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_personailities1.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 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):

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

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 nataks*. Natyakala Company, Mahalakshmiprasada 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 Bhave. 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 Ichalkaranjikar Natak Mandali.

Ichalkaranjikar 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 Ichalkaranjikar Natak Mandali (1880). Ichalkaranjikar 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 Maharshtra’, 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 Mandal 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. Dhyaneshwar 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. Anandaraao) 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, Basvappasastri 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:

Srikantesh Gowda borrows his structural plan from *A Midsummer Night’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 Basvappasastri 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. Srikanth, 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 Chandrashekar 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 *Koollapramanam* (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 natak. 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 *Sadaram* (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 Warrier’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,* Warrier 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 (Demtrius), 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). Jyotish 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 Bhullaiyan (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 giraha 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 na 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 Bhullaiyan* (*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 Devanagri 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 Shakspeare 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 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.
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<td>L. M. Pylee as Macbeth</td>
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<td>1947</td>
<td>Macbeth</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>The Merchant of Venice</td>
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<td>1952</td>
<td>King Lear</td>
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<td>Josy Joseph as Hamlet, Lakshmi Prasad as Gertrude</td>
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