (shirt), round hose by pajamas and bonnet by cap. The Christian-Jew conflict is transformed into Hindu-Jain tussle. Bhartendu translates Shailaksha's (Shylock's) lines ("He has disgrac'd me and hind' red me half a million ...") in 3. 1. 11 as:

*who sada meri hani par hasa hai,
mere labh ki ninda ki hai, meri jati
ki pratishtha ki hai, mere vyarharo me
tach mari hai, mere mitro ko thanda
aur mere shatruyo ko garam kiya hai,*

aur yah sab kis liye? Keval is

liye ki mai Jaini hu (cited in Das 52).

Nandi Bhatia sees the play as a “struggle between Indians and British, a struggle in which Anant resembles the colonized, and Shailaksha, a foreigner in Vanshnagar, symbolizes the foreign foe” (63-4). She further argues,

Rendered in Hindi at a time when the rulers’ official policies became increasingly repressive toward Indians on legal grounds, *Durlabh Bandhu* becomes a parable for a strategy for independence from the growing encroachment of British authority. Shailaksha, in this parable, represents the colonizer, who with his deceit, cunning, and manipulative legal rhetoric attempts to kill the honest citizen of Vanshnagar and appropriate his wealth. [...] Anant’s eventual victory and escape from the manipulation of Shailaksha affirm the victory of the nation over its enemy. In rewriting the play, Bhartendu’s message at once becomes clear: subverting the rhetoric of the oppressor is crucial to the resistance strategies of the oppressed. On another level, the appropriation of the play conveys that knowledge of colonial models can be turned into a tool for striking back at the colonizer (63-4).

Whether the play was ever staged is debatable as there is no documentary evidence available. With the premature death of Bhartendu at an early age of 35, Hindi theatre suffered a setback though there were sporadic attempts by amateur groups to sustain its activities. In the absence of regular theatrical activity, Shakespeare translations were largely confined to literary circles.

It is clear then that most of the Shakespeare translations in Hindi prior to Independence were done as a literary exercise rather than for the stage. These are ‘faithful’ literary translations. As the translators did not have to cater to an audience as in Parsi theatre, they did not indigenize or transcreate the English plays to the extent Parsi or Marathi theatres did. However, it is important to look at the pre-Independence translations because Shakespeare exerted an important influence on the emerging Hindi drama between the mid 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Hindi translations of Shakespeare’s plays can be broadly classified into two categories: prose narratives introducing Shakespeare to Hindi readers; and ‘faithful’ translations as plays. Lala Sitaram, a prolific translator, translated 15 plays of Shakespeare between 1900 and 1926. His translations follow the original plays closely with the aim to counteract the “demoralizing effects upon the minds of the readers” made by the works of the “vernacular romancers” (cited in Verma 33). His *Bhool Bhulaiyan* (*Comedy of Errors*, 1915) is a faithful rendition in prose. The names of the characters and the places are changed to Indian ones while maintaining the phonetic affinity with the original as for example, Silanidhi for Solinus, Ajina for Aegeon, Antapal for Antipholus, Damaru for Dromio, Amalika for Aemilia, Adra for Adriana (Mishra 34). The lines (Act II, sc. ii; 43-52) spoken by Dromio are translated so literally that it loses all its charm:

Dromio: ‘Return’d so soon; rather approached too late:

The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit,

The clock hath stricken twelve upon the bell:

My mistress made it one upon my cheek:

She is so hot because the meat is so cold;

The meat is cold because you come not home;

You come not home because you have no stomach;

You have no stomach, having broke your fast;

But we, that know what it is to fast and play.

Are penitent for your default today.

The Hindi translation is:

Damaru: Itani jaldi aya. Mujhako to badi der ho gai, mrig jala jata hai, masa sika se aag mein gira raha hai aur jab ghante mein barah baja to bahuji ne mere sir par ek bajaya. Khana thanda ho raha hai isase vah bahut garam ho rahi hai aur kahati hai ki khana thanda hota hai aur aap ghar par nahi aate aur aapke ghar par na aane ka kaaran yahi hai ki aapko bhuk nahi hai kyonki aap kahi aur bhojan kar chuke hai. Parantu ham log jaante hai ki upvas karna aur devata ka manana kya hai. Ascharya yah hai ki aap aparadh Karen aur ham vrat kare (cited in Mishra 35).

His other translations like *Man Mohan ka Jaal* (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 1912), *Apni Apni Ruchi* (*As You Like It*, 1915), *Bagula Bhagat* (*Measure for Measure*, 1915), *Sati-Pariksha* (*Cymbeline*, 1915), *Jangal men Mangal* (*The Tempest*, 1915), *Prem Kasauti* (*Romeo Juliet*, 1931), all indigenize the names and places but otherwise follow the original texts closely. Among the histories, Sitaram translated *Richard II* as *Raja*

Richard Dwitiya (1915) and *Henry V* as *Raja Henry Pancham* (1915). No other translator has tried to translate these two histories in Hindi probably because of “wide unfamiliarity in India with these historical backgrounds” (Trivedi 1978, 83). Since Shakespeare’s history plays are steeped in the English history, it is difficult for the Indian translator to ‘Indiannize’ them. As Mishra observes, “As the translation is too literal, it becomes a mere catalogue of historical facts, and has little appeal to a reader” (53). Among the Shakespearean tragedies, Sitaram keeps the original names and places and follows the text closely. His *Hamlet* (1915) is in prose with occasional verse. Mishra notes that this translation “decidedly marks an advance upon all its predecessors. The prose is chaste, noble and dignified; the sense becomes crystal-clear and the verses ... do not degenerate into mere doggerel” (60). Similarly, Sitaram translated *Othello* as *Jhutha Sandesh* (1915), *King Lear* as *Raja Lear* (1915) and *Macbeth* (1926) following the original closely. Rajiva Verma states that although Sitaram’s translations have not been rated highly, “he did succeed in popularizing Shakespeare in the Hindi-speaking regions. Some of his translations were so popular that they went through several editions during the course of a few years” (33). Other Hindi translators of Shakespeare during this period were Ganga Prasad, Kashinath Khattri, Jai Vijay Narain Singh Sharma, Seth Govind Das, Mathura Prasad Chaudhari and Govind Prasad Ghidiyal. Some of the plays translated or adapted for Parsi theatre were also put into Devnagri script like Narain Prasad Betab’s *Gorakh Dhanda* (*Comedy of Errors*, 1912) into Hindi by B. Sinha (1917), Munshi Mehdi Hasan Ahsan’s *Bhool Bhulaiyan* (*Twelfth Night*, 1905) and Munshi Arzu Sahib’s *Khune Nahaq* (*Hamlet*) by Shivaram Das Gupta.

Only in post-Independence India Hindi translations of Shakespeare were done for the stage although literary translations continued. Rangeya Raghav’s translations, for instance, are largely done in prose and have not been staged often. His 15

translations of Shakespeare's plays during the 1957-58 are rather a hasty exercise. Raghav observes, "A language which does not possess translations of Shakespeare cannot be counted among the more developed languages" (cited in Trivedi 1978, 33). All his translations follow the original texts closely. He retains all the original names, places, allusions and references. Shakespearean puns too are sometimes retained and at other times explained in the footnotes. In *Barhevin Raaat* (1957), for instance, the translator retains the pun on 'dear' (Act III, sc. ii: 60-63):

Fabian: This is a dear manakin to you, Sir Toby

Sir Toby: I have been dear to him, lad, some two thousand
strong, or so.

In the Hindi translation Raghav replaces 'dear' by '*amulya*' and the pun is retained (Raghav 2006, 69):

Fabian: Sir Toby yah bhi aapke amulya aadmi hain.

*Sir Tobi: Are main isko amulya hu. Jab se yeh yahan hai,
tab se iske karib do hazaar pound kharch ho gaye hain.*

On the other hand, in the opening scene of *Twelfth Night*, Curio asks the Duke (Act I, sc. i: 15-22)

Curio: Will you go hunt, my lord?

Duke: What, Curio?

Curio: The hart.

Duke: Why, so I do, the noblest that I have.

O! when mine eyes did see Olivia first,

Me thought sh purg'd the air of pestilence.

That instant was I turn'd into a hart,

And my desires, like fell and cruel hounds,

E'er since pursue me.

In the footnotes Raghav explains the pun Shakespeare plays upon 'hart' as 'hunt' and 'heart' and also states that since there is no pun for 'hart' in Hindi that has both the meanings, it could not be used in translation (I. i). At various places Raghav transcribes English words in Devanagari script and sometimes translates English words and phrases too literally that they do not seem appropriate. For instance, as Mishra points out, in *Nishful Prem (Love's Labour Lost, 1958)*, 'school of night' is literally translated as 'ratri ke skool' which does not mean anything in Hindi (33).

Other Hindi translations of Shakespeare in the post-Independence India include *Mano na Mano (As You Like It, 1960)* and *Athens ka Raja Timon (Timon of Athens, 1960)* by Dharam Pal Shastri; *Barehvin Raat (Twelfth Night, 1961)* by Kuldeep Kapur; *Barehvin Raat (Twelfth Night, 1962)* by Shyam Sunder Suman; *Othello (1962)* by Vidyarthi Diwakar Prasad; and *Hamlet (1988)* by Amrit Rai. Most of these translations as short prose narratives or prose translations follow the original closely. Kuldeep Kapoor's *Barehvin Raat*, for instance, is in the form of a novel. There is no record of these translations being staged. Two translators stand out during this period – Harivanshrai Bachchan and Raghuvir Sahay. As powerful poets, they were able to translate Shakespeare's plays into verse, a rare feat achieved in Hindi translations of Shakespeare. The success of their translations is evident in the fact that they have been

successfully staged. Sahay's *Barnam Van (Macbeth)*, 1979) has become one of the path-breaking productions in Indian theatre.

Bachchan translated *Macbeth* (1957), *Othello* (1959), *Hamlet* (1969) and *King Lear* (1972). *Macbeth* was first telecast as a radio play by All India Radio (AIR) in February 1958 and was subsequently published in 1959. The play was staged by the Hindi Shakespeare Stage on 18th, 19th and 20th December 1958 at the Fine Arts Theatre in Delhi after 6 months of rehearsals. Bachchan's *Macbeth* is significant because it was the first Hindi Shakespeare play in verse to be staged. It appears that the biggest problem that Hindi translators have faced in translating Shakespeare is that of metre. Hindi does not have a metre that corresponds to the Shakespearean blank verse. Bachchan's success in translating *Macbeth* and *Othello* (1959) lies in devising an unrhymed verse using the traditional *rola* metre that comes quite close to blank verse. In the 'Introduction' to *Othello*, Bachchan justifies his use of *rola* as follows:

Like blank verse, *rola* too has that rhythm which, being suitable for poetry, does not leave the naturalness found in the spoken prose. The biggest strength of blank verse is that it is the closest to the rhythm of spoken English. During the staging of *Macbeth* most of the audiences did not even realize that verse is being spoken. While criticizing the acting, many well-known newspapers wrote that the translation is in prose-verse. But this mistake made the fact of the translation clear. The translation gave the feeling of verse and the sound of prose (*Bachchan Rachnavali* 118).

His choice of *rola* metre has been questioned by some as it is more suited for descriptive poetry rather than the dramatic. Rajiva Verma argues,

My own feeling is that this metre does come as close to iambic pentameter as the nature of Hindi allows. What is wrong is not the choice of metre but the mechanical and monotonous fashion in which Bachchan uses it. So strong is the metrical pattern that while reading his lines one is inexorably drawn into a singsong rhythm in spite of one's best effort to stick to the speaking voice. The metre is too emphatic and draws attention to itself all the time. Further, in trying to stick to his metre closely Bachchan has often to distort the syntax of the spoken language. His verse thus sounds too much like verse and too little like speech and thus fails to capture the characteristic rhythm of Shakespearean blank verse, which never loses touch with the spoken language (35).

However, Shakespearean verse has been beautifully rendered by Bachchan as can be seen in the the lines spoken by Macbeth in Act V, sc. v (17-28), "She should have died hereafter" have been translated as follows:

Macbeth: Unhen kisi din marna hi tha:

samay kabhi ata hai aisi baat ke liye –

aaj, aaj ke baad, aaj phira-phira se aakar

chalta jata din-pratidin, avichal kram se,

jivan-path par, jab tak chhor nahin aa jata;

aur hamare sare aaj, ujale, kaale

kal mein badle akl ke andhe insaano ko

andhkaarmay kaal-gart me pahuncha dete.

Thandi ho ja, thandi ja, kshanbhangur lau!

Jivan keval ek svapn hai, chalta-phirta;

ek din abhineta, jo do din duniya ke

rangmanch par hans-rokar gaayab ho jata,

koi pata nahin phir pata: yeh, kissa hai

kisi moodh ka ki jismein shabdaadamabr

bad kintu kuchh saar nahin hai (103).

In his “Preface” to *Macbeth*, Bachchan reproduces a review in *The Indian Express* which suggested that “along with the Hindi translation of *Macbeth* the characters too should have been Indiannised – i.e. *Macbeth* should have been made a Hindu king and so too other characters because English characters speaking in Hindi seems fake and unnatural. Such mentality reveals sheer ignorance towards the tradition of translation and that of drama” (cited in *Bachchan Rachnavali* 24; trans. mine). Another important translation that was staged was Raghuvir Sahay’s *Barnam Van* which would be discussed in chapter V.

In this chapter I discussed Shakespeare’s presence in those theatre traditions, other than Bengali and Parsi theatres, which have registered a strong influence of the Bard. The chapter makes it clear that while Shakespeare’s plays were adapted and staged quite regularly in Marathi and Kannada theatres, it was not the case with Malayalm and Hindi theatres. Since most of the Malayali and Hindi translations, especially during the colonial period, were largely literary exercises the translators have

tried to remain close to the original plays. However, it is clear that Shakespeare's plays have definitely influenced theatres in these languages.

Shakespeare productions by The Shakespeare Theatre, Changanacherry

Year	Play	Director	Main Actors
1937	Macbeth	M. P. Paul	L. M. Pylee as Macbeth
1947	Macbeth	M. P. Paul	D. Verghese as Macbeth, S. L. Thomas as Lady Macbeth
1951	The Merchant of Venice	C. A. Sheppard	Prem Nazir as Shylock
1952	The Merchant of Venice	K. J. Francis	George Koshy as Shylock
1952	King Lear	C. A. Sheppard	Sheppard as King Lear
1953	Hamlet	C. A. Sheppard	S. L. Thomas as Hamlet, Sheppard as Claudius, C. Z. Scaria as Laretes
1961	King Lear	C. A. Sheppard	Sheppard as King Lear
1964	Othello	A. E. Augustine	S. L. Thomas as Othello, K. K. Francis as Iago
1965	Othello	A. E. Augustine	S. L. Thomas as Othello, K. K. Francis as Iago
1969	Macbeth	A. E. Augustine and K. J. John	George Mathew as Macbeth, K. K. Francis as Lady Macbeth
1971	Macbeth	A. E. Augustine and K.J. John	George Mathew as Macbeth, K. K. Francis as Lady Macbeth
1983	The Merchant of Venice	A. E. Augustine	K. K. Francis as Shylock, Ajith N Babu as Portia
1986	Macbeth	K. V. Joseph and C. C. Thomas	P. L. Lucas as Macbeth, A. J. Thoms as Lady Macbeth
1989	Julius Caesar	K. V. Joseph	A. J. Thoms as Caesar, P. L. Lucas as Brutus, Thomas Jose as Antony
1991	Othello	K. V. Joseph	A. J. Thoms as Othello, John Korah as Iago
1994	Romeo and Juliet	C. C. Thomas	Josy Joseph as Romeo, Satheesh Kumar as Juliet
1997	Antony and Cleopatra	C. C. Thomas	A. J. Thomas as Mark Anthony, V. B. Vinod as Cleopatra
1999	Hamlet	C. C. Thomas	Josy Joseph as Hamlet, Lakshmi Prasad as Gertrude

Source: http://www.sbcollege.org/St._Berchmans_Profile.pdf

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Chapter V

Performing Shakespeare in Post-Independence India

This chapter looks at Shakespeare productions in post-Independence India. As discussed in the previous chapters, the number of Shakespeare productions, translations and adaptations decreased considerably in the post-1920s India. An important reason for this decline between the 1920s and 1940s was the emergence and growth of IPTA. The IPTA shifted the focus of theatre which had hitherto been primarily entertainment to voicing social and political issues of the time. During this time Shakespeare seems to have lost his appeal. It was only in post-Independence India that Shakespeare's plays found favour again on the stage. It is in the post-Independence period that one can locate some of the more significant Shakespeare productions in India.

The chapter is divided into two sections. Section I discusses the issues involved in the post-Independence Indian theatre and the subsequent rise of "theatre of roots" movement. Locating the selected Shakespeare performances in the post-colonial discourse in general and the emergence of post-Independence Indian theatre in particular is significant because "history does not just provide a background to the study of texts, but forms an essential part of textual meaning; conversely, texts or representations are seen as fundamental to the creation of history and culture" (Loomba and Orkin 3). Thus, the post-Independence discourse on Indian theatre presents a context to these productions and also operates as a *co-text* to be read along to understand the complexity of Shakespeare appropriation and indigenization. Section II discusses several Shakespeare productions in folk and traditional idioms in post-Independence India. Christy Desmet in *Shakespeare and Appropriation* describes the process of post-colonial appropriations of Shakespeare as the one "in which post-

colonial societies take over those aspects of imperial culture ... that may be of use to them in articulating their own social and cultural identities” (19). In this context, Utpal Dutt’s *Macbeth* (1954) and *Bhuli Nai Priya (Romeo Juliet)*, 1970), B. V. Karanth’s *Barnam Van* (1989), Habib Tanveer’s *Kamdev ka Apna Vasantritu ka Sapna (A Mid-Summer Night's Dream)*, 1993), Lokendra Arambam’s *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* (1997) and M. K. Raina’s *Badshah Pather (King Lear)*, 2009) illustrate practical applications of this process. These productions cannot claim to be truly ‘folk’ but they definitely comprise a blend of ‘folk’ and ‘modern’ theatres. The ingenious use of folk and traditional idioms peculiar to Indian performance traditions sets them apart from other Shakespeare productions from anywhere in the world.

Before proceeding with the analyses of such Shakespeare productions which have incorporated elements from traditional forms of performance, let me explain a point of caution. Shakespeare has not been produced using only folk and traditional idiom (a case of ‘exoticising’ and ‘Orientalising’ Indian Shakespeare as seen from the Western perspective) in post-Independence India; there are equally important Shakespeare productions besides the ‘traditional/folk’ experiments. However, my interest on certain selected Shakespeare productions arises from the fact that these productions cast Shakespeare into typically Indian folk and traditional idioms. The cultural alterity of these productions distinguish them from other Shakespeare productions. Also, these productions reflect upon the larger discourse on post-colonial culture in India because, as Raymond Williams says, “the most fundamental cultural history is always a history of forms” (84).

I. 'Decolonizing' Indian Theatre

After Independence, one of the major concerns for India was to 'decolonize' the minds of the people. The colonists had gone but colonialism remained as an insidious and perpetuating influence. After political Independence, Indians had to 'decolonize' aspects of life to make 'freedom from foreign control' meaningful. This would mean the creation of a cultural community distinct from other such nations/communities. Thus during the first decades of the post-Independence era the 'makers of culture' were faced with the task of reshaping a culture that would be 'authentically' Indian. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, the Kenyan playwright and the most vociferous proponent of 'decolonization', has argued for "decolonizing the mind" to defeat colonialism in the African context. According to him,

... the most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. [...] To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism this involve two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized (16).

Ngugi was in fact echoing the sentiments of eminent anti-colonization leaders like Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Chinua Achebe – to name a few.

Theatre was a part of cultural deliberations in post-Independence India, The search for indigenous idioms for Indian theatre was motivated by the need to decolonize ‘modern’ Indian theatre from the way it was being done in the urban centres during the colonial period. The contact with the west had brought about transformation in almost every sphere of Indian life — social, economic, political and cultural — during the colonial rule. Theatre too had experienced change. The theatrical modernity brought by the West had introduced a new kind of theatre quite different from the traditional performances. Some of the important features that differentiated the two theatrical traditions were the use of fixed proscenium stage replacing open air performances of folk theatre; western realism and naturalism in the place of inherent symbolism in Indian traditional forms; western commercial theatre instead of Indian theatrical tradition based on patronage. The ‘new’ theatre introduced by the English was taken up by the educated Indian elite as ‘gentlemanly’ activity. Gradually this kind of theatre was assimilated into the indigenous performance traditions and a distinct theatre emerged during the colonial period that subtly blended the two traditions. In post-Independence India, there was opposition to this kind of theatre which seemed ‘derivative, ‘imitative’ and ‘colonial’ to many. It was argued that theatre need to be decolonised for it to flourish in India. The collective support was for a theatre inspired equally by the classical Sanskrit tradition as well as ‘folk’ theatres of India or in other words, merging elements from both the ‘great’ and the ‘little’ traditions.

It was with this idea that *Sangeet Natak Akademi* was established in Delhi in 1953 as the national institution for performing arts to monitor and guide, provide patronage and conserve Indian traditions of performance:

The idea of establishing an organization to coordinate all the activities in the sphere of dance, drama and music came to the forefront and

assumed a new urgency and importance in independent India... The necessity of such an organization was all the more compelling in view of the fact that all of a sudden the erstwhile princely patronage of the arts had ceased to function or was fast ceasing. In the void thus created, the art traditions were faced with the grave risk of breaking down in an atmosphere of general decline in our cultural and artistic values (*SNA Report* cited in Dalmia 169).

The *akademi* intended to organize a seminar every four years for each of the arts – dance, drama, music, and film. The first drama seminar was organized in 1956 and inaugurated by S Radhakrishnan, the then Vice-President of India. Aparna Dharwadkar refers to this seminar as “the first sustained exercise in historical self-positioning — an early postcolonial reflection on the singular problematic of a multilingual theatre tradition that had classical and pre-modern as well as colonial antecedents, the emergent modernity of which was synchronous with colonialism” (37). The objective of the seminar was to conceive the future of Indian theatre as it should develop in independent India. It was formally recommended in the seminar that,

... the regeneration of the Indian theatre can only be possible by revitalizing the traditional folk forms so as to narrow the gulf between the dramatic forms that have developed during the last hundred years and the survivals from the past. The Seminar recommends that adequate steps be taken not only for the careful and scientific study of the folk drama in different parts of India but also for preventing their decay and disappearance and for giving them recognition and new life (*Sangeet Natak* 2004, 128).

Thus, the major concern for theatre practitioners was to ‘decolonize’ Indian theatre in terms of — form, content, conventions, and so on.

The most important and visible colonial metaphor in modern Indian theatre was ‘Western naturalism’ manifest in the form of the proscenium stage. The discussion regarding the proscenium was based on the assumption that this Western convention along with naturalism had disturbed the traditional styles of performance. The subject generated interesting discussions. Almost all of the participants of the above-mentioned seminar agreed that the urban proscenium was an alien imposition on Indian theatre that destroyed the elasticity of spatial use in traditional performances by creating fixed and enclosed theatre space. The proscenium created an unwanted divide between the performer and the audience. For instance, Mulk Raj Anand argued that,

we cannot follow the Western system of founding a chain of grandiose closed theatres in India, in blind imitation of the West and merely mount plays in those theatres according to the commercial techniques already discarded by the most advanced experts of Europe (*Sangeet Natak* 2004, 16).

But such criticism of the proscenium does appear to be a little too harsh because proscenium stage could not have harmed traditional theatres that much since the former was urban-centric while traditional performances were majorly rural. There does not seem to be much interaction between the two which existed independent of each other. Anand himself commented on the already decaying status of Indian traditional forms before the arrival of the British:

The decay of ritual through rigid ill-understood forms, and the whole tradition, which was becoming increasingly more conventional through

formalism, was degraded by the low position to which actors and dancers were reduced in the cast hierarchy that bound Hindu society into a compact but corrupt social organism. The puritanism of the Muslim invaders made the situation in the arts more difficult still, because Hindu religious practices were often an exposition of their sense of value (*Sangeet Natak* 2004, 8).

Thus, it seems that the traditional forms were already in decay by the 18th century before Indians were introduced to the Western proscenium theatre. As Anand observes, “old folk and classical theatre had begun to lose its hold on the fringes of the urban areas long before the European-style theatre came to the middle sections” (10). Moreover, in the 19th century, indigenous forms came under severe criticism “because of the self-critical thrust of social reform movements, the emergence of middle-class culture in cities, and the commitment of such major authors as Bhartendu Harishchandra, D. L. Roy and Rabindranath Tagore to the literary and cultural possibilities of the new aesthetic” (Dharwadker 141). It is ironical that after the discussion on proscenium theatre as a colonial and alien import the seminar resolved,

... to build at the Capital a theatre hall worthy of our national status, but it is strongly of the opinion that at the same time, as this project is launched, a number of suitable theatres, both covered and open-air, should be constructed by the State [governments], the municipal authorities and other such bodies. Without the construction of such theatres in the main towns and the countryside, the existence of the national theatre at the capital will lose much of its significance. The plans for such theatres should be drawn up in consultation with experts in theatrical technique (*Sangeet Natak* 2004, 126-7).

The important consequence was that the issue of ‘decolonizing’ Indian theatre gained official and popular sanction of the intelligentsia in the 1956 seminar. Nemichandra Jain’s argument for ‘decolonizing’ Indian theatre is representative of the kind of discourse that was emerging in post-Independence India. Jain observed,

It is generally believed that drama and theatre like many other things are a Western gift to India. We may have had some popular entertainments like the Nautanki or the Jatra but these had little to do with drama to which we were introduced by the British through our contact with English literature, particularly Shakespeare. It is also said that the Sanskrit drama was more of dramatic poetry than drama proper, and even that had become extinct and was rediscovered for India by the Western scholars. In a sense, this unfortunate impression was confirmed by the readiness with which we adopted and have been almost slavishly imitating, the Western models of dramatic writing and theatrical presentation for the last 200 years. As a result, our theatre people, until very recently, knew Shakespeare. Moliere, Ibsen, Aristotle’s *Poetics* or even *Commedia dell’arte* but almost nothing of Kalidasa, Shudraka, and the *Natya Shastra*, or the Kuttiyatam, Yakshagana, Bhavai or Swang (1995/1971, 9-10)

Consequently there were attempts to revive Sanskrit drama as an “ingredient of national theatre for restoring an “authentic” Indian tradition, which, in the nationalistic post-colonial imagination, had been interrupted by colonialism” (Bhatia xiv). The revival of Sanskrit theatre led to contemporary productions of Sanskrit drama by almost every notable theatre director for the next 30 years or so, aided by centrally-funded festivals like the *Kalidasa Festival* and *Nehru Shatabadi Natya Samaroh*. In addition to Sanskrit

theatre, “the traditional and folk theatre surviving in different forms and languages all over the country” found favour in the task of establishing cultural alterity of Indian theatre (Jain 2003, ix). The National School of Drama (NSD) was established in 1959 to realize the aim of developing a ‘national theatre’ based on the rich cultural heritage of India.

The issue gained further impetus with Suresh Awasthi becoming the secretary of Sangeet Natak Akademi in 1965. Awasthi’s role in ‘decolonizing’ Indian theatre is clear in his comments,

As part of the great cultural renaissance generated during the post-independence period, there has occurred a most meaningful encounter with tradition in various fields of creative activity. The return to and discovery of tradition was inspired by a *search for roots and a quest for identity*. This was part of a whole process of decolonization of our life style, values, social institutions, creative forms and cultural modes. The modern Indian theatre, product of a colonial theatrical culture, felt the need to search for roots most intensely to match its violent dislocation from the traditional course (1989, 48; italics mine).

Efforts were made to establish Awasthi’s “theatre of roots” as national movement in theatre of India through SNA’s policies and the state-sponsored conferences, seminars and festivals such as The ‘First Drama Seminar’ (1956), seminar on ‘Contemporary Playwrighting and Play Production (1961), ‘Roundtable on the Contemporary Relevance of Traditional Theatre’ (1971), and Conference on ‘Emergence of the National Theatre’ (1972). The ‘Scheme of Assistance to Young Theatre Workers’ especially promoted the creation of indigenous theatre. Theatre festivals like *Kalidasa Festival* and *Nehru Shatabadi Natya Samaroh* helped in strengthening the status of “theatre of roots”. Erin

Mee argues that the “theatre of roots really went national” during the 1970s by carefully projecting a constructed image of Indian theatre (200). Such a policy left theatre workers in search for grants, with no other option but to take up traditional forms sometimes without adequate knowledge of these forms. Soon “theatre of roots” came under severe criticism from theatre persons for promoting a particular kind of theatre. Satish Alekar, a major Marathi playwrights, objected against the ‘Scheme of Assistance to Young Theatre Workers’ which laid down the mandatory condition that,

... for the play to be performed in the scheme [it] should have [some] bearing on the folk theatre traditions of India. Due [to] this condition all the directors who had no knowledge of folk theatre traditions were made to use these forms in order to be in the scheme and as a result a lot of substandard plays were produced (cited in Mee 200).

International theatre festivals furthered the projection of the ‘Immortal India’ image. Initiated in the 1980s, the Festival of India was to play a major role in the “marketing drive to introduce India to the highly industrialized G7 countries as a viable locale for investment” (Dutta 122). Thus, the Festivals projected a carefully constructed image of ‘Indian’ for an economic end. The economic gain for the government through these festivals becomes the clearly-stated official intention:

S.K.Mishra, director-general of the Festival of India, and an ex-tourism top official from the state of Haryana, explained the Festivals in terms of the following: ‘... it’s a perfect moment for India to cash in, to change existing prejudices about India in the western world and to signal a new era of Indo-American cooperation.’ And Niranjana Desai, the Washington-based minister counsellor for culture, talking about economic potentials in the field of tourism, books, movies, investment

and trade: 'These are things we want but cannot get until we alter our image. We are still trapped in the Heat and Dust and Indiana Jones syndrome. We have to show that India is not only exotic but contemporaneously exotic as well as modern and competent' (Dutta 122).

To meet the aim of the Festivals, it was required to feature only those productions that cast in typically traditional and folk idioms. Productions like Tanvir's *Charandas Chor*, Panikkar's *Karanbharam* and *Madhyam Vyayogam*, M. K. Raina's *Andha Yug* and Thiyam's *Chakravyuha* which incorporated elements from traditional Indian forms, were clear choices for the Festivals. Projecting such a constructed image of Indian culture at international fora has led Rustom Bharucha to argue that,

At the international level, we have projected a most cosmetic and superficial image of 'Indian culture'... At home, these festivals have merely mechanised and commodified our rural and tribal cultural resources, apart from making showpieces of our 'classical art'. They have disrupted social relationships by creating false hierarchies within the communities of performers. They have increased the role of impresarios and cultural dalals, intensifying deference's to power structures rather than facilitating a critique of their role (1992, 1676).

Another source that helped to crystallize the indigenizing trends in post-Independence Indian theatre was Bertolt Brecht. Theatre practitioners found in Brecht's theatre characterized by its rejection of Western theatrical traditions, anti-realism, epic theatre mode, a performative style which would accommodate traditional forms of India, China and Japan. Nissar Allana, one of the leading designers of Indian theatre, observes that the elements used by Brecht were already present in folk theatre and therefore

“brought about a wider awareness of the possibility that such elements could become a part of the modern idiom in the Indian context [...] In India there was already an awareness of the importance of discovering a link with the tradition, and Brecht’s theatre soon became exceedingly relevant” (2-3). In the 1960s, Brecht was taken as the model for developing a ‘modern’ theatre based on indigenous traditions of performance. Also, the sponsorship provided by the German Democratic Republic in the 1960s provided the opportunity to Indian directors like M. S. Sathyu and Shama Zaidi to visit the Berliner Ensemble. Later Ebrahim Alakzi’s participation in the ‘Brecht Dialog 1968’ in East Berlin and Fritz Bennewitz’s collaboration with National School of Drama in the early 1970s affirmed Brecht’s place in Indian theatre (Dalmia 189). The period that followed witnessed Brecht being produced by eminent directors around India. Some of the major productions include Fritz Bennewitz’s *The Threepenny Opera* in the *swang* style of Uttar Pradesh (1970); Vijaya Mehta’s adaptations of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* in the *tamasha* and *dashavtar* styles (1972 and 1974); M. K. Raina’s Punjabi folk version of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1976); Habib Tanvir’s Chhattisgarhi folk version of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (1978); and B. V. Karanth’s Bundelkhandi folk version of *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1983). All of these productions attempted to indigenize Brecht within the performative styles of different traditional forms.

Thus, the period from the 1960s onwards was engaged with the search for “roots”, initially at an individual level and later at the national level after the official diktat on policies to be regulated by Sangeet Natak Akademi. There is no denying the fact that the “theatre of roots” gave direction to Indian theatre, especially at a time when directors and playwrights were struggling to find suitable idioms that could be described as ‘Indian’. However, excesses started bothering directors and playwrights when it

seemed that 'folk' was the only 'genuine' expression of Indian theatre, thwarting the development of any other form of expression. "Theatre of root" was critiqued not only by those who did not practice it but also from the directors engaged with it. Shanta Gandhi who played a major role in revitalizing traditional theatre observed,

It has become the fashion to incorporate in one's productions some of the features of traditional theatre which the actors can learn without much strain. [...] With rare exceptions, these forms are used without an adequate understanding of their basic nature and without sensitive apprehension of the inherent relationship that exists between the forms and their content (14).

Similar arguments were echoed by Rajinder Nath:

When an idea degenerates into a slogan the consequences can be disastrous. Something similar has happened or is happening to a very creative idea: using our folk and traditional theatre forms in contemporary theatre. [...] If we take a very brief look at some of the plays which have used traditional or folk forms two conclusions emerge clearly. In all those plays where the playwrights have been able to achieve a complete fusion between form and content the results have been very satisfying; whenever the form has been imposed on a particular play the result has been disastrous. Whereas in the second category there have been umpteen plays, one can recall only a few in the former category (26).

Polemical arguments were voiced by scholars like G. P. Deshpande who equated this with the West's enthusiasm for 'ethnic' and 'exotic' India. According to Deshpande, such an approach, was nothing but 'Orientalism in reverse' which

dismisses nearly two hundred years of modern proscenium theatre in India. It rule out contemporary experience and therefore contemporary sensibility. All this has political meanings. Quite often they are unintended but their impact cannot be avoided. Modern Indian Theatre is a victim of a particular kind of politics—the politics of cultural nationalism which is monolithic, blind and anti-creative (96).

Despite these debates on "theatre of roots", it cannot be denied that it was an influential movement that marked the dominant style of post-Independence Indian theatre. "Theatre of roots" may no be an explicit movement today but theatre directors continue to produce plays in traditional and folk idioms. Section II deals with some productions of Shakespeare in post-Independence India which exemplify the traces of the early style and draw upon various traditional and folk forms of performance.

II. Shakespeare Performances in 'Urban-folk' Theatre

I. Utpal Dutt's Productions of Shakespeare

Utpal Dutt's (1929-1993) initiation into theatre dates back to his school and college days where he acted in various Shakespeare plays directed by the Jesuit Fathers. Dutt remembers playing the second grave-digger in the 1943 *Hamlet* production at St. Xavier's College, Kolkata, the production which "created a sensation [...] with its striking sets, costumes and lighting" (Bandopadhyay 9). As a student at St. Xavier's College, Dutt played various roles in Shakespeare plays. His induction into professional

theatre was by Geoffrey Kendall who toured India with his English theatre troupe Shakespearana during the 1950s, performing Shakespeare plays in schools and colleges. Kendall invited Dutt to act in his plays. Subsequently, Dutt formed his own The Amateur Shakespeareans group that staged Shakespeare plays in English. The group was later renamed Little Theatre Group (LTG). Dutt also joined the IPTA for a brief period but was “thrown out” on charges of being a Trotskyite (Bandopadhyay 12). When the Kendalls returned for an India-Pakistan tour, Dutt rejoined them. As Tapati Gupta writes that Dutt acted as “Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, Horatio in *Hamlet*, Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Ross in *Macbeth*, and Roderigo in *Othello*” (158). It was from Kendall that Dutt learnt the nuances of theatre and discipline in acting. Dutt recalls an anecdote when he was beaten up by Kendall in Allahabad after a performance of *Romeo and Juliet*:

I had Mercutio’s part, I died in the middle of the play. Having finished my part, I went back to the hotel. Around midnight, Kendall entered my room with a pair of heavy boots in his hand and, before uttering a single word, he beat me mercilessly. Then I remembered that I was supposed to conduct the music in the last scene. As there were only fourteen of us in the group, we had to do practically everything ourselves. As I had neglected my duty for various personal reasons, Kendall, Kendall became furious and constantly repeated the words: “Shame on you, you don’t belong”. You don’t belong – you are not one of theater. You are not a man of this profession. The Guru’s reprimands hurt me more than the boots. That night I learned a lot. Kendall was an old type of British professional, who had learned by being beaten up and who used to teach by beating (1983, 242).

The tour with the Kendals and his brief involvement with IPTA brought about a major change in the Dutt's philosophy of theatre. Dutt and his group LTG had hitherto produced Shakespeare exclusively in English for select audiences which comprised either a few Englishmen in Calcutta or a "few Bengo-Anglians who had to be where the British were" (Bandopadhyay 12). Dutt remembers the diminishing audience for English theatre in Calcutta who "sat there with clenched fists – pretending to enjoy it" (1972, 68-9). Later Dutt regretted doing Shakespeare in English and observed, "[T]hose were years wasted performing Shakespeare before an intellectual audience" (Gunawardana 235). After the tour with the Kendalls, Dutt decided that LTG would stage plays in Bengali for a wider and more inclusive audience. Himani Bannerji notes,

No matter how political a play may be – the very fact that it is in English, he [Dutt] felt, kills the politics of the play, since it must be played to an audience which is upper class and generally right-wing. Utpal therefore looked to Bengali and European classics and sought out primarily a Bengali speaking audience (11).

The first play to be produced was Jatindranath Sengupta's translation of *Macbeth* (1954). Dutt toured with the play, surely influenced by Kendal's touring company, and performed hundred shows in the villages of West Bengal. Dutt noted in an interview:

Shakespeare must be done, but he must be done for the common people. We did *Macbeth* in Bengali, and in one season we did ninety-seven performances in the villages. The people took to Shakespeare enthusiastically. To them Shakespeare was in the proper *Jatra* style –

the action, the violence, the robustness charmed them (Gunawardana 235).

In another interview on “Taking Shakespeare to the Common Man,” he elaborated:

A play like *Macbeth* or *Othello* with its emotional emphasis is extremely popular with ... people in the rural areas. That’s possibly because of the *jatra*-background of the audiences. *Jatras* are full of blood and thunder and high-flown prose which make the *jatra*-goers receptive to Shakespeare’s plays (cited in Trivedi 2005a, 159).

Dutt did not believe in taking liberties with Shakespeare plays. In Bengali *Macbeth*, Dutt retained the original names of places and characters and Western costumes. He remained as close as possible to the original text despite some minor alterations. The rural audience could not understand various references pertaining to Scotland and England but the production was a huge success since human elements such as “ambition and kingship, loyalties and morality, emotions, poetry, passion and human weakness” were well understood (Gupta 166).

Various arguments have been put forward by theatre scholars regarding Dutt’s production of *Macbeth*. Some of them equate the production to *jatra*. Rustom Bharucha describes Dutt’s production of *Macbeth* as *jatra*. According to him, “[I]t was only by immersing *Macbeth* in the ritual world of *jatra* and by transforming Shakespeare’s language into a bold, declamatory form of incantation that the Little Theater Group could reach a Bengali working-class audience with an Elizabethan classic” (Bharucha 1983, 62). Similarly, Jyotsna Singh observes that Dutt drew on the conventions of *jatra* “to create the spectacle that he believes is an essential aspect of a non-elitist revolutionary theatre.” However, this production does not belong to Dutt’s famed

revolutionary phase. Dutt himself admits about the production, “[B]ut this *Macbeth* was not revolutionary theatre” (Gunawardana 235). Following Bharucha’s argument, Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins observe:

In an attempt to undermine both the elitism and the Anglocentrism associated with the Shakespearian theatre of the time, Dutt took translations of such plays as *Macbeth* to the rural masses, dispensing with the conventions of the proscenium stage and infusing his productions with the ritual traditions of *jatra*, the folk theatre of Bengal. By using Shakespearian texts in this manner, Dutt’s work presented a way not only of indigenizing the imperial canon but also of disrupting its cultural clout (21).

Although Dutt took *Macbeth* to villages away from the fixed proscenium, but he did not use a *jatra* stage. Tapati Gupta argues that the stage for *Macbeth* was “a temporary proscenium – a boxlike, three-walled platform, winged and curtained – with the audience sitting in front” (166). The arguments put forward by Bharucha, Singh and Gilbert considering Dutt’s *Macbeth* as *jatra* seem to be based on the assumption that the Dutt had used a bold and declamatory style. Gupta disagrees and maintains that “[S]ince Dutt did not believe in hyper-emotional postures, he explored the natural potentialities of Shakespeare to captivate the imagination of the masses” (177). Whether it was *Macbeth* in *jatra* or *jatra* in *Macbeth*, it can be safely said that the production was the first Shakespearean performance in the post-Independence India to be taken away from elite circuits into the masses staging 97 shows in one season (Gunawardana 235). Dutt had observed elsewhere that “the classics were not a prerogative of an elite. They would cease to exist unless they were brought to the people” (cited in Bhattacharya 5). Bharucha states, “Dutt’s conception of staging Shakespeare for the masses may have

been crude but it was, in all probability, closer to the guts of the Elizabethan theater than most European revivals of Shakespeare's plays in recent years" (1983, 62). The play was later mounted in a Calcutta proscenium but could not achieve the earlier impact. According to Bharucha, the faults lay in the production being "blatantly operatic" (1983, 62). Bharucha elaborates, "the production exemplified some of the worst excesses of the nineteenth-century theatre – melodramatic acting and posturing, a pretentious delivery of lines, and a fundamental lack of belief in the social and political resonance of the play. It was one of Dutt's most pointless productions" (1983, 62).

Much later in 1970, Dutt produced his first Shakespeare play as *jatra*. This was *Bhuli Nai Priya* (I Have Not Forgotten, My Love), a radical transformation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Tapati Gupta finds it strange that this play does not feature in any list of Dutt's plays and has been overshadowed by his political plays (161). For the first time Dutt reworked a Shakespeare text in the *jatra* form for the *jatra* audience. The play was staged by professional *jatra* actors with the spatial arrangement of a traditional *jatra*. Minimum props were used and the audience sat all around, unlike in the case of the earlier *Macbeth*. However, Dutt had to introduce some changes to the traditional *jatra* format. For instance, he reduced the time to two to three hours whereas traditional *jatra* is usually ten to twelve hours long. Also, the traditional *jatra* had innumerable songs. He also cut down the number of songs to four or five. In his own words,

Originally I think (there's a controversy as to whether the songs or the dialogue came first), it was all sung. But we can understand why during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Jatra had to rely mostly on songs. It is much easier to project song than speech. And continuous acting would be very strenuous in a play lasting from early afternoon until midnight. So the actors would act a little, and then

various kinds of singers would come on. There was a character called Vivek (“Conscience”) who would enter at particularly dramatic moments and sing a song about what was to be learned from the incident. There was another conventional device – the *juri* – a group of singers sitting on the edge of the arena throughout the performance. In the middle of a scene they would suddenly stand up and start singing in chorus. The action would resume after they finished their song and sat down. That’s how the form used to be ... Today the main audience comes from the working class and not the peasants – tea garden workers, railway workers in Assam, coal and steel workers in Bengal. They pay well and the *Jatra* is now oriented towards them. They won’t sit and listen to a *Jatra* for twelve hours – they have a work shift the next day – so the plays must be shortened. Naturally the songs are the first to go out, and now instead of thirty, there are never more than five or six, usually only three. Also, *Vivek* is no longer used. We are trying to reintroduce these elements but the paying audience is already conditioned (Gunawardana 230).

Traditional *jatra*, like other folk forms, is declamatory, melodramatic and has exaggerated expressions. According to Gupta, in *Bhuli Nai Priya*

Dutt naturalized the action and expression, introducing subtlety, racy conversation, natural intonation, and restrained body language. He carefully trained veteran *jatra* actors, whom he admired greatly, and ultimately they discarded their mannerisms and adopted such a finesse that the *jatra* acquired a modernity that was not at odds with the

indigenous flavour that Dutt was careful to retain. ... The didactic element of *jatra* was retained (165-6).

As far as the narrative is concerned, Dutt's play follows the original story but localizes it. Verona is transformed to Murshidabad and Mantau to Calcutta. Escalus becomes Nawab Sirajuddaula. The Montague-Capulet families are changed into Hindu-Muslim families. As Gupta observes, "[B]y making the two families Hindu and Muslim, the historical and post-Partition significance was enhanced" (169). As the play was thoroughly indigenised for the *jatra* audience, it was natural that the costumes too would be Indian, unlike Dutt's previous productions of Shakespeare where costumes were Western even if the play was in Bengali. Thus, the bright and colourful costumes of *jatra* were used. The music composed by Pancham Mitra composed used a mixture of Indian classical and western instruments like harmonium, *nakkara*, *dholki*, saxophone, clarinet and violin and also incorporated *baul*, *kirtan*, folk tunes and north Indian classical music (169).

The play *Bhuli Nai Priya* was probably the only play of Shakespeare to be performed in *jatra* by Dutt. By then his theatre had become more revolutionary and Dutt produced *Rifle* (1968), *Jallianwala Bag* (1969), *Delhi Chalo* (1970), *Samudra Shasan* (1970), *Jai Bangla* (1971), *Sannyasir Tarabari* (1972), *Jhad* (1973), *Mao Tse Tung* (1974), *Seemanta* (1975), *Turuper Tash* (1976), *Mukti Deeksha* (1977), *Shada Poshak* (1979), *Kuthar* (1980), *Swadhinatar Phanki* (1981), *Bibighar* (1982) and *Damama Oi Baje* (1988) – all for professional *jatra* companies. *Bhuli Nai Priya* was among the earliest attempts in post-colonial India to decolonise a Shakespeare play from the conventional proscenium and perform it in the idiom of an indigenous folk performance.

II. B. V. Karanth's *Barnam Van*

B. V. Karanth (1928-2002) was one of the most innovative theatre directors of post-Independence Indian theatre. Born in Manchi village in Karnataka, he was trained as a child actor in theatre by Gubbi Veeranna Company, the most famous theatre company in Karnataka. Gubbi Veeranna later sent Karanth to Banaras Hindu University to do an M. A. in Hindi where he was also trained in Hindustani classical music by Pandit Omkarnath Thakur. Karanth then graduated from National School of Drama (New Delhi) and later became its director (1977-1981). He also served as Director, Rangmandal Bharat Bhavan, Bhopal (1981-1986) and then at Rangayana, Mysore (1989-1995).

The two major influences on Karanth that get reflected in his work are his deep involvement with folk and traditional performances since his childhood and his training in classical music. Many theatre persons including Vijay Tendulkar and G. P. Deshpande considered Karanth more of a music person than of theatre. Folk music had always captivated Karanth and he made use of folk and traditional music not only of Karnataka but from other parts of the country in his plays. Although trained in classical music he did not mind adjusting the rules of classical music to suit the musical needs of theatre. He could create music from stones, wood pieces, chairs or scrap. This was a characteristic feature of many of his productions. Karanth used music not only as an ornament for embellishment but for interpreting a play. Similarly, he used performance traditions of Karnataka and of various other regions. Deeply rooted in traditional and folk forms of performance, Karanth created individualistic forms for his theatre deriving from these conventions. In his own words,

Our folk theatre is extremely pliant, but we have completely lost sight of its immense potential. So whenever we look for our own identity or legacy, our quest automatically ends at the same emotional destination ... there ... at folk theatre. However modern and urbanized we think we may have become, our roots still lie somewhere in the villages. It is in the rural countryside that our 'instincts' are essentially grounded. So, it is right to associate ourselves with the folk theatre, while exploring the spirit of the Indian theatre. Whenever we discuss the Indian theatre in the same way as discuss Indian music and drama, which other forms can we speak about except *Tamasha*, *Yakshagan*, *Bhavai* and so on? (Taneja n.d., 14).

As the Director of National School of Drama (1977-1981), Karanth made it mandatory for students to undergo a month-long workshop in folk forms for which he was criticized for fostering a unidirectional trend in theatre. Reeta Sondhi observes,

With Karanth's background of folk and traditional theatre it seems as though he has shifted the emphasis in the training programme ... it appears as though it has become a messy splash of colour, comedy and caricature. Credit is to the consummate artistes who have managed to sustain interest in their new productions! (cited in Dalmia 199).

This might be true to some extent. But Karanth had the ability to blend the traditional with modern to create the contemporary which was the hallmark of his theatre. Karanth directed *Hayvadana*, *Ghasiram Kotwal* and *Jokumaraswamy* in which folk elements were embedded in the structure of the play. But Karanth did adapt Shakespeare's plays in indigenous performance idioms.

Karant produced *Barnam Van* for the National School for Drama Repertory in 1979. He cast the play in a non-realistic and stylized form. He decided to use elements from *yakshagana* for the play. In his own words,

I do not find myself capable of producing Shakespeare the way he is produced in his own country. Were I to do so, it would be false of me. Therefore my use of the Yakshagana form is not for my own sake, but because it is a part of my awareness and expression ('Director's Note').

The choice of *yakshgana* was determined by the fact that Karant found Macbeth "overflow[ing] with rasas, such as valour, wrath, terror and wonder, and the characters and situations have a universality and larger-than life quality which can be well expressed in the *yakshagan* style" ('Director's Note').

Macbeth had been translated into Hindi by Rangeya Raghava and Harivansh Rai Bachchan, among others. Also, the National School of Drama had produced two plays of Shakespeare – *King Lear* (1964) and *Othello* (1969) under the direction of Ebrahim Alkazi. These productions had used the existing translations. Karant commissioned Raghuvir Sahay, the well-known Hindi poet, for his production. But even before the translation of the play had begun, the format was decided. Thus, it was for the translator to present the play to fit the form. Unlike Bachchan who had used the *rola* metre for his translation, Sahay chose to translate the play using the "*kavitta* metre whose subtle rhythm gives infinite freedom for creative vocal expression and lends itself to the entire spectrum of moods" ('A Word from the Translator'). Although much of the translation follows the original verse pattern a scene or two have been rendered

into prose. For example, Lady Macbeth's speech in Act I, sc. vii, which is in prose has been rendered into verse by Sahay (Act I, sc. 7, 37) :

Lady Macbeth: I have given suck, and know

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

I would, while it was smiling in my face,

Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn as you

Have done to this.

Macbeth: If we should fail,

Lady Macbeth: We fail!

But screw your courage to the sticking-place,

And we'll not fail.

In Sahay's translation the prose becomes verse as follows:

Lady Macbeth: Main pila chuki hun doodh

Aur jaanti hun pyaar aanchal mein kaise umadta hai

par godi mein pade iktak niharte

dudhmunhe ke munh se main chhuda leti stan

patak kar kapaar phod daalti

agar kai pran aisa kiye hue hoti teri tarah

Macbeth: Yadi asaphal hum rahe?

Lady Macbeth: Asaphal hum?

Apne saahas ko tu chaanpe reh usi thor

to hum honge na viphal.

Instead of translating the original in a literal manner, Sahay concentrated ‘on capturing the sound patterns of sentences as they occur in the original so as to recreate the resonance of the language that was heard on the Elizabethan stage’ (‘A Word from the Translator’). Although the names of the characters and places have been retained, topical references to Scotland and England were dispensed away with. For instance, in Act 1, sc. ii when a soldier talks with Duncan he addresses him as Mark, King of Scotland. However, in the translation Sahay omits the reference of Scotland and the soldier addresses Duncan as *raja* (king). As Sahay explains, “[D]espite being burdened by the ostentatious verbosity of its times, Shakespeare’s language at places glows with quiet simplicity, wherein rests his genius and which I have found essential to my translation (‘A Word from the Translator’). An example of this simplicity of language may be found at the outset of the play where Sahay translates the dialogues of the witches in a very simple and rustic language (Act I, sc. I):

Daayan 1: Aaj mile hain hamm

pher milenge kabb?

Daiv garjai bijuri chamkai meha barse tabb

Daayan 2: Hum milenge jabb

kattajhujh hui le

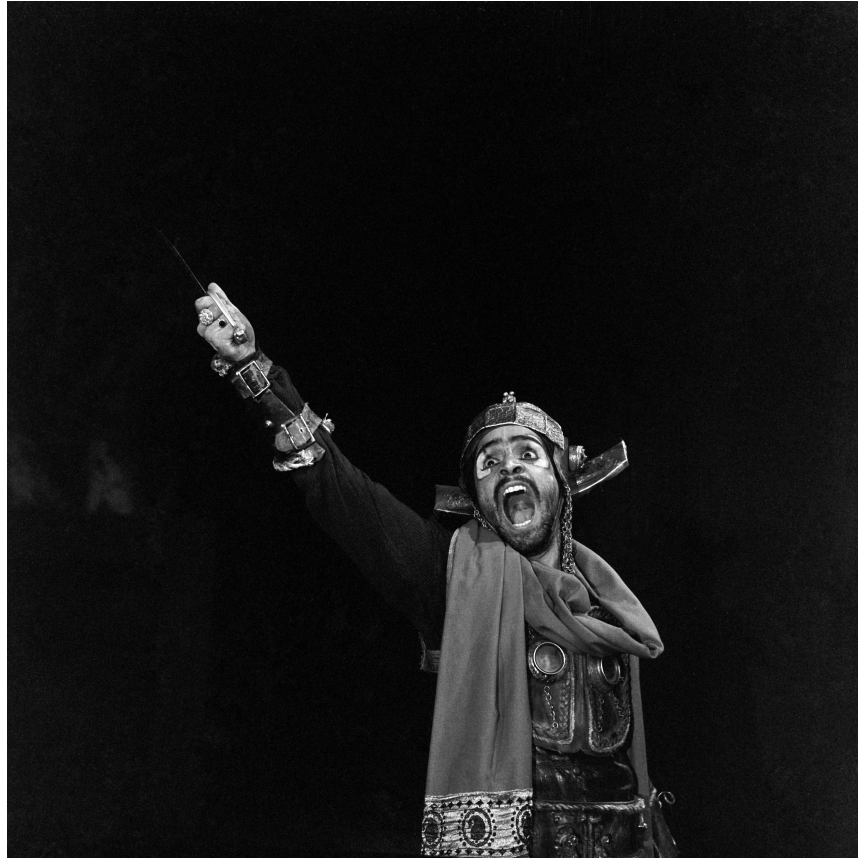
Finally, Sahay left the play to the director to edit it to suit the form.

Barnam Van was first staged at the open-air stage of National School of Drama in 1979. The huge banyan tree with its branches coming on to the stage cast a maze of shadows on the stage. Jaidev Taneja observes, “With the leaves stirring in the air, lights seemed to be creating waves; they created a scene of a jungle where the witches dance in fearful gestures and demonic faces” (105). The powerful visual symbolizes the theme of *Macbeth*: “the labyrinthine jungle of ambition, which ensnares and destroys man” (Karanth, ‘Director’s Note’). The witches are a creation of Macbeth’s own mind and are “imaged as creatures of the forest, emerging from the entrails of the tree, covered with drapes painted over with emblematic branchlike shapes” (Trivedi 2005a, 163). As mentioned earlier, Karanth made use of elements from *yakshagan* especially for characters’ entry and exit, battle scenes, and the expression of emotional tensions through the rhythm of body movements (‘Director’s Note’). In *yakshagan*, as in other traditional forms of India, a lot of emphasis is given to the entry and exit of characters. These are highly stylized movements that become a performance in their own right. In *Baranam Van*, characters enter and exit with dance steps taken from *yakshagan*. Unlike *kathakali*, *yakshagan* relies on the movements of the whole body and not just face and hands. Karanth does not always use conventional *yakshagan* movements but allows leaps and pirouettes leaving out the movement of shoulders and hands. In traditional *yakshagan* characters usually enter from behind a half-curtain called *tere* held by two stagehands. In *Baranam Van*, Karanth uses the half-curtain for the entry of characters and for more dramatic purposes to conceal the witches’ entry by shaking the curtains and making circular dance movements, draping the curtains around their bodies and suddenly removing them (Awasthi 1979, 41). Such creative use of the conventional half-curtain makes the scene dramatically effective and also enhances the suspense. The

last scene showing the moving Birnam Wood has always been challenging for directors. Karanth makes ingenious use of half-curtains to meet the challenge. Malcolm's army enter the stage draped in half-curtains having branches painted on them around their bodies. This gives the impression of the Birnam Wood proceeding towards Macbeth.



The three witches in *Barnam Van* (1979), dir. B. V. Karanth (Source: NSD).



Macbeth in *Barnam Van* (Source: NSD)

Music plays the central role in *yakshagan*. A traditional *yakshagan* troupe has one or two singers and at least three instrumentalists – a *maddale* drummer, one for *chende*, and one to provide the drone on a harmonium. (Akshara 526) Karanth, himself a trained classical singer, makes music integral in all his productions. *Barnam Vana* is no exception, especially when he borrows so much from the *yakshagan* form for the production. Although the music in *Barnam Van* is of *yakshagan* style because Karanth found the rhythm of the *kavitta* metre quite close to the beat of *chenda*, Karanth makes certain alterations. As he explains in the ‘Director’s Note’, “[S]ince pure *Yakshagan* music can prove to be obscure and incomprehensible, I have introduced other Asian musical instruments such as bells and gongs”. The beat of *chende* and *nakkara* is used to emphasize the stylized movements of entry and exit of characters. Awasthi comments on Karanth’s use of music in following words:

The play begins with the music of *chenda* and *nakkara*, just like in the performance of *yakshagan* and *kathakali*. After that, the witches enter with a short sad alaap. Alaaps in male and female voices have been used quite effectively. When Macbeth decides to kill Duncan the *nakkara* underlines each line of his dialogue and the humming goes on in the background ... In the sleep-walking scene, Lady Macbeth's dialogues are supported by the beats of *nakkara* and *chende* coupled with the shrilling voices which gives the whole scene a ritualistic setting (1979, 41; trans. mine).

Besides musical instruments, Karanth also creates music out of wood pieces as is done in Japanese *kabuki*.

Costume is an elaborate affair in *yakshagan*. Characters in traditional *yakshagan* can be identified by the costumes typical to particular characters. Karanth does not entirely replicate *yakshagan* costumes for *Barnam Van's* characters but with other traditional theatres like that of Cambodia, Bali, Japan, Burma and Indonesia ('Director's Note'). With such strong similarity with *yakshagan* for the production, one may be tempted to think that it is *Macbeth* in *yakshagan* form. As Karanth himself clarifies, it is in fact the other way round. Karanth has not cast the play rigidly in a traditional form nor surrenders to the form. A deliberate defamiliarisation with *yakshagan* is achieved by incorporating elements from other traditional forms and by modifying some of the conventions of *yakshagan*. Only those *yakshagan* elements have been incorporated which seem suitable for the visual presentation. Hence, it is *yakshagan* in *Macbeth* and not *Macbeth* in *yakshagan*.

III. Habib Tanvir's *Kamdeo ka Apna Vasantritu ka Sapna*

Habib Tanvir (1923-2009) belonged to the elder generation of theatre directors in post-Independence India. Tanvir's form of theatre drew a lot from various folk forms of India, especially the traditional performative styles of Chattisgarh. Tanvir was one of the first theatre directors to introduce folk forms into modern theatre. There were several influences that brought Tanvir closer to the traditional forms of performance which he incorporated into his style of theatre. As a child, Tanvir would often visit his uncles who were landowners in the villages of Raipur. There he got the chance to listen to folk music and songs. Tanvir was attracted to these songs and even memorized some of them (Website 2). The second important influence in Tanvir's initiation into folk forms was his brief involvement with IPTA in the 1940s. He says,

I think I must have got the inspiration from my IPTA background in Bombay. I worked in the Hindi group but we were also surrounded by the Gujarati, Marathi and Konkani groups. Each group had a music squad. These were strong music squads and some of the great figures in the world of music were associated with them. For example, the Marathi squad included stalwarts like Annabhau Sathe and Amar Sheikh. They drew upon the folk traditions like *burrakatha* and *pawara* (cited in Malik 103).

The third and probably the strongest influence on Tanvir that gave him the direction to work in theatre with a strong base in folk and traditional elements, was his travel across Europe, especially the eight months he spent in Berlin in 1956 watching Brecht's productions. It is interesting to note that Tanvir sustained himself in Europe by singing Chhatisgarhi folk songs in pubs and nightclubs (Malik 103). Brecht had died the same

year and his recent productions were being staged. Having seen Brecht's theatre which made us of various folk forms, some of which were Eastern too, Tanvir realized that

... it is only if one works with one's own cultural traditions and ethos that one can achieve something more durable, more innovative, and artistically more interesting. Although a lot is made out of Brecht's indebtedness to the Eastern theatres, the medieval and the Elizabethan traditions of Europe, the American jazz and so on, he remains at the core very German. The innovativeness of Brecht and his collaborators in music, Eisler and Kurt Weil, could only be achieved when one has a very very established native tradition in music to draw upon. Likewise, in the matter of language, the innovations of Brecht were based on German colloquialisms, on his own creative adaptations of the local dialects and colloquial phrases to make new compounds out of them. So, these were the lessons I had learnt from my European travel. I thought you can do nothing worthwhile unless you went to your roots and tried to reinterpret traditions and used traditions as a vehicle for transmitting the most modern and contemporary messages (Tanvir cited in Malik 103-4).

Once Tanvir returned to Delhi, he directed Sudraka's *Mricchkatika* in 1958 in which he introduced some folk performers from Chhatisgarh. He left Delhi to form his own theatre group called Naya Theatre in 1959. For Tanvir Naya Theatre "stands for Indianness in theatre. It believes in an aesthetic blend of the folk and urban theatre techniques in order to interpret contemporary life in a manner at once Indian and universal" (cited in Mee 84). During this first phase (1958-70) in Tanvir's theatre career, he directed plays like *Saat Paise* (1959), *Jalidar Parde* (1959), *Phansi* (1960),

Rustam-o-Sohrab (1961) and *Shatranj ke Mohre* (1969). Later, Tanvir called these plays “failures” and he says that it took him years to realize that

... I was trying to apply my English training on the village actors – move diagonally, stand, speak, take this position. I had to unlearn it all. I saw that they couldn’t even tell right from left on the stage and had no line sense. And I’d go on shouting: ‘Don’t you know the difference between the hand you eat with and the one you wash with?’ ... I realized that those who were for years responding to an audience like this [without bothering about whether the audience was on one side, or three, or four, or whether some of them were sitting on the stage] could never try to unlearn all this and rigidly follow the rules of movement and that was one reason why Thakur Ram, a great actor ... wasn’t able to be natural. Another reason was the *matrubhasha* – he wasn’t speaking his mother tongue, so it jarred on my ears, because he was speaking bad Hindi and not Chhattisgarhi, in which he was fluent, which was so sweet. This realization took me years – naïve of me, but still it took me years. Once I realized it I used Chhattisgarhi and I improvised, allowed them the freedom and then came pouncing down upon them to crystallize the movement – there you stay. And they began to learn. That quite simply was the method I learnt (Tanvir cited in Deshpande 2009, 112).

With this realization began the second phase (1970-1973) in Tanvir’s career when he worked with folk performers and their repertoire in their dialects. His role was rather like editing and structuring their plays for the stage. Folk plays like *Arjun ka Sarthi* and *Gauri Gaura* were staged in 1972 as the Chhattisgarhi versions of the *Mahabharata*.

The third and the most significant phase (1973-2008) in Tanvir's theatre career came after he held a month-long *nacha* workshop with about a hundred participants in Raipur in 1973. Among the participants, thirty were folk actors and others were urban and rural artists and intellectuals as observers. The workshop became the turning point in Tanvir's theatre as it culminated in the much-acclaimed production titled *Gaon ka Naam Sasural, Mor Naam Damaad*. The play blended three folk comedies from the *nacha* repertoire. Thus began the most productive phase of Tanvir's theatre when he staged productions like *Uttam Ram Charit* (1974-75), *Charandas Chor* (1975-76), *Mitti ki Gadi* (1977-78). Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* adapted as *Kamdeo ka Apna Vasantritu ka Sapna* (1993) marked a high point of his achievement with this kind of theatre.

Kamdeo ka Apna was Tanvir's first attempt at producing a Shakespeare play. In fact, Tanvir had always wanted to do a Shakespeare play but as he admits, "I never liked the translations in Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani. I also did not fancy translating for I found it intimidating" (cited in Padmanabhan). It so happened that the English Shakespeare Company offered Tanvir a project to direct a Shakespeare play in collaboration with the English actors of the company and his own folk performers. According to Tanvir,

The English Shakespeare Company which has an educational wing attached to it, had been feeling for a long time that the Indian community in Britain shied away from theatre, especially Shakespeare, and were worried about the effects the double alienation – from Indian culture back home and English culture – on the community (cited in Padmanabhan).

Tanvir first thought of producing a Shakespearean tragedy but realized that a tragedy may not work in a bilingual production. He turned to comedies and found *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to be tailor-made for a bilingual production. Tanvir saw the possibility of different languages being spoken by different characters in the play. The strategy that Tanvir devised was simple: the royalty would speak English, the inhabitants of the forest and fairies would speak Urdu, while the mechanicals would converse in their dialect. Once Tanvir was sure about the languages to be used, he started translating the play. Tanvir focused on only one plot and tried to be close to the original text. However, the translation posed several problems. The English title, for instance, was problematic for literal translation. As he comments, the title “itself resists a literal translation – midsummer day and midsummer night being specific occasions for festivity for Britain and elsewhere in the West. Midsummer itself, particularly in tropical countries, does not exactly stand for convivial occasions. Even the meaning of autumn differs in East and West. Spring (*Vasant*) alone can perhaps be considered conducive to feelings of love all over the world. Hence, the change in the play's title” (*The Economic Times*, 8 March 1994). Similarly, Cupid is unknown to Indians. The nearest equivalent is *Kamdev* from Hindu mythology. So Cupid is replaced with *Kamdev*. Tanvir decided to retain the original names of the characters and places but changed the names of the flora and fauna, the fairies and the gods. The fairies are referred to as *pari* (fairy). The Indian substitutes for gods seem awkward sometimes. For instance, though the play is set in Athens, Bottom says, “I am Lord Shankar's devotee, Sun is my carriage” (Act I. sc. ii; tr. mine). Tanvir's translation is among the very few versions of Shakespeare in Indian languages that translates blank verse into blank verse, rhymed verse into rhymed verse, and prose into prose. Songs based on *ghazals* and *thumris* of the *nautanki* tradition have been incorporated “due to the demands made by the Arabic and Hindi metres, and the

Hindustani vocabulary used” (*The Economic Times*, 8 March 1994). Some modifications are necessary for translating from one culture. Tanvir believes that “[I]n spirit, however, the play in translation hopefully remains Shakespearean, if only because of the love of nature and of life in general, including little creatures such as spiders, beetles, snails, blind-worms and snakes” (*The Economic Times*, 8 March 1994).

The project proposed by the English company got postponed due to financial constraints. Tanvir, however, decided to carry on with the play with some modifications. He now concentrated only on one of the plots — the rustic mechanicals planning to stage a play on the occasion of the royal wedding of Theseus, the Duke of Athens, with Hippolyta, the queen of Amazons. The denizens of the fairy world were to be played by urban actors and the mechanicals by the folk artists of Tanvir’s group. Although Tanvir had already worked out the problem of language to be used by the two sets of actors, urban and the folk, he found it difficult, at least initially, to make the actors grasp the rhythm of dialogue delivery: “The proper way to go about it is not to give in to the lilt of poetry; to keep the beat under and bring out the emotion, unlike in Parsi theatre. You have to know how to stretch a word so that the listener hears the beat but goes straight to the dramatic position” (cited in Padmanabhan). He further observes that the folk artists had better understanding the song beats but found it difficult to manage the beat of the conversations; for the urban actors both were challenging, especially for the actors playing Puck, Oberon and Titania (cited in Padmanabhan).



Bottom's entry concealed behind the conventional *rang-patti* (hand-held curtain) in *Kamdeo ka Apna Vasantritu ka Sapna* (Act III, sc.i).

Tanvir's theatre has always been one of austerity. Under the influence of the folk forms, it is no surprise that Tanvir's theatre acquired the simplicity and lucidity of folk theatre. His much-acclaimed plays like *Charandas Chor*, *Gaon ka Naam Sasural* or *Mitti ki Gadi* are played on a bare stage with minimal props and sets. The same holds true for *Kamdeo ka Apna* where a hand-held half-curtain is the only element of the set. A reviewer of *The Statesman* observed, "[T]he minimal use of stage props enables the play to proceed without interruptions for changes of scene and the open stage is well-utilized by the tribal dancers of Bastar, who while far removed from the Shakespearean ethos, are not an incongruity considering the particular orientation Habib Tanvir has given the Bard in *Kamdeo ka Apna Basantritu ka Sapna*" (18 Feb. 1994). Sudhanva Deshpande remarks, "[W]ith its simplicity, its directness and minimalism, Habib

Tanvir's theatre would have been considered avant-garde had it not been so popular, and so funny" (112).

IV. Lokendra Arambam's *Macbeth: Stage of Blood*

Manipur has a rich performance tradition which includes *thang-ta*, *lai-haraoba*, *ras-lila*, *nat sankreetan* and *wari liba*. Some of the Meitei ritualistic traditional performances date back to the 12th century and are generally associated with the fertility rituals and ancestral worship (Arambam 2004, 233). *Lai-haraoba*, for instance, is a traditional fertility ritual. Nongmaithem Premchand describes *lai-haraoba* as a celebration of divinity that "enacts the Meitei myth of creation of the universe, making of human being and giving birth and creation or invention of most important things of civilization like boat, making of cloth, construction of a house, engaging in agricultural activities etc" (11).

Manipur's history has played an important role in shaping its performance tradition. Till the 18th century, Manipur was an independent kingdom ruled by kings. Various performance forms like *lai-haraoba* and *wari liba* or the art of storytelling were patronized by the kings. With the coming of Vaishnavite Hinduism in Manipur in the 18th century, many natives converted into Hinduism. The performance traditions were also influenced by the Hindu performance traditions. New forms like *ras-lila* emerged that assimilated the two cultures especially due to the efforts of the Vaishnava king Bhagyachandra (1763-98) who "effected a compromise between the dissenting faiths, manifested theatrically in the harmonious assimilation of both cultures in Manipuri *Ras Lila*" (Arambam 2004, 252). The 1891 defeat of Manipur in the Anglo-Manipuri war brought Manipur under the colonial control. The proscenium theatre made inroads into Manipur during this time via Bengal. As Arambam observes, "While Calcuttans looked

forward toward Victorian London for artistic leadership, Imphal looked to the nearest imperial metropolis” (2004, 252-3). The early plays staged in Manipur were mostly Bengali plays. It was only in 1925 that the first Manipuri drama *Narasingh* written by Lairenmayum Ibungohal Singh in 1922, was staged at the Palace compound of Maharaja Churachand Singh (Somorendra 178). During the 1930s dramatic clubs were founded like Meiti Dramatic Union (1931), Aryan Theatre (1935), Chitrangada Natya Mandir (1936), Society Theatre (1937), Rupmahal (1942). The theatre of this time was dominated by plays written on the Western models. These plays were largely romantic plots celebrating the “folklore and the native vernacular, narrating the experiences of the semi-urban agricultural communities” (Arambam 1997, 17). According to Somorendra Arambam the well-known dramatists like Lamabam Komol, Sorokhaibam Lalit, Arambam Dorendrajit and Ashangbam Minaketan wrote plays which “held a strong sense of good, evil and piety” (178). In *Bhagyachandra* (1930) a Manipuri adaptation of *Macbeth* by Arambam Dorendrajit, Lokendra’s father, the usurper and not the king is killed thereby making the play “a eulogy to good rule” (Trivedi 51). One exception during this period was G. C. Tongbra who, influenced by G.B. Shaw, wrote social drama. Most of his plays mocked the hypocrisy of the society and social evils.

The post-Independence theatre in Manipur has witnessed various experiments by young directors and actors. The 1960s and 70s witnessed, as Arambam observes, “a growth of youth power, youth influence, along with an increasing awareness by the people of their own identity, in the entire northeastern region” (1997a, 16). It was the time when young directors like H. Kanhailal and Ratan Thiyam were trying to structure indigenous idioms to create a theatre that could express their distinct identity. Ratan Thiyam introduced ritualistic element in his theatre while Kanhaialal engaged himself with Badal Sircar’s style of intimate theatre. Thiyam’s theatre which draws heavily

upon the ritualistic traditions of Manipur is less verbal and more spectacular because according to him “the word cannot travel properly and reach the inner eye” (cited in Dharwadker 105). His productions are fairly well-known as they travel across the world. Kanhailal, once a student of Badal Sircar, is also ‘inspired’ by Meitei ritualistic traditions. But his approach to ‘roots’ is different from Thiyam. His theatre is not spectacular but psycho-physical. Kanhailal is also a well-known figure in Manipuri theatre. Rustom Bharucha has dedicated a complete book to Kanhailal and his theatre. A talented director who has somehow not figured prominently in the Manipuri theatre is Lokendra Arambam. Although he has committed himself to give expression to reflect upon the political and social situation of Manipur in his productions he never received much attention of the central funding agencies till recent when his *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* was sent to London in 1997 to commemorate 50 years of Indian Independence. Hence, I chose to discuss Arambam’s theatre in reference to the production of *Macbeth: Stage of Blood*.

Arambam has deeply been involved in political theatre since the 1970s. Since then this quest has been dominated by desire to express the pre-Vashnavaitic Meitei culture and identity. The 1980s brought more political tension as a result of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Arambam observes,

We were no longer as free as we were in the 70s. In the 80s things were more critical, there were a lot of tensions, CRPF firing innocent people, women being raped, armed insurgents in open confrontation with the army – violence became a feature of the 80s (1997b, 34).

Arambam had to tone down the political content of his theatre during the 1980s. In his own words,

By the 80s we had to change our strategies. It was in this period that we became internalized – myself, Kanhailal – all of us were no longer direct in our expression of political tensions, feelings, etc. ... We changed our genre of expression. We completely forsook what we were doing before. Our plays incorporated folklore, nuances which were gradually integrated through a kind of internalized research into aspects of culture. ... I was not political anymore (1997b, 36).

Arambam's theatre since the 80s has been less overtly political. However, he has been exploring various ritual practices of Meitei culture as the mode of presentation and reflection upon the contemporary situation of Manipur. It is the continuation of his urge "to do politically sensitive plays in which [I] reflect on [our] situation" coupled with his exploration into the Meitei ritual practices that finds manifestation in *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* in 1997 (1997b, 36).

Macbeth: Stage of Blood premiered on the Loktak lake stage in 1995. It was performed again on the floating stage at the Ningthem Pukhri reservoir in 1997 and then in England in 1997 to commemorate 50 years of Indian Independence. The play was directed by Arambam for his theatre group 'The Forum for the Laboratory Theatre of Manipur'. The play situated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* amid the contemporary political and social milieu of Manipur. Arambam's Stage of Blood is "*Macbeth* wrenched, twisted and subverted into a metaphor of the anarchy in Manipur" (Arambam cited in Trivedi 2005b, 51). Along with the violence that Manipur has witnessed in the post-insurgency period of the 1990s, the issue of identity which has been so central to Arambam's expressivity gets reflected in the play. Arambam admits that he wanted to do *Macbeth* because it dealt with "the issues of violence, murder and violence" and that he "wanted to interpret Shakespeare from [my] own tribal tradition" (1997b, 36). He

states that “the symbology of *Macbeth* powerfully expresses the tragedy of Manipur and the crisis of identity in the Manipur psyche – at once gentle, dynamic and receptive but with a deeper inner turmoil which finds extreme expression in the conflicts of today” (Website 3).

The play is quite complex for someone uninitiated into the Meitei culture because it incorporates various rituals and myths belonging to the pre-Vaishnavite Meitei culture. Also, the language used is the archaic Manipuri, parts of which are not comprehensible by even the young Manipuri speakers. The environmental staging of the play on the floating stage instead of the proscenium enhances the ritualistic and symbolic dimensions. Water has a deep spiritual meaning in Meitei culture representing “the universe along with fire, earth, wind and sky, driving the dynamics of life and the cosmos. Water represents the source of life and nourishment of the spirit” (Addezio 39). Meiteis believe in living in communion with nature and the failure of which causes suffering and disaster. Arambam himself explained that the stage was “Mother Earth, isolated, naked, and a site of the relentless struggle for domination. The surrounding Water was not just the seed of life but also the tomb where the spirits of the dead were subsumed” (Cited in Trivedi 2005b, 52).

The play was translated by Somorendra Arambam, Lokendra’s elder brother who inverted the sequential order of the play. The play opens with *Macbeth’s* end with soldiers bringing the dead Macbeth to the stage. He wakes up to re-enact his story. The play ends coda-like with Macbeth dead and soldiers taking him away for burial. The play moves backwards making the end both the beginning and the end. This has significance in the context of post-insurgency Manipur when violence and killings have become the cyclic order. The structure of the play reflects the vicious circle of violence the state is witnessing. The play is a prose translation of the original and has 17 scenes.

When the play was staged at the Thames in London, the drama critic of *The Independent* observed that the iambic pentameter has been “abandoned in favour of the Manipuri martial art *Thang Ta* as Macbeth’s inner turmoil is expressed purely through visual imagery and haunting live music” (Website 4). Another deviation from the original text is the number of witches in *Stage of Blood* is seven. The seven weird sisters derive from Meitei mythology and represent the seven ‘virgin goddesses’ known as *heloys* who have power to prophesy. They are both benevolent and malevolent forces of Nature. Also known as *lay cakhetspi* (the destroyer) and *thaway lakpi* (one who snatches the soul), the seven sisters in the play snatch Macbeth’s soul and lead him towards his destruction (Website 5). A very important change in Arambam’s play is the melding of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth into one character. Arambam interprets Lady Macbeth as Macbeth’s alter-ego. Both the roles are played by a single actor who uses his body and a red shawl to demarcate the two aspects of the character.



The weird sisters in *Macbeth: Stage of Blood*.

As mentioned earlier, Arambam interprets the play according to the Meitei culture. According to the programme note Macbeth 'is representative of a repressive state that has lost its soul ... Malcolm and Macduff are not individual representatives of the righteous, but part of the unnamed unknown forces of the oppressed' (cited in Trivedi 2005b, 51). Macbeth becomes evil is not of his own will but because of the forces beyond his control. Arambam wanted to reflect upon the way

... a murder is committed not because it becomes an obsession, but because one has to; one has to continue murdering one person after another; and it ends up in one being murdered. The tremendous political crisis in our state at present, where murder, violence and state terrorism are so widespread, finds an echo in my production.

According to this argument, Macbeth is a victim rather than a villain. This point becomes clearer when one locates Macbeth's claim to the land within the discourse of 'motherland' as against the state/nation. Bipin Thongam observes that Macbeth,

calls the land he overtook as his motherland despite being an illegal inheritor of the land and a traitor. He does not only worry about his kingship but also for the land which Duncan's son Malcolm will inherit eventually. Macbeth calls Malcolm an outsider. This is important because he is questioning the established rules. Malcolm even asks his mother if his father was a traitor. This subverts the idea of the inheritor or the rightful owner of a kingdom. It could be a direct representation of Manipur and the Naga dispute over the land as to who owns the state of Manipur? Is it the Manipuri-Nagas who want to join in the formation of greater 'Nagalim' or the Meiteis who object?

At another level, the play deploys the political metaphors of Manipur vis-à-vis India (50).

The play ends when Malcolm's army wrapped in reed-mats and giving the impression of the Birnam Wood advancing as if it were the elemental forces of nature, encircle Macbeth and finally kill him. The dead body is taken away for burial by the soldiers who had brought it on the stage in the beginning. The play thus ends where it had started.



Malcolm's army wrapped in reed-mats giving the impression of Birnam Wood approaching Macbeth.

Just like the use of Meitei rituals to express the distinct identity, the costumes too are tribal as are the headgears and ornaments. The production has live music using traditional musical instruments like bells, cymbals and drums which augment the creation of the haunting and eerie atmosphere. When staged in Imphal, the play was witnessed by some 2000-odd people. The play may seem to belong to the 'theatre of

roots' movement like Ratan Thiyam's theatre. However, there is an important difference between Thiyam's and Arambam's approach towards 'roots'. While Thiyam's work can be seen as belonging to the 'theatre of roots' movement looking towards 'Vaishnavite Hindu modes and conservative Sanskrit influences', Arambam's theatre looks to the pre-Vaishnavite Meitei culture (Arambam 1997b, 31). The politicization of *Macbeth* within the larger framework of Meitei identity, ethnicity and culture which has been haunting the people of Manipur in addition to the aesthetics evolved out of the traditional performance forms make his play complex.

V. M. K. Raina's *Badshah Pather*

One of the latest Shakespeare productions in India that needs mention is M. K. Raina's adaptation of *King Lear* as *Badshah Pather* (2009) in Kashmiri. The production is significant because of two reasons: first, Raina's choice of working in the Valley which has witnessed violence since 1989 and still experiences sporadic encounters between the militants and the army. The impact of such bloodshed is clearly reflected in the pain and sorrow of the people of the Valley. Raina states that when working with young boys at Akingham, a small village in Kashmir where *Badshah Pather* was rehearsed and performed, he found that

... their bodies were not in the right proportion. There was a stiffness, a distortion, a lack of grace. I started asking myself whether these problems were due to the stresses and tensions that their mothers had gone through before the children were born or if they were a result of the atmosphere they had grown up in (Website 6).

Second, Raina's choice to cast the play in the Kashmiri folk form which has been opposed by the militant groups is equally important. The 1990s was a difficult decade

for the *bhands* in the Valley. The extremist groups targeted the performers and the performances as un-Islamic. The traditional musical instruments of the *bhands* like *swarnai*, *dhol* and *nagara* were destroyed and costumes torn away. Not only this, Raina informs that “Mohammad Subhan Bhagat, the guru of the folk form who was put under house arrest later succumbed to the humiliation and shock” (‘Personal Correspondence’). This was a major loss for the indigenous theatre of Kashmir when the *bhands* stopped their practice. Raina a Kashmiri Pandit whose family fled from their hometown Srinagar in 1990s due to ethnic cleansing made efforts to revive the indigenous theatre of Kashmir. Raina worked constantly with the *bhands* and has been instrumental in its revival and in making this form known nationally.

The origins of *bhand pather* date back to the 11th century. The name is made up of two words: *bhand* means ‘actor’ and *pathar* is the play. As Raina says,

The plays of the *bhands* are called *pathar*, a word that seems to have derived from *patra*, dramatic character. *Bhand* comes from the *bhaana*, a satirical and realist drama, generally a monologue that is mentioned in Bharata’s *Natya Shastra*. The *Bhand Pather* though is not a monologue but a social drama incorporating mythological legends and contemporary social satire (Website 7).

Balwant Gargi observes that *pathar* seems to have come from *patra* meaning a scroll and *bhand* is a local variant of the classical *bhandika* or the clown (186). Whatever might be the etymology of these terms, *bhand pather* is indigenous theatre of Kashmir that includes all the components of folk theatre like dancing, singing, clowning, satire and humour. An important difference between *bhand pather* and other Indian folk forms like *jatra* is that the former is secular and does not have any religious framework primarily because, as Ghulam Bhagat, a *bhand*, explains, “Islam does not associate with

theatre' (Website 8). Even today a ritual dance called *chhok* is performed at the temple of Goddess Shiva Bhagvati in Akingham. Traditionally, both Muslims and Hindus performed *bhand pather* in Kashmir. Till the 1990s, there were Hindu *bhand* groups in Kashmir before they moved out of the Valley due to the communal violence.

Bhands tour the countryside and perform plays from their repertoire. A *bhand pather*, like other folk performances, is performed in open air. The performance starts with the sound of *swarnai*, a wind instrument. The narrative is usually formulaic, consisting of a cruel king who is corrected by the clown or the jester called *maskhara*. There can be any number of *maskharas* in a performance. The king usually is an allegory for the outsider or the 'other', while the *maskhara* is the native 'self' who wins over the former. In a traditional *pathar*, the 'otherness' of the king is established through his speech. He usually speaks in a language not understood by the natives, like Persian, English, Punjabi or gibberish (Website 9). The 'self' in the form of *maskhara* speaks the native dialects. The most famous traditional *bhand pathers* are *Darza pather* and *Gosain pather*. Like other folk forms, *bhand pather* incorporates music using traditional instruments like *swarnai*, *dhol*, *nagara* or *thalej*. There are set musical compositions called *mukams* to which the *bhands* dance. As Kashmir has a strong tradition of *sufi* poetry, it is also incorporated into the *bhand pather*. As far as props are concerned, *bhand pather* uses very few, the mandatory props being a whip and a short bamboo stick. The whip is not simply a prop but represents authority:

During the performance a character can be whipped a hundred times without being hurt because this property does not have the impact associated with a whip, it just looks deadly. It is used to transform all the elements that represent oppression into strong dramatic images. In sharp contrast the *bans* [the bamboo stick] are used by the jester or

maskhara. These are split bamboo sticks that make a sharp sound. In his pantomime, the *maskhara* uses the *bans* emerges as the total opposite of the oppressor's whip (Website 7).

Bhands are trained by traditional *gurus* known as *maguns* who teach various skills like acting, dancing, music and acrobatics.

Raina held five workshops in Kashmir as part of National School of Drama's extension programme since 2001 and mounted 14 productions mostly based on the works of Kashmiri writers (Website 10). In 2009, with the help of traditional *ustads* of *bhand*, Raina organised a workshop at Akingham to train the local children and youth in this form. Raina chose Akingham because it is here that the Kashmir Bhagat Theatre, one of the oldest *bhand* companies, is based. Raina explains, "I went to the houses of Bhand performers in three or four villages and told them – look you have to send your kids for this workshop. They sent them gladly. These elders themselves visited the workshop and performed too – we had a week which was like a little folk festival" (Website 9). The workshop culminated in the production of Shakespeare's *King Lear* adapted as *Badshah Pather*.

Regarding the choice of the play, Raina explains, "The number of plays in *bhand pather*'s repertoire has diminished to just 7 or 8. We wanted to evolve a new play for performance. As *King Lear* is a play about a foolish king, it fits well in the schemata of *bhand pather*. Moreover, I knew that doing Shakespeare would be helpful in getting the marginalised form and performers recognition in urban centers" ('Personal Correspondence'). Doing a Shakespeare play with the *bhands* in a folk form was a challenging task for Raina, at least initially, due to several reasons. In the first place, a tragedy does not exist as a form in the *bhand pather* repertoire as in other folk and classical forms. The players agreed to enact the tragedy of Lear as it was the story of a

foolish king. The inclusion of a new form like tragedy into *bhand pather* is significant because it underlines the openness of the performers to innovations which prevents the form from being ‘preserved’ in the sense of being frozen in history like a museum piece. Another challenge for Raina was to work with a set of actors most of whom were illiterate and could not read the script. Lastly, Raina had to rework his formal training in theatre, as he says, “[Y]ou can’t use techniques you have learnt. There are no auditoriums, you have to tell stories in an empty space” (*The Hindu*, 30 Jan. 2010). Also, performing in open air in the broad daylight meant that Raina could not use any kind of technology – lights, mikes, projectors and so on. In the end, it all came down to acting and Raina believed in his actors, “[P]erformance is in their blood after all” (Website 9).

The first problem was to get a performable translation. Initially Raina had brought with him Harivansh Rai Bachhan’s well-known Hindi translation of *King Lear* to be translated into Kashmiri. However, the Kashmiri translation could not make an impact on the actors as the language was quite literary. As Ghulam Bhagat, one of the actors said, “[I]n the beginning we followed nothing but didn’t have the courage to challenge our guru. Slowly the story, simple at heart, began to make sense to us” (Website 11). It did not take long for Raina to realize the futility of his efforts. He was trying to give these actors a pre-written text of Shakespeare which is not a convention in *pathar bhand*. A traditional *bhand pather* does not have a written script but develops the plot through improvisations. Thus Raina adopted the strategy of evolving a performance text of *King Lear* which would come from the actors themselves, rather than depending upon a ready-made script. The story of Lear was told to the actors and Raina worked in sequences with the actors. This worked very well as Raina observes,

[O]nce the sequence was explained to the actors they came up with their own dialogues in everyday speech. This was important because a folk form needs to have a language of the folk, a language that can be understood by the actor and the audience alike ('Personal Correspondence').

It was then through ensemble work that a performance script called *Badshah Lear* evolved. The scenes were formally 'blocked' by Raina which is not done in traditional *bhand pather*.

The performance text that evolved in the workshop concentrated on the main plot of the original play, that is, the story of an idiosyncratic king planning to divide his kingdom among his three daughters. *Badshah Pather* follows the main plot of the original play quite closely with slight change. The daughters become sons primarily because women are not allowed to perform. Moreover, in most of the traditional Indian societies a woman is not entitled to a share in her parents' property. Having declared his intentions to divide his kingdom among his sons, the *Badshah* asks the sons to express their love for him. The two elder sons, like Goneril and Regan in the original, pass the love-test by replying in the superlatives. The youngest one replies like Cordelia that he loves the *Badshah* as much as a son should love his father. Hearing this, the *Badshah* banishes the youngest son and divides his kingdom between the elder sons. However, he soon realizes his mistake when the elder sons throw him out and the youngest one comes for his rescue. All the sons die in the wars being fought. Finally Lear too succumbs after the death of his youngest son.

The play was performed at Akingham village in open air in broad daylight, surrounded by the audience on all sides like the traditional *bhand pather*. The staging of the performance was not an easy task. The separatists had called for a *bandh* on the day

of performance and the director was cautioned against staging the play (Website 12). The director however decided to proceed with the show as planned. What was heartening was the large number of spectators who turned up to watch the performance disregarding of the *bandh*. Raina observes in an interview,

I am certain that this was the first time in 19 years that such a large crowd has gathered together for a cultural event in Kashmir. Some of our friends from Srinagar who had come for the performance could not believe that such a gathering was possible without government support and without any security or police (Website 9).



Badsah Pather (2009) performed at Akingham village in Kashmir.



The play ends with the Kashmiri folk dance where all the actors join in.

Through these productions we see that in post-Independence India Shakespeare has been produced in traditional and folk idioms to express a sense of alterity that makes them different from Shakespeare productions in the rest of the world. The important point to be noted here is the difference between pre-Independence and post-Independence Shakespeare productions which too incorporated folk and traditional elements. For instance, as discussed in Chapter III, when Parsi theatre staged plays in a 'proscenium' set-up it still drew upon elements from various traditional and folk performances like *bhavai*, *yakshgan*, *lavani* as well as Urdu, Gujarati or Persian *ghazals*, and *thumris*. Hence, an important difference between the two periods is more about attitude than technique. When Shakespeare productions in pre-Independence India drew upon folk and traditional forms, it was more a matter of reaching out to the masses for these forms were popular among them. Their choice was governed by the commercial imperatives that demanded Shakespeare plays to be understood by the masses in a familiar idiom. In post-Independence Shakespeare productions incorporate folk and traditional forms of performance are used consciously

with contemporary awareness that expresses the post-colonial sensibility by foregrounding its alterity from other Shakespeares around the world. The difference becomes manifest in Poonam Trivedi's words, "[I]f earlier the adaptive process was more a matter of a free-wheeling localization to make Shakespeare more accessible to a broad-based audience, the contemporary postcolonial adaptations attempt to reinterpret Shakespeare by submitting the plays to the distinct conventions and performative codes of individual folk forms" (154).

There is always a danger of labelling the use of folk and traditional forms by Indian directors as 'revivalist'. However, one should not take these productions as authentically 'folk' performances. Even folk and traditional performances underwent changes during the colonial period. Given the various social, cultural and economic mediations aspirations about 'authenticity' and 'purity' of a form become untenable. Neither Tanvir nor Karanth tried to 'revive' any folk form even though they incorporated such elements in their productions. Tanvir made judicious use of *naach* and freely mixed it with other folk traditions like *nautanki*. Tanvir never had an agenda of reviving a folk form. Similarly, Karanth uses elements from *yakshgana* but mixes them with other traditions. Interestingly, neither Tanvir nor Karanth project their productions as cast in a particular form. In this regard Tanvir has clearly stated that,

I was not running after folk forms, I was running after the folk actors.

There is a class of difference here because when I used the folk actors, they brought the folk forms with them. I did not have to academically impose upon them. And I did not really think a lot about the forms as such. I was freely using my imagination to interpret a play and these actors had the form. ... The very fact that there is a restriction of number of actors in the traditional *naacha* group sets it apart from my

work. The former is usually limited to ten persons, most of whom are musicians, singers and dancers, whose performances fill up the gaps between skits. Only two or three are actors. Most of the drama part is a dialogue (or duologue) between two with an occasional intervention by a third actor. Thus naacha is theatre in its most primitive form. My theatre is obviously different. However, the way my actors move, dance, speak and sing, if that is the form, then my theatre has it (108).

Karant too in his production of *Barnam Van* uses elements from *yakshgan* but does not cast the play as *yakshgan*. To ensure that his audience does not confuse the theatrical production of *Barnam Ban* with *yakshgana*, Karant mixes *yakshgan* music with instruments like bells and gongs conventionally not used in the form. Also, the defamiliarization of *Barnam Van* from *yakshgan* is achieved through the use of costumes. *Yakshgan* has typical costumes and characters are identified by their costumes. Karant used costumes from traditional theatres of Bali, Indonesia, Japan and Cambodia. Karant observes very aptly that “it is not *Macbeth* in *yakshagan*, but *yakshgan* in *Macbeth*” (40). M. K. Raina’s aim may have been to ‘preserve’ the Kashmiri folk form of *bhand pather* through workshops and his production of *Badshah Pather* (*King Lear*). But he does not treat the folk form as frozen in time with no scope for change. He works with the folk artists within the contemporary context and makes deliberate changes in the traditional form. His *Badshah Pather*, for instance, is a tragedy which is not a genre in traditional *bhand pather*. Also, Raina’s production has well defined entries and exits to the bhand actors who go ‘off-stage’ unlike the traditional *bhand pather* where the actors are always ‘on-stage’. Similarly, Arambam makes use of myths, rituals and shamanistic traditions of Meitei culture but with a contemporary awareness. The staging of his *Macbeth: Stage of Blood* in international theatre festivals

may seem to project an 'exotic Indian' image in the international market but his weaving of the social and political situation of Manipur into the Shakespeare text makes the production contemporary relevant.

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Chapter VI

Conclusion

In this thesis I have tried to identify various responses to Shakespeare evoked by Indian productions of his plays at different points of time and what governed these responses. This dissertation did not aim to provide a comprehensive history of Shakespeare productions in India which would be a vast project requiring collaboration of a number of scholars working in various language sectors. The thesis traces the advent of Shakespeare in India, the colonial 'agenda' in promoting Shakespeare and India's efforts in making Shakespeare its own which in turn led to greater theatre activity and most significantly the development of 'modern' Indian theatre. The thesis tries in a humble way to fill the lacuna in Shakespeare studies by discussing the responses evoked by Indian productions of Shakespeare. The thesis has also dealt with major issues in post-Independence theatre that need to be emphasized when dealing with post-Independence Shakespeare productions to appreciate the complex aims and achievements of these productions.

The finding of this thesis is that Shakespeare productions in India have been governed by their own aesthetics. When Shakespeare's plays moved out of schools and colleges in the 19th century, they were quickly adapted to suit the general Indian milieu and audience taste. Shakespeare may have served the British colonists' agenda academically but theatrically Shakespeare productions in India refused to be overwhelmed by the master's text and in fact appropriated the text itself. The three prominent trends in Shakespeare productions in India can be identified as 'imitative', 'popular' and 'urban-folkish'. The earliest productions of Shakespeare in India by the educated elite tried to 'imitate' the way Shakespeare's plays were produced by the

British colonists and followed the conventions of English theatre. There was also a gradual and noticeable assimilation into the indigenous theatrical activities. By the 1870s, with the emergence of Parsi theatre, Shakespeare was out of the elite circle and was transformed into ‘popular’ modes. An important achievement of Parsi theatre was founding a theatre for the masses, beyond the private theatre of the elite. In the 1920s with the growing momentum of nationalism, the once-revered Shakespeare was noticeable in its absence. Shakespeare’s plays regained favour on the stage albeit with a difference in the post-Independence decades. Utpal Dutt employed elements from *jatra* in producing Shakespeare; later theatre directors like Karanth, Tanvir, Arambam and Raina followed suit.

The thesis also proposes that categorising Indian productions of Shakespeare as ‘colonial’ and ‘post-colonial’ would not be appropriate as all the productions of the colonial period cannot be called ‘colonial’ in an ideological sense. As has been explained, even during the colonial period Shakespeare’s plays were changed to suit the audience sensibility. Similarly, not every production in post-colonial India can be called ‘post-colonial’. One may still find ‘colonial’ Shakespeare in post-colonial India as is evident in the following account:

Twelfth Night, first produced in 1928 by the Shakespeare Society of St. Stephen’s, was the most frequently performed of all Shakespeare’s plays, being revived in 1948, 1963, 1987, and 1993. When *As You Like It* was stage in modern English dress, a reviewer observed that the production demonstrated the truth of the assertion that Indians, and especially Stephanians, were “the last Englishmen left on the earth” (cited in Bartholomeusz 213).

Post-colonial appropriations of a canon are generally considered counter-discursive and resistant to canonical 'authority'. Such a narrow view would not explain the complexity of Shakespeare productions in India. Many of these productions do not necessarily create counter-discourse to subvert the canon. In fact, Shakespeare can evoke at least three kinds of responses in post-colonial societies like India: one, of rejection as a representative of colonialism; two, of value as a 'universal' writer and a 'touchstone' of greatness; and three, of appropriation to suit local socio-political-cultural purposes. The last attitude has been the most productive in terms of Indian productions of Shakespeare. For instance, productions like *Bhuli Nai Priya*, *Barnam Van*, *Kamdeo ka Apna*, *Macbeth: Stage of Blood*, or *Badshah Pather* may not create a counter-discourse by subverting the English canon as Derek Walcott and Aime Cesaire have done with *The Tempest*, but they illustrate the appropriation of the master texts in their own ways. This is particularly true of the productions which present a "syncretic combination of indigenous and colonial forms in the post-colonial world". (Gilbert & Tompkins 294). Arambam, for instance, has appropriated Shakespeare's *Macbeth* to express the social and political turmoil in present-day Manipur. Dutt, Karanth, Tanvir and Raina have appropriated Shakespeare to develop theatrical styles by blending elements of traditional and folk forms, Sanskrit theatre and 'modern' theatre. Thus, such productions go beyond the fixed categories of the colonial and the postcolonial and open up the possibility of a more nuanced discourse on theatrical expressivity. In this regard Parmita Kapadia observes,

Through their emphasis on the postcolonial, interculturalist, and intraculturalist Indian identity, contemporary Shakespeare appropriations simultaneously reify and subvert the East-West, colonizer-colonized binary in much the same way as their predecessors

did; however, their stress on the intraculturalism of Indian identity complicates the binaryism [*sic.*] of conventional counterdiscourse (92).

Once the boundary between the colonial and the postcolonial is blurred, one realizes that these categories can not be fixed but become hybrid conditions. Ania Loomba argues that “every culture can be said to be hybrid – in fact even ‘authentic’ identities are the result of ongoing processes of selection, cutting and mixing of cultural vocabularies. In practice, hybridity and authenticity are rarely either/or positions” (146-7). In such a hybrid world it is difficult and pointless to identify ‘authentic’ Shakespeare. Loomba raises an important question:

[...] does the idea of “authentic” or “inauthentic” Shakespeare have any meaning in a world where the entire Shakespeare trade is fueled by a frank acknowledgement of the legitimacy of inauthenticity? For even the New Globe is, as Dennis Kennedy has put it, “a form of staged authenticity”, combining aspects of the shrine with those of the amusement park. In this situation, the inauthenticity of the “foreign” or indeed any other devotee should matter less than it once did, just as the authenticity of Shakespeare himself is less important to both audiences and vendors (123).

The concept of ‘authentic’ itself, says Richard Handler, is “a cultural construct of the modern Western world” (2). There cannot be an ‘authentic’ Shakespeare. How is one to believe that the Shakespeare text that has come down to the modern readers is ‘authentic’? Shakespeare himself was a reviser of scripts. Moreover, Shakespeare texts have been mediated by numerous editors, composers and scribes. Even the most trusted Quartos and Folios vary from each other. For instance, “about 200 lines of

Hamlet in the First Quarto version (Q1, 1603) do not appear in the First Folio version (F1, 1623), while about 85 lines found in F1 are not featured in Q1” (Rauen 123). Such multiplicity of Shakespeare texts makes it impossible to claim a version as the ‘authentic’ text of Shakespeare. Lurie E. Osborne notes that:

All Shakespearean editions are copies; there is no recoverable original, even for those plays like *All’s Well that Ends Well* for which bibliographers suggest that the edited text was taken from Shakespeare’s foul papers. In fact the more vigorously textual bibliographers search for some singular, original authorizing text, the more obvious it becomes that there is no original to be found (169).

Such views make efforts to discover ‘authentic’ Shakespeare fruitless endeavour. Consequently, no production can claim to be an ‘authentic’ Shakespeare production. Apart from the text itself, present-day performance conditions are very different from the Elizabethan times. In this sense, any attempt at producing an ‘authentic’ Shakespeare play would invariably be ‘inauthentic’. In fact, this ‘inauthenticity’ makes any Shakespeare productions different from another and must be valorized.

The thesis suggests further research investigations into Shakespeare productions and their reception in India in different theatre traditions and language sectors not covered in this study like Tamil, Telugu, Oriya, Gujarati and Punjabi theatre, among others, which have lively theatre history. Also, scholars more familiar with the languages represented here like Bengali, Urdu, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam and Hindi, can take up more nuanced and detailed investigations into the Shakespeare productions in these languages to trace the possibility of subliminal evocations.

On the whole, working on this thesis has been a rewarding experience. The insights into the Indian productions of Shakespeare provided me the opportunity to visit Utrecht University, The Netherlands to carry out a short-term research project on a comparative study of Shakespeare reception in India and the Netherlands. This has broadened my vision regarding Shakespeare productions outside India. Also, the collaborations that were formed during this project with Shakespeare experts around the world especially Prof. Ton Hoenselaars, Prof. Paul Franssen and Prof. Ann Thompson have been particularly helpful in providing insights into the study of Shakespeare productions. I sincerely hope that this study adds to the existing scholarship in Shakespeare studies in a modest way.

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Appendix I

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Kannada

S. No	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published
1.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Raghavendrarao nataka</i>	Gundo Krishna Churamuri	1881
2.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Surasena charitre</i>	Basavappasastry	1895
3.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Padmini</i>	Srikanthasastry	1911
4.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Krishnasastry	—
5.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Shanmukhayya	1954
6.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Huyilagola	1963
7.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	—	1967
8.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Nissar Ahmed	1974
9.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Sankalpa siddhiyu</i>	KKR	1871
10.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	Shastry	—
11.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Kamalavat Parinaya</i>	Shamarya	—
12.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Doremagalu</i>	Bharatisuta	1959
13.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Nivu Bayasidamte</i>	Huyilagola	1963
14.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Satimani Vijaya</i>	Somanathayya	1897
15.	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	Mallaraje Arasu	—
16.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Nagadavarannu Nagisuva Kathe</i>	Chennabasappa	1871
17.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhrantivilasa</i>	Venkatacharya	1876
18.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Viparyasa Jak Keddombi Damdhaleya</i>	Parvatavani	1947
19.	<i>King Henry VI</i>	<i>Prahasana</i>	Gundappa	1959
20.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Hemchandraraaja Vilasa</i>	M.S. Puttanna	1889

21.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Liyar Maharaja</i>	Srinivasa	1959
22.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	Huyilagola	1963
23.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	H. S. Shivaprakasha	1988
24.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	T. T. Sharma	1931
25.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Savasamskara</i>	Channabasava	1939
26.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Inamdar	—
27.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Shanmukhayya	—
29.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Huyilagola	1963
30.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Shankar	1973
31.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	K. S. Bhagvan	1975
32.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	T. Niranjana	1977
33.	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	<i>Kusumkumara</i>	Annajirao	1897
34.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Chandamaruta</i>	Subbarao	1893
35.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Birugali</i>	Kuvempu	1930
36.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Chandamaruta</i>	Masti Venkatesh Iyengar	1959
37.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Mamtrikana magalu</i>	Mahalingabhatta	1963
38.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Birugali</i>	Huyilagola	1963
39.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Birugali</i>	Vi Vi	1967
40.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Chandamaruta</i>	A. N. Murtyrao	1981
41.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Dhum Dhum Suntaragali</i>	Vaidehi	1992
42.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	—	Vardachar	1881
43.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Gayyalianu Sadhumaduvike</i>	Narsimhachar	—
44.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Chandimardana</i>	Ramashastry	—
45.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Gayyalianu Sadhumaduvike</i>	Somanathayya	1897
46.	<i>The Taming</i>	<i>Chandimardana</i>	Lakshman Rao	1910

	<i>of the Shrew</i>	<i>natakam</i>		
47.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Tratikanataka</i>	Honnapuramath	1920
48.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Bahaddurganda</i>	Parvatavani	1947
49.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Gayyaligamda</i>	Murthy	1964
50.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Dvadasa Ratri</i>	Masti Venkatesh Iyengar	1960
51.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Hanneradaneya Ratri</i>	P. V. Narayan	1975
52.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Panchali Parinaya</i>	Anadarao	1890
53.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venisu Nagarada Vanika</i>	Venkatacharya	1906
54.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venupuriya Vartaka</i>	Hanumanta Gowda	1928
55.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Surtanagarada Sresthiyu</i>	Vasudevacharya Kerur	1929
56.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venis Vyapari</i>	Sukuma	1958
57	<i>The Merchant The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venissina Vyapari</i>	Gundanna	1959
58	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venisina Vartaka</i>	Huyilagola	1962
59	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Jayarajacharya	—
60	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Sitaramayya	—
61	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Shanmukhayya	—

62	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Pramilarjuniya Vasantayamini</i>	Srikantesha Gowda	1890
63	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Swapanachamatkara Natakavu</i>	Vasudevacharya Kerur	1890
64	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Nadubesageya Iruluganasu</i>	Huyilagola	1963
65	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Nisar Ahmad	1974
66	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Channabasappa	1881
67	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Prataprudra Deva</i>	Srikantesha Gowda	1895
68	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Devesa Bhandara Natakavu</i>	Anantharya	1926
69	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Rakatshi</i>	Kuvempu	1932
70	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Gundappa	1936
71	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Huyilagola	1963
72	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Ramachandra Deva	1976
73	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth Maranayakana</i>	Parvatavani	1985
74	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Drishtanta Maranayakana</i>	H. S. Shivaprakash	1990
75	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Gombey Macbeth</i>	Vaidehi	1992
76	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Kamalaksha Padmagandhiyaraka the</i>	Venkatesh B. Bhandiwad	1881
77.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ramavarma Lilavati</i>	Vardachar	1889
78.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ramavarma Lilavati Charitre</i>	Anandarao	1889
79.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ramavarma Lilavati Charitre</i>	Jayarajacharya	1889
80.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Basvappaasastry	—

81.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Srikantesha Gowda	—
82.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ramesh Lalitha</i>	Vasudevacharya Kerur	—
83.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Asuya Parinama</i>	Amrutachari	1931
84.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Mattu Juliet</i>	Shankaranarayana Rao	1949
85.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Y. M. Shanmukhayya	1952
86.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Mattu Juliet</i>	Huyilagola	1963
87.	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Manjughosha</i>	Rangacharya Mudgal	—
88.	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Mahimamdana</i>	Annajirao	1900
89.	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Manjuvani</i>	Srikanthasastry	1914
90.	<i>The Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Hemanta</i>	Shivarama Karantha	1982
91.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Jayasimharaja Charitre</i>	Puttanna	1881
92.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Jayasimharaja Charitram</i>	Naajappa M. Chakrapuri	1907
93.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Manjuvani</i>	Shrikantha Shastri Nanjanagud	1914
94.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Ananadarao	1905
95.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Bhasamtaram</i>	A. Ananda Rao	1905
96.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Shivarama Karantha	1930
97.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Samtapaka</i>	Amrutachari	1937
98.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Kulkarni	—
99.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Jayarajacharya	—
100.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Jivan Naryana	—
101.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Shivalingaswamy	—
102.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Hemantakumara	—
103.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Jivaji	—

104.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Savalgimatha	—
105.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Masti	1958
106.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Parvati	1960
107.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Kulkarni	1961
108.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Anadarao	1970
109.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Bhagwan	1973
110.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Ramchandra Dev	1978
111.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Parvatvani	1985
112.	<i>Coriolanus</i>	<i>Coriolanus</i>	K. V. Rajagopal	1981
113.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Parikalabhyudaya</i>	Annajirao	1897
114.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	<i>Athensina Arthavanta</i>	K.V. Subbanna	1994

Compiled from the following sources:

- i). Satyanath, T. S. “How Does Shakespeare Become Sekh Pir in Kannada?”
Translation Today 1.2 (Oct. 2004).
- ii). Guttal, Vijaya. “Translation and Performance of Shakespeare in Kannada”.
India’s Shakespeare: Translation, Interpretation, and Performance. Eds.
Poonam Trivedi and Dennis Bartholomeusz. New Delhi: Pearson Longman,
2005.
- iii). Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television
Associates, 1989.
- iv) Rao, A. N. Moorthy. “Shakespeare in Kannada”. *Indian Literature*, 7.1 (1964).
- v) Amur, G. S. “Shakespeare in Kannada”. *Shakespeare in Indian Languages*. Ed. D. A.
Shankar. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1999.

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Marathi

S. No	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published
1.	<i>Henry VIII</i>	<i>Raja Raghanath Rao</i>	H. B. Atre	1904
2.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Vallabhanunaya</i>	V. M. Mahajani	1880
3.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Priyarthana</i>	V. S. Patvardhan	1912
4.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Premagumpha</i>	V. S. Patvardhan	1908
5.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Agadi Monasarakhel</i>	D. K. Bhat	1957
6.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	Ajay Arosakar	1958
7.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Jase Tumhamsa Avadela</i>	Shashikanta	—
8.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Mhatrya Vyaparyachi Goista</i>	R. V. Oka	1875
9.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhrantikrta Chamatkara</i>	R. B. Jathan and B. R. Pradhan	1877
10.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Gadya Apulagavbara</i>	S.M. Oak	1959
11.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	D. K. Barve	1959
12.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhurala</i>	Ramachandra Mohani	1872
13.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhurala Athva Isvarkrita</i>	Vinayaka Patakar	1876
14.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Avalya Javalyanca Ghotala</i>	Vijaya Rasala	1949
15.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Tara</i>	V. M. Mahajani	1909
16.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>	B. D. Kher	1862
17.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Nanasaheb Phatak	—
18.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Vikaravilasita</i>	G. G. Agarkar	1883
19.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Himmata-Bahadura</i>	A.S. Barve	1890
20.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Virasena</i>	G. V. Kanitkar	1883
21.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Puspasena Rajaputra</i>	A. S. Barve	—
22.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Teen-Anli Hamlet</i>	G. S. Jog	1959
23.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	B. D. Kher	1958

24.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Vijaya Sinha</i>	K. G. Natu	1872
25.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	R. T. Pavanskar	1883
26.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	K. B. Belsare	1912
27.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	M. N. Kulkarni	1959
28.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Atipidacharita</i>	S. M. Ranade	1880
29.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Kanyapaariksana</i>	G. S. Gore	—
30.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Samrat Sinha</i>	P. K. Atre	1973
31.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Raja Lear</i>	G. V. Karandikar	1974
32.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	D. M. Kher	1958
33.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Manajirava</i>	S. M. Paranjpye	1896
34.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Dakini Vilasa</i>	L. M. Joshi	1899
35.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Rajmukut</i>	V. V. Shirvadkar	1954
36.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Roopvidh</i>	Arun Naik	1988
37.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Ajay Arosakar	1958
38.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Samana Sasana</i>	—	1909
39.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Sumati-Vijaya</i>	H.M. Apte	1911
40.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Strinaya-Chaturya</i>	A.V. Patkar	1871
41.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Pranay Mudra</i>	V.S. Gurjar	1904
42.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Mohanachi Anguthi</i>	D.G. Limaye	1909
43.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice Nagarcha Vyapari</i>	K.B. Belsare	1910
44.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Saudagar</i>	M. Agashe	—
45.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Ek Paund Maans</i>	S.B. Gondhalekar	1944
46.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Shankar Gopal Naravane	1921
47.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Vilakshan Nyayachaturya</i>	Sakharam P. Pandit	1868
48.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	M.G. Shastri	1867

49.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Zunzarrao</i>	G.B. Deval	1890
50.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Zunzarrao</i>	M.G. Kolhatkar	1890
51.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othellonamak Natak</i>	G.B. Deval	1890
52.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Ajit Simha</i>	M.G. Kolhatkar	—
53.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	V.V. Shirvadkar	1961
54.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Nishpaap</i>	Dilip Pardesi	1984
55.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Arun Naik	1987
56.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Ajay Arosaskara	—
57.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Madhyamini Swapna</i>	K.N. Athale	—
58.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Veshaviparysa</i>	K.P. Gadgil	—
59.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Sita Sangeet</i>	C.G. Talvalkar	1889
60.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Madhu Yamini Swapan Darshan</i>	K.B. Belsare	1913
61.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	B.D. Kher	1958
62.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Premamakrand Nataka</i>	A.N. Ukidave	1908
63.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Prataparva Ane Manjula</i>	E.V. Musale	1882
64.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Sasikala-Ratnapal</i>	Kanitkar	1882
65.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Salini</i>	K.V. Karmakar	1901
66.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Tara-Vilasa</i>	Dattaraya Mantakeskar	1908
67.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Mohan-Tara</i>	K.R. Chapkhane	1908
68.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Premcha Kalas</i>	K.B. Belsare	1908
69.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	K.J. Purohit	1959
70.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest</i>	N.J. Kirtane	1875
71.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tuphan</i>	K.B. Belsare	1903
72.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest</i>	L.G. Deva	1958
73.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tuphan</i>	Ramvav B. Kirtikar	1893

74.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Vesh Vibhram</i>	K.P. Gadgil	1891
75.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Bhramvilas</i>	B.H. Pandit	1910
76.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Priyarthana</i>	Navalkar	—
77.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Prem Vinod</i>	A.V. Apte	1919
78.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Vagvilas</i>	V.G. Joshi	1928
79.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Madnachi Manjari</i>	Vidyadhar Gokhale	1967
80.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	S. Behere	1958

Compiled from the following sources:

- i). Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television Associates, 1989.
- ii) Rajadhyaksha, M. V. "Shakespeare in Marathi". *Indian Literature* 7.1 (1964).
- iii) Yajnik, R. K. *The Indian Theatre: Its Origins and its Later Developments Under European Influence*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933.

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Bengali

S. No.	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published
1.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Bhisak-Duhita</i>	Govindachandra Ray	1888
2.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Ananga-Rangini</i>	Annada Prasad Basu	1897
3.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	Sunil Kumar Chattopadhyay	1957
4.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>As You Like It</i>	Ashok Guha	1959
5.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhram Kautuk</i>	Venimadhav Ghosh	1973
6.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhrantivilas</i>	Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar	1884
7.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Sarat Sashi Natak</i>	Nilratan Mukherjee	1882
8.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Susila Virsenā</i>	Harimohan Mukhopadhyay	1868
9.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Kusumkumari</i>	Chandrakali Ghosh	1874
10.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Amarsimha</i>	Paramath Natah Basu	1874
11.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Chandranath</i>	Siddhesvara Gupta	1894
12.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Chandiprasad Ghosh	1894
13.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Manmohan Ray	
14.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hariraja</i>	Amrendranath Datta	1897
15.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Lalitmohan Adhikari	1893
16.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Denmarker Raja Kumar</i>	Abu Shariyar	1976
17.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Jyotindranath Tagore	1907
18.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Sudhindranath Raha	1959
19.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Liyar</i>	Yatindra Mohan Ghosh	1902
20.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	Kalyanvrat Datta	1957
21.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Dharma Va Ratnapuri</i>	Surendrachandra Basu	1921
22.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Rudrapal</i>	Haralal Ray	1874
23.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Tarkanath Mukhopadhyay	1875
24.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Karmvir</i>	Nagendranath Basu	1885
25.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Bhramar</i>	Dhirendranath Paul	1891
26.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Girish Ghosh	1893
27.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Ashutosh Ghosh	1900

28.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Ashok Guha	1959
29.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Upendrakumar Kar	1923
30.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Sudhindranath Raha	1959
31.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Nirendranath Ray	1952
32.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Vinimay</i>	Birendranath Ray	1909
33.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Bhanumati-Chittavilas</i>	Harachandra Ghosh	1853
34.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Sulata Natak</i>	Pyarelal Mukherjee	1877
35.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Surlata</i>	Pyarelal Mukhopadhyay	1897
36.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Saudagar</i>	Bhupendranath Bandopadhyay	1915
37.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Manmohan Roy	1917
38.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Pashupati Chattopadhyay	1920
39.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	Sunilkumar Chattopadhyay	1956
40.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Kalyanvrat Datta	1956
41.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Bhinish Venik</i>	Mahadev De	1926
42.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Ashutosh Ghosh	1925
43.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Merchant of Venice</i>	Ashok Guha	1959
44.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Sudkhor Saudagar</i>	Nagendranath Ray Chaudhuri	1915
45.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Jahanara</i>	Satishchandra Chattopadhyay	1903
46.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	Manindra Datta	1956
47.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Kuhaki</i>	Devendranath Basu	1920
48.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Bhimsimha</i>	Tarinicharan Pal	1882
49.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Surasundari</i>	Surendranath Bhattacharya	1891
50.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Kaliprasanna Chattopadhyay	1894
51.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Rudrasen</i>	Manilal Bandopadhyay	1906
52.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Devendranath Basu	1919
53.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Kaliprasanna Sharma	1893
54.	<i>Romeo and</i>	<i>Charumukh</i>	Harachandra	1864

	<i>Juliet</i>	<i>Chittahara</i>	Ghosh	
55.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ajay Sinha-Vilasvati</i>	Yogendra Ghosh	1878
56.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Hemchandra Bandopadhyay	1895
57.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Evam Julietera</i>	Gurudas Hajra	1848
58.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo-Juliet</i>	Sudhindranath Raha	1960
59.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Surendrachandra Basu	1892
60.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Chamundar Siksha</i>	Nagendranath Ray Chaudhuri	1915
61.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Prakiti natak</i>	Charuchandra Mukherjee	1882
62.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Nalini-Vasant</i>	Hemchandra Banopadhyay	1954
63.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Jhanjha</i>	Nagendra Sarvadhikari	1913
64.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest</i>	Pashupati Chattopadhyay	1919
65.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>The Tempest</i>	Ashok Guha	1960
66.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest</i>	Nirmalkanti Mallick Chaudhuri	1956
67.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Sushila-Chandraketu</i>	Kantichandra Mukhopadhyay	1872

Compiled from the following sources:

- i) Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television Associates, 1989.
- ii) Bhattacharya, S. K. "Shakespeare and Bengali Theatre". *Indian Literature* 7.1 (1964).

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Hindi

S. No.	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published
1.	<i>Love's Labour Lost</i>	<i>Nishphal Prem (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part VI</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
2.	<i>Love's Labour Lost</i>	<i>Nishphal Prem</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
3.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhramjhalak</i>	Munshi Ratnachanda Sahib	1882
4.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Adbhut Bhram Jaal (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
5.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhool Bhulaiyan (story) in Saraswati</i>	—	1906
6.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhram Jaal (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
7.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhool Bhulaiyan (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part III</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
8.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhul-Bhulaiyaan</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
9.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Gorakhdhandha</i>	B. Sinha	1917
10.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Gorakhdhandha</i>	Ek Natak Premi	1917
11.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhul-Bhulaiyaan</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
12.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhul Chuk Maaf (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharam Pal Shastri	1960
13.	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	<i>Verona Nagar ke Do Sajjan (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
14.	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	<i>Varona ke Sajjan Yugal (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
15.	<i>The Two Gentlemen of Verona</i>	<i>Verona Nagar ke Do Bhadra Purush (story) in Hindi Shakespeare,</i>	<i>Ganga Prasad</i>	1914

		<i>Part III</i>		
16.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Greeshma Ritu ki Raat ka Ek Swapna (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
17.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Garmion ki Raat ka Supna (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
18.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Greeshma Raat ke Swapna (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1913
19.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Ek Sapna</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1958
20.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice Nagar ka Vyapari</i>	Munshi Ratanchand Sahib	1879
21.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Durlabh Bandhu</i>	Harishchandra	1881
22.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Saudagar</i>	Baleshwar Prasad	1885
23.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Saudagar</i>	Thakur Dayal Singh	1885
24.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ke Vyapari ka Vratant (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
25.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Banka</i>	Gokul Chand Sharma	1888
26.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice Nagar ka Vyapari</i>	Arya	1888
27.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Vyapari</i>	Gopinath Purohit	1896
28.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Banka</i>	Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay 'Hariaudh'	1900
29.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Vyapari</i>	Ek Hindi Premi	1904
30.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Ek Aurat ki Vakalat</i>	Shrikrishna Hasrat	1908
31.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Vyapari (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Pandit Shivprasad Dubey	1912
32.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Saudagar</i>	Jaivijay	1912

	<i>Venice</i>	<i>(story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Narain Singh Sharma	
33.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Vyapari (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1912
34.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Dil Farosh</i>	Munshi Mehdi Hasan	1918
35.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Vyapari (story) in Shakespeare ke Natak ki Kahaniyan</i>	Usha Khanna	1950
36.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Saudagar</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
37.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice Nagar ka Vyapari (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharam Pal Shastri	1960
38.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Karkash Stri ko Sudharne ki Vidhi (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
39.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Karkash Vashikaran</i>	Ishwar Chand Kundu	1911
40.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Karkash ka Seedha Karna (story) in Shakespeare Katha- gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
41.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Kutil Stree ko Vash mein Karna (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
42.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Parivartan</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
43.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Karkash ka Sudhar</i>	Dharam Pal Shastri	1960
44.	<i>The Merry Wives of Windsor</i>	<i>Windsor ki Hansmukh Striyan (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
45.	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>Vyarthi Hora Machana Tha (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
46.	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>Man Mohan ka Jal</i>	Lala Sitaram	1912
47.	<i>Much Ado About</i>	<i>Baat na Kuchh</i>	Jaivijay	1912

	<i>Nothing</i>	<i>Adambar Bhari (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Narain Singh	
48.	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>Baat ka Batangarh (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part V</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
49.	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	<i>Til ka Taarh</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
50.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Jaisa Tumhe Pasand Aave Karo (story) in Shakespeare ke Natakon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
51.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Manbhavan</i>	Gopinath Prohit	1887
52.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Jaisi Jiski Bhavana (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
53.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Krishna Kamini</i>	Seth Govind Das	1912
54.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Apani Apani Ruchi</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
55.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Tumhari Ichha (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
56.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Jaisi Aapki Ichha (story) in Shakespeare ke Natakon ki Kahaniyan</i>	Usha Khanna	1950
57.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Jaisa Tum Chaho</i>	Rangey Raghav	1957
58.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Mano na Mano (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharam Pal Shastri	1960
59.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Do Bhin Bhai ke Rup Rang Mein Adbhut Prakar se Bhram Parh Jana (stiry) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natakon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
60.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Bhool Bhulaiyan</i>	Munshi Mehdi Hasan	1905
61.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Dwadashvin Ratri (story) Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
62.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Barehvin Ratri (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part IV</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914

63.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Barehvin Raat</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
64.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Barehvin Raat</i>	Dharm Pal Shastri	1960
65.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Barehvin Raat</i>	Kuldip Kapur	1961
66.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Barehvin Raat</i>	Shyam Sunder Suman	1962
67.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Ant mein Jo Ho So Thik Hai (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
68.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Ant Bhale ka Bhala (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
69.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Vahi Bhala Jiska Ant Bhala (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part V</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
70.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Jaise ko Taisa (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
71.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Jaise ko Taisa (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
72.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Jaise ko Taisa (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part IV</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
73.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Bagula Bhagat</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
74.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Raja Pericles ka Vratant (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
75.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Pericles (story) in Saraswati</i>	Radhakrishna Das	1900
76.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Bhagya ka Pher ya Pyare Krishna ki Kahani</i>	Purushottam Das Tandon	—
77.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Honhar</i>	Seth Govind Das	1912
78.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Pericles (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912

79.	<i>Pericles</i>	<i>Pericles (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
80.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Raja Cymbeline ka Vratant (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
81.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Cymbeline (story) in Saraswati</i>	Radhakrishna Das	1900
82.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Cymbeline (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
83.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Cymbeline (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1913
84.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Sharad Ritu ki Kahani</i>	Gokul Chand Sharma	1881
85.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Sharad Ritu ki Kahani (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
86.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Vyarth Sandesh</i>	Seth Govind Das	1912
87.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Jadon ki Kahani (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
88.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Sharad Ritu ki Kahani (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
89.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Prachand Pawan (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natakon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
90.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan</i>	Jagannath Prasad Chaturvedi	1897
91.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Tempest</i>	Vindabanlal Varma	1908
92.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
93.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Shiv Prasad Dubey	1912

94.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan (story) Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1913
95.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Jangal Mei Mangal</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
96.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
97.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Toofan (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharm Pal Shastri	1960
98.	<i>King John</i>	<i>Inglistan ka Raja John (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part III</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
99.	<i>King John</i>	<i>Saide-Havas</i>	Avdeshpathi Varma	1923
100.	<i>Richard II</i>	<i>Dwitiya Richard (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part III</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
101.	<i>Richard II</i>	<i>Raja Richard Dwitiya</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
102.	<i>Henry IV, Part I</i>	<i>Chaturth Henry, Pratham Bhag (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
103.	<i>Henry IV, Part II</i>	<i>Chaturth Henry, Dwitiya Bhag (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
104.	<i>Henry V</i>	<i>Pancham Henry (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
105.	<i>Henry V</i>	<i>Raja Henry Pancham</i>	Lala Sitaram	1916
106.	<i>Henry VI, Part I</i>	<i>Chhata Henry, Pahla Bhag (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
107.	<i>Henry VI, Part II</i>	<i>Chhata Henry, Doosra Bhag (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
108.	<i>Henry VI, Part III</i>	<i>Chhata Henry, Tisra Bhag (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
109.	<i>Richard III</i>	<i>Tritiya Richard (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
110.	<i>Henry VIII</i>	<i>Athwan Henry (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
111.	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	<i>Titus Andronicus (story) in Hindi Shakespeare</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
112.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo aur Juliet-Do Mitra (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natak ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
113.	<i>Romeo and</i>	<i>Premlila</i>	Gopinath	1896

	<i>Juliet</i>		Purohit	
114.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	Chaturbhuj Auditya	1911
115.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Surendra Sundari</i>	Seth Govind Das	1912
116.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Shiv Prasad Dubey	1912
117.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
118.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet</i>	Surya Prasad Mishra	—
119.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
120.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Prem Kasauti</i>	Lala Sitaram	1931
121.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
122.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet</i>	Shyam Sunder Suman	1961
123.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1913
124.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
125.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
126.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet – Denmark ka Rajkumar (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
127.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Shiv Prasad Dubey	1912
128.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
129.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Jayant</i>	Ganpati Krishna Gurjar	1912
130.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part IV</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
131.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet ka Hindi Anuvad</i>	Nanak Chand Bhanot	—
132.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Denmark ka Rajakumar</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915

		<i>Hamlet</i>		
133.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet (story) in Shakespeare ke Natakon ki Kahaniyan</i>	Usha Khanna	1950
134.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
135.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharm Pal Shastri	1960
136.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Harivanshrai Bachchan	1969
137.	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>	<i>Troilus aur Cressida (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part VI</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
138.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello – Kapat ke Bure Parinam (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
139.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Gadadhar Sinha	1894
140.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Gopal Goil	1911
141.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello (Story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narayan Singh Sharma	1912
142.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part III</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
143.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
144.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Govindprasad Ghidyal	1916
145.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Uthello</i>	Usha Khanna	1950
146.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Vishnu Sharma	—
147.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
148.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Harivanshrai Bachchan	1959
149.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Vidyarthi Diwakar Prasad	1962
150.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Raja Lear ka Vratanta (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
151.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Snehariksha</i>	Badrinarain	1903
152.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Badshah Lear</i>	Chaturbhuj	1911

			Audichya	
153.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Badshah Lear (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narain Singh Sharma	1912
154.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Raja Lear (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Shiv Prasad Dubey	1912
155.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Raja Lear</i>	Lala Sitaram	1915
156.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Lear (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part I</i>	Ganga Prasad	1922
157.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Badshah Lear (story) in Shakespeare ke Natakon ki Kahaniyan</i>	Usha Khanna	1950
158.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Samrat Lear</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
159.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Raja Lear (story) in Shakespeare ki kahaniyan</i>	Dharma Pal Shastri	1960
160.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>King Lear</i>	Harivanshrai Bachchan	1972
161.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth – Kapati Badhik (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part II</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1884
162.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Sahsendra Sahas</i>	M. P. Chaudhari	1893
163.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth (story) in Shakespeare Granthavali</i>	Shiva Prasad Dubey	1912
164.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	Jaivijay Narayan Singh Sharma	1912
165.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part II</i>	Ganga Prasad	1913
166.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth ka Bhashanuvad</i>	Lala Sitaram	1926
167.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Vishnu Sharma	—
168.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Rangeya Raghav	1957
169.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Harivanshrai Bachchan	1957
170.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharam Pal Shastri	1960

171.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Barnam Van</i>	Raghuveer Sahay	1980
172.	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Antony aur Cleopatra (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part V</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
173.	<i>Coriolanus</i>	<i>Coriolanus (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part VI</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
174.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	<i>Athens Nagar ke Timon Nami Amir ka Vratanta (story) in Shakespeare ke Manohar Natkon ke Ashaya ke Anuvad, Part I</i>	Kashinath Khattri	1882
175.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	<i>Athens ka Pradhan Timon (story) in Shakespeare Katha-gatha</i>	J. N. Singh Sharma	1912
176.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	<i>Athens ka Timon (story) in Hindi Shakespeare, Part III</i>	Ganga Prasad	1914
177.	<i>Timon of Athens</i>	<i>Athens ka Raja Timon (story) in Shakespeare ki Kahaniyan</i>	Dharma Pal Shastri	1960

Compiled from the following sources:

- i) Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television Associates, 1989.
- ii) Mishra, Jagdish Prasad. *Shakespeare's Impact on Hindi Literature*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970.
- iii) Yajnik, R.K. *The Indian Theatre: Its Origins and its Later Developments Under European Influence*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933.
- iv) Trivedi, H. K. "Hindi Translations of Shakespeare". *Shakespeare Translation* 5 (1978).

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Urdu and Gujarati

S. No.	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published
1.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Dilpazir</i>	Charandas Bakshi	1901
2.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Kannan Kallol (GU)</i>	Apabhai Patel	—
3.	<i>As You Like It</i>	<i>Bage Behast (GU)</i>	K.N.Kabraji	—
4.	<i>Love's Labour Lost</i>	<i>Yaaron ki Mehnat Barbad</i>	Mohammad Sulaiman	1899
5.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Jodiya Bhaiyo (GU)</i>	N.R.Ranina	1865
6.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhram Jhalak</i>	Munshi Imdad Ali	1879
7.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Ram Ratna (GU)</i>	N.K.Vaidya	1903
8.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhul-Bhulaiyan</i>	Munshi Mehdi Hasan	1905
9.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Gorakhdhandha</i>	Narain Prasad 'Betab'	1912
10.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Bhul-Bhulaiyan</i>	Abdul karim	1913
11.	<i>The Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Parekha (GU)</i>	Maganlal Harilal	—
12.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Strinyaykala (GU)</i>	Narsidas Vanamalidas	1893
13.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Chand Shah-e-Sudkhor</i>	—	1895
14.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice ka Saudagar</i>	Ashiq Hussain	1898
15.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Tajir-e-Venice</i>	Muhammad Fateh Ali Nadhr	1884
16.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Dil Farosh</i>	Agha Hashr Kashmiri	1900
17.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Jagat Simha (GU)</i>	—	1904
18.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Vibudh Vijay (GU)</i>	—	—
19.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice no Veparai (GU)</i>	Nareabhesankara P. Dave	1911
20.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venice no Veparai (GU)</i>	Manacksha Kekobad	1920
21.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Nathari Firangiz Thekani Aavi (GU)</i>	Dinsha A. Tal Yarkhan	1852
22.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Karkash par Kaabu (GU)</i>	N.M.Shukla	1912
23.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Husnara (with scenes from</i>	—	1900

		<i>Measure for Measure)</i>		
24.	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>	<i>Vaidya Kanya (GU)</i>	Narayan Hemchandra	1895
25.	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	<i>Shaheede Naaz</i>	Agha Hashr Kashmiri	1905
26.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Ramanasundari (GU)</i>	G.K.Delvadkar	1895
27.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Zulme narava</i>	—	1899
28.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Mitha Zahar</i>	Munshi Mustafa Saiyadalli	1900
29.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Champaraja Hando (GU)</i>	V.A.Oza	1900
30.	<i>Cymbeline</i>	<i>Cymbeline</i>	M. Abdul Aziz	1902
31.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Chandrasahsa (GU)</i>	V.A.Oza	1894
32.	<i>Winter's Tale</i>	<i>Mureede Shak</i>	Munshi Hasan	1898
33.	<i>King John</i>	<i>Said-e-havas</i>	Munshi Jalal	—
34.	<i>Richard III</i>	<i>Saide Havas</i>	Agha Hashr Kashmiri	1906
35.	<i>Titus Andronicus</i>	<i>Junun-e-vafa</i>	A.B.Latif Sad	1910
36.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo and Juliet (GU)</i>	Dosabhai Randeria	1876
37.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Bazm-e-fani</i>	Mehar Hasan	1897
38.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Gulnar Faroz</i>	Muhammad Shah	1900
39.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Ishq-e-Firoz Gulnarsiyar</i>	Nazir Beg	1905
40.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Gulzar-e-Firoz</i>	J.L.Seth	1908
41.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Juliet</i>	Aziz Ahmed	—
42.	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>	<i>Romeo Ane Juliet (GU)</i>	Kalyanray Desai	1913
43.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Khun-e-nahaq</i>	Munshi Mehdi Hasan	1898
44.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Khun-e-nahaq</i>	Munshi Arzu Sahib	—
45.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	Muhammad Afza Khan	1902
46.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Wagi'Ah-e-Jahangir-e-Nshd</i>	Nazir Beg	1904
47.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Denmark ka Shehzadah</i>	Inayatullah Dehlvi	—
48.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Denmark-no Rajkumar (GU)</i>	Nareabhesankara P. Dave	1917
49.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Malavaketu (GU)</i>	N.V.Thakur	—
50.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth (GU)</i>	Jaswant Thakur	—
51.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Malavaketu Mayaprabhav(GU)</i>	Narayan Visnaji Thakur	—
52.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Kashiraj na Karasthan (GU)</i>	N.R.Randeria	1866

53.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Shaheed-e-vafa</i>	Munshi Mehdi Hasan	1898
54.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Saubhagya Sundari (GU)</i>	—	1903
55.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Venice no Habsi (GU)</i>	N.P.Dave	—
56.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Gopal Goil	1911
57.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Sher-Dil</i>	Najar Dehlvi	1918
58.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Haar-Jeet</i>	Munshi Murad Ali	1905
59.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Safed Khun</i>	Agha Hashr Kashmiri	1906
60.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Mathnavi Shah Lear</i>	Barq Sitapuri	1921
61.	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Kali Nagin</i>	—	1906
62.	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Zan Mureed</i>	—	1909
63.	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>	<i>Antuni aur Kalabatrah</i>	Inayatullah Dehlvi	—

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- i) Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television Associates, 1989.
- ii) Mishra, Jagdish Prasad. *Shakespeare's Impact on Hindi Literature*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970.
- iii) Yajnik, R. K. *The Indian Theatre: Its Origins and its Later Developments Under European Influence*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933.
- iv) Mehta, C. C. "Shakespeare and Gujarati Stage", *Indian Literature* 7.1 (1964).

Shakespeare Translations & Adaptations in Malayalam

S. No.	Title	Translator's Title	Translator	Published/ Performed
1.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet Natakam</i>	Kodgallur K. Tampuranun	1897
2.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	A. Govinda Pillai	1902
3.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	M. K. Kuriyan	1923
4.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	A. J. Varky	1923
5.	<i>Hamlet</i>	<i>Hamlet</i>	P. S. Venkatesvaran	1955
6.	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	P. S. Nair	1953
7.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Brittenile Rajavu Lear</i>	A. Govinda Pillai	1897
8.	<i>King Lear</i>	<i>Lear Rajavu/Lear Natakam</i>	K. M. Panikkar	1959
9.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Ramakrishna Pillai	1962
10.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Madhava Varier, Matasseri	1962
11.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Chandradasan	
12.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	M. G. Jyotish	2009
13.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Almarattam</i>	Oomman Philipose	1866
14.	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	<i>Vibhrama Vihasam</i>	Paramu Pillai, K	1906
15.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venicile Vyapari</i>	A Govinda Pillai	1902
16.	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	<i>Venicile Vyapari</i>	P. S. Venkitesavarana	1955
17.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Vasantikasvapnam</i>	C. Krishna Wariyar	1907
18.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Vichitravipinam</i>	Narayan Pillai, P. K.	1938
19.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Madhya Grishmakala Ratriyile Swapnam</i>	Madhava Varier, Matasseri	1966
20.	<i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	<i>Oru Swapnam</i>	Paramu Pillai, K.	
21.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Avivekattilundaya Appattu</i>	Pappu Pillai, K.	1903

22.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Uddalacharitam</i>	Anujan Raja,P.C.	1922
23.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Duranat Dussanka</i>	Kainkkara M. Kumara Pillai	1931
24.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Prema Homam</i>	M. R. Velu Pillai Shastri	1932
25.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	M. R. Nair	1951
26.	<i>Othello</i>	<i>Othello</i>	Parmeswaran Pillai, V. N.	1966
27.	<i>Richard II</i>	<i>Richard Simham</i>	Varavur Narayan Menon	1938
28.	<i>The Taming of the Shrew</i>	<i>Kalahinidamanakam</i>	Kantattil Varghese Mapila	1893
29.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Dvadasanisa Allenkil</i>	Koyathu Koccunni Menon	1954
30.	<i>Twelfth Night</i>	<i>Manampole Mangalyam</i>	C. P. Thomas	1919
31.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Kodumkattu</i>	K. N. Panikkar	2000
32.	<i>The Tempest</i>	<i>Chathankattu</i>	Chandradasan	1995
33.	<i>Macbeth</i>	<i>Macbeth</i>	Chandradasan	2002

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- i) Paul, Sunita, ed. *A Tribute to Shakespeare*. New Delhi: Theatre and Television Associates, 1989.
- ii) *Indian Literature* 7.1 (1964).
- iii) Nair, Jayasree Ramakrishnan. "Towards a Malayalee Shakespeare: The Search for an Ideal Form of Expression". *Shakespeare in Indian Languages*. Ed. D. A. Shankar. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1999.