

## Translation History as Alternative Cultural History: a Case Study of Shakespeare's Plays in Gujarati

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### Abstract

Gujarat is widely known to the world for being a land of entrepreneurs and for its economic progress and prosperity. The mainstream history books highlight these aspects, along with focusing on political events. However, mainstream history books of Gujarat do not talk about the vibrant cultural and intellectual life of 19th and 20th century Gujarati society. They do not take into account art, literature and culture which flourished equally during that time. Since mainstream history books fall short of highlighting these aspects, we will need to adopt alternative methods. Translation history is one of them as translation is an "intercultural activity" that entails negotiation between at least two cultures. The paper attempts to trace the cultural history of 19th and 20th century Gujarat by tracing the translation history of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati which took place from 1874 to 1992. It shows how Gujarati society had the sensibility to engage with Shakespeare through translation and other endeavours. It concludes by asserting that translation history of this kind can shed new light on the cultural and intellectual traditions of Gujarati society..

**Keywords:** Translation history, alternative cultural history, Shakespeare, colonial encounter, patronage

### 1. Introduction

In most of the cases the history which is being written or discussed in the academia is considered as the mainstream history, which mainly highlights the political events of a particular period. The history of Gujarat is no different in this regard. For instance, M.S. Commissariat's *History of Gujarat* in three volumes, published in the mid twentieth century, talks about the period from the fourteenth to mid eighteenth centuries and focuses on describing political developments mainly. The nine-volumes of *Gujaratno Rajkiya Ane Sanskrutik Itihas* (The Political and Cultural History of Gujarat), published between 1972 and 1987, cover the period from the earliest times to the formation of Gujarat state. However, these volumes devote only a chapter or two to the social and cultural life of those times. There is little to read about aspects such as art, literature, and culture in these history books. While Gujarat is renowned for being prosperous and economically progressive, its rich cultural history is yet to be fully appreciated by the world. In order to document it, merely taking recourse to mainstream history books would not suffice. Therefore, we will need to adopt alternative methods, and translation history is one of them. As Anthony Pym rightly said that the history of translation is "an important intercultural activity about which there is still much to learn" (221) and that, "Translators are not *within* a culture; they always act *on the boundaries* of cultures; their work is thus always *intercultural...*" (229). In the introduction to *Post-Colonial Translation*, Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi state that translation "is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer." (02) The act of translation involves cultural exchange between at least two cultures which makes it a rich site to discover those aspects of culture which have not been explored yet. The case study considered herein pertains to a set of translations of Shakespeare's plays undertaken by various translators in Gujarat over a span of more than a century, from 1874-1992. This paper argues that the translation history of

these translations can serve as a window through which we can discover about the cultural aspects of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat. By analysing the texts under consideration, an alternative cultural history of the then Gujarat can be reconstructed.

## 2. Rationale for Tracing Cultural History of Gujarat

Gujarat is better known to the world as a society comprising of entrepreneurs and businessmen. Compared to states like West Bengal, whose art and cultural leanings define their identity to the world, Gujarat's identity is that of a business-driven state. While that perception is true, there is another dimension to it that needs to be brought to the fore. Gujarat has had an equally vibrant intellectual history; there were different scholars who read, translated, critiqued and discoursed upon the timeless works of Shakespeare.

In 2017, National Translation Mission published a volume titled *History of Translation in India*. It contains chapters on major modern Indian languages depicting the translations that occurred in these languages. It is pertinent to point out that the chapter on Gujarati language translations is evidently missing from the volume. The renowned translator and scholar Rita Kothari quotes the famous linguist Ganesh N. Devy who observes that 'the Gujaratis are, by and large, indifferent to translation. Gujarat has never been dominated emotionally by the West.' (Kothari 1999, p. 164). However, this observation is far different from the reality. Gujarat had the sensibility to read and engage with the literature of the world including Shakespeare through translations and other endeavours. This paper is an effort to put it in perspective and understand the cultural history through translation history.

## 3. Legacy of engagement with Shakespeare

Indian subcontinent first encountered Shakespeare due to colonialism. He was a revered figure in Western literature due to his exemplary literary and artistic grandeur. A society that reads and engages with him is considered to be intellectually richer. In this sense, it is necessary to understand that apart from being a community inclined towards business, people in Gujarat also read and relished Shakespeare. Gujarat's tryst with Shakespeare began in the year 1852, when an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* titled as *Nathari Firangiz Thekane Aavi* in Gujarati was performed by a Parsi theatre group at Andrews Library in Surat in 1852 (Mehta 1964). Incidentally, this was the first ever adaptation of a Shakespearean play in any modern Indian language. Every major writer, poet, scholar, and critic in Gujarat read and commented on Shakespeare in different ways. Keshav Harshad Dhruv, a renowned Sanskrit scholar, conceptualised *Vanveli* metre which could lend itself to the translations of Shakespeare. It was a significant contribution because translating Shakespeare's blank verse in Gujarati was deemed difficult before that. The eminent Gujarati critic R.V. Pathak had translated a scene from the play *Romeo and Juliet* incorporating *Vanveli* metre, which inspired Jaswant Thakar to render a full-fledged translation of *Macbeth* using the same metre. Umashankar Joshi was one of the most influential scholars in terms of his contribution towards facilitating Shakespeare in Gujarati. He had conceptualized a series of 15 translations under *Kavita Sangam: Nisheeth Puraskar Granth Mala - 22* published by Gangotri Trust established by Joshi himself. This project was initiated with the purpose of introducing literature and poetry from other languages into Gujarati, including the works of Shakespeare. Joshi reached out to scholars such as Mansukhlal Jhaveri and Nalin Raval, and requested them to translate *Othello*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest* for the same. He was the editor of a Gujarati literary magazine named *Sanskriti*, and at the time of 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, Joshi decided to dedicate the publications of all issues of *Sanskriti* of an entire year to Shakespeare. Santprasad Bhatt, another Shakespearean scholar and Joshi's friend, contributed articles on Shakespeare for each issue, starting from January 1964 until April 1965. These articles talk about not only Shakespeare's life and works, but also carry salient translations of some lines and titles of Shakespeare's plays as well as sonnets. Since Shakespeare was born in the month of April, Joshi decided to prepare a special issue on Shakespeare in April issue of *Sanskriti* in 1964. The index of the issue carried a poem written by Joshi followed by excerpts of translations by the well-known scholars such as Mansukhlal Jhaveri, Hansa Mehta, etc. It also carried scholarly articles by Santprasad Bhatt, C. C. Mehta, Jayant Pathak and Niranjan Bhagat etc. It also had a translation of Hamlet's famous soliloquy "To be or not to be, that is the question" by Umashankar Joshi himself. On the occasion of 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth, C. C. Mehta conceptualized *Drashyavali*, an anthology of scenes translated from Shakespeare's plays to be performed in schools. It was an effort to pay tribute to Shakespeare through performance on stage. For that volume, he contributed a translation of a scene from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These instances are a testimony to the fact that scholars, poets, critics, writers made concentrated efforts to ensure that Gujarati readership was introduced to Shakespeare in myriad ways, including translation. They were not only cognizant about Shakespeare's place in world literature but were celebrating his works by translating, critiquing, performing and discoursing on them.

#### 4. Understanding the 19th and 20th century Cultural History through Translation History

Translations proper of Shakespeare's plays began to appear from 1874, the last quarter of the 19th century and continued till the end of the 20th century. Here is the translator-wise chronology of Gujarati translations of Shakespeare's plays:

Sr. No	Title	Year of Publication	Translator's Name
1	<i>Karunaras Julius Caesar Natak</i>	1874	Bhanji Gokul Parekh
2	<i>Othello</i>	1898	Narbeshankar Pranjivan Dave / <i>Kathiawadi</i>
	<i>Julius Caesar</i>	1898	
	<i>Measure for Measure</i>	1905	
	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1911	
	<i>Hamlet</i>	1917	
3	<i>Hamlet</i>	1942	Hansa Mehta
	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1944	
4	<i>Othello</i>	1963	Jayant Patel
	<i>Macbeth</i>	1963	
	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1964	
	<i>As You Like It</i>	1964	
5	<i>Macbeth</i>	1964	Jashwant Thakar
	<i>Richard III</i>	1969	
6	<i>Hamlet</i>	1967	Mansukhlal Jhaveri
	<i>Othello</i>	1978	
	<i>King Lear</i>	1983	
7	<i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	1975	Krushnashankar Ambashankar Vyas
8	<i>Shakespeare's 159 sonnets</i>	1977	Mahmad Rupani
	<i>As You Like It</i>	1979	
9	<i>The Tempest</i>	1992	Nalin Rawal

Bhanji Gokul Parekh was the first ever translator who provided a full-fledged translation of *Julius Caesar* in Gujarati in the year 1874. The preface states that while he was in Rajkot for a span of 20 days, he was wondering how he could spend his time constructively; that is how the translation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* came into existence. He even convened a meeting of like-minded scholars at Rajkot and discussed the translation with them. Some complained that the language was highly Sanskritised, to which he responded in the preface stating that Gujarati is derived from Sanskrit only so there is not harm in it. This process of translation would have not only entailed a deep understanding of the nuances of translation but also a sound knowledge of both languages, especially that of Shakespeare. This also speaks volumes about the culturally and intellectually rich society that could come together and discuss Shakespeare in a constructive way.

This fact is also evidenced by the case of the second translator, Narbeshankar Pranjivan Dave, who translated not one but five of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati at the behest of the then Maharaja of the Princely State of Bhavnagar, HH Bhavsinhji Gohil. He translated *Othello* and *Julius Caesar* both in the same year (1898), *Measure for Measure* (1905), *The Merchant of Venice* (1911) and lastly *Hamlet* (1917) using the technique of literal translation i.e. *bhashantar*. The project was called *Shakespeare Mala* series. He not only translated the said plays but also provided elaborate introduction to each of his translation comprising of plot construction, theme, character analysis and even the salient views of various critics on Shakespeare. This implies that he was not merely translating into Gujarati, but also trying to acquaint the readers with the phenomenon that Shakespeare is. In his preface to the translation of *Measure for Measure* (04), he expresses his gratitude towards the *diwan* (the then Prime Minister of the State) Prabhashankar Pattani who not only reviewed the translations but also helped Dave understand the dramaturgy of Shakespeare's plays. One might wonder how did the Maharaja or the Prime Minister know about Shakespeare and confer on the topic of getting his plays translated. Bhavnagar was a State that was headed by Kings who studied at Rajkumar College situated at Rajkot,

an institution for educating and training Chiefs and Princes of various Princely States established by the British. When one reads Chester Macnaghten's book titled *Common Thoughts on Serious Subjects*, a compilation of lectures he delivered on Sundays, it is easy to discern that the pupils must have been introduced to Shakespeare in their syllabus. Chester Macnaghten was the first Principal of Rajkumar College and H.H. Maharaja Sir Takhtsinhji Gohil, father of H.H. Maharaja Sir Bhavsinhji Gohil, was the first pupil of Rajkumar College. The introduction of the book distinctly states that Mr Macnaghten introduced the students to "some of the best things in English literature" (Macnaghten 23). Therefore, H.H. Maharaja Sir Takhtsinhji and H.H. Maharaja Sir Bhavsinhji must have been acquainted with Shakespeare's works which explains their choice of texts for the purpose of translation. Additionally, it can be inferred that H.H. Maharaja Sir Takhtsinhji and H.H. Maharaja Sir Bhavsinhji were ardent admirers of art and especially theatre performances, which is explained by the fact that so many theatre groups visited Bhavnagar on various occasions (Patel 1931). A theatre group named Arya Subodh used to visit Bhavnagar for performances of various plays including those by Shakespeare. Before joining the state, Pattani worked at Rajkumar College, Rajkot, wherein he was designated as the tutor of HH Sir Takhtsinhji Gohil. It can be inferred that he must have taught Western literature at the college which explains his keen interest and understanding of Shakespeare's plays. The state of Bhavnagar also had a long standing tradition of patronising and encouraging various artists, writers, poets regardless of their religious or educational background (Dahyaram 1933). Apart from 'Shakespeare Series', a series titled *Bhavsinhji Vividh Gyan Granth Mala*, was separately published which contained titles such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Comparative Study of Kalidas and Shakespeare* written by Narayan Hemchandra. The translation project of Dave was not a stray incident but a part of the several endeavours undertaken by the Princely State to promote art and literature. The British deemed the 19<sup>th</sup> century Princely State of Bhavnagar as a first-class state of Kathiawad Agency. Every British official who worked in Kathiawad or Bombay Presidency such as Colonel Lang, Watson, Barton, etc. praised Bhavnagar for the progressive governance and administration that was committed to reform. This Princely State also had a rich art and cultural history which has not been documented, or been recognised largely. It was a state ruled by Kings who were also inclined towards art, culture, literature and not just their administrative duties. It is only when we trace the history of translations that took place in Bhavnagar that we begin to fully appreciate the cultural legacy of the Princely State of Bhavnagar.

Another translator who undertook the task of rendering Shakespeare into Gujarati was Hansa Mehta, the granddaughter of Nandshankar Mehta who wrote the first ever novel in Gujarati, *Karan Ghelo: Gujarat's Last Rajput King*. She was a reformist, social activist, educator, independence activist, feminist and writer from Gujarat who translated *Hamlet* (1942) and *The Merchant of Venice* (1944) in Gujarati language. Unlike her predecessors, she translated using *Anushtup* metre, which is found in both Vedic and Classical Sanskrit poetry (Mehta 1942). Since Shakespeare wrote his plays in blank verse, translators had to improvise while rendering him in Gujarati as Gujarati language did not have an equivalent of blank verse. Before her translations came into existence, it was believed that blank verse was almost impossible to render in Gujarati; hence her translations were revolutionary in this regard. Hansa Mehta mentions in her preface to the translation of *Hamlet* that she undertook this translation after considering the remarks of eminent Gujarati critics B.K. Thakore and R.V. Pathak who lamented that none of the Gujarati writers and poets tried to usher Shakespeare in Gujarati. (Mehta 1942) As mentioned in the previous section, R.V. Pathak had translated a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* using *Vanveli* metre. It might be pertinent to point out that she was the only woman translator who rendered Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati. It also shows that the translators had started experimenting with the process of translation and were finding new avenues to indianise Shakespeare. She also translated into Gujarati eight cantos of Valmiki's *Ramayana*, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and *Moilerena be Natako (Tortuffe and Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, two of Moliere's plays in French) . As compared to Dave, who was translating for the first time, Hansa Mehta was a seasoned translator who was adept at not only English and Gujarati, but also Sanskrit and French.

After a lull of almost 19 years, Jayant Patel, a lecturer at MTB Arts College, Surat, translated 4 of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati; *Othello* and *Macbeth* in the year 1963, *As You Like it* and *The Merchant of Venice* in 1964. He mentions in an email interview that he translated these texts into Gujarati for his B.A and M.A. students who had them as a part of their syllabus at the college. Since his aim was to enable his students who did not understand English to get better acquainted with the works of Shakespeare, he rendered them in prose. This is a unique instance in the translation history of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati since the aim of translating was only to ensure that the students could read and understand Shakespeare better.

The fifth translator to translate Shakespeare was Jashwant Thakar, an eminent theatre personality who began his theatrical career in the year 1943. He had written poems and translated as well as adapted English plays into Gujarati, which includes two plays of William Shakespeare, *Macbeth* and *Richard III*. In the preface to his translation of *Macbeth* he mentions about his conversation with a Professor named H.L. Tengshey wherein Thakar asked what they could do for the 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Shakespeare (Thakar 1964). Mr. Tengshey

suggested that the play *Macbeth* could be translated in a different way from what it has been done so far and that's when Jaswant Thakar decided that he would translate it using a metre named *Vanveli*. He states how *Vanveli* does justice to prose and poetry both which is why it is an apt metre for translation (Thakar 1964). His intent was to provide an adaptation which was easy to read and could be performed on stage (Thakar 1964). Similarly, he had decided to render *Richard III* in Gujarati in the same year, 1964. However, due to other commitments of Thakar, the translation kept getting delayed. In his preface to the translation of *Richard III* he expresses his gratitude towards his friend and Shakespearean scholar, Santprasad Bhatt, who always reminded him that he should complete the translation, whenever they met. He states in the preface of his translation that he was inspired to translate *Richard III* after the translation of *Macbeth* was well-received in Shakespeare Drama Festival. Thakar was one of the many scholars who, through his translations, made an effort in his own way to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Shakespeare.

Mansukhlal Jhaveri was a Gujarati language poet, critic, translator, and literary historian of the Gandhian era. He was immensely interested in studying eastern and western concepts of literary criticism. He contributed to Gujarati literature in salient ways but his contribution to the translation history of Gujarat was in terms of the three translations he did of Shakespeare's plays namely *Hamlet* (1967), *Othello* (1978) and *King Lear* (1983). For the translation of *Hamlet*, there isn't an immediate explanation as to why he undertook it. It might be out of the sheer desire to introduce English literature to Gujarati readership in a particular form. Apart from having an understanding of both languages and the process of translation, Jhaveri was also well-read in criticism on Shakespeare. The introduction to the translation of *Hamlet* consists of an excerpt on Shakespeare's life and a brief outline of the plot by Professor John Dover Wilson CH, who was a scholar of Renaissance drama, focusing particularly on the work of William Shakespeare. His second translation, *Othello's* Gujarati translation carries a preface by Umashankar Joshi, the renowned poet, critic and translator wherein he explains why he asked Jhaveri to translate this play (Jhaveri 1978). Joshi had conceptualized a series of 15 translations under *Kavita Sangam: Nisheeth Puraskar Granth Mala - 22* published by Gangotri Trust which was established by Joshi himself. All other texts were poetry from Indian and other languages translated into Gujarati. Joshi wanted to get Shakespeare's *Othello* translated which is why he requested Jhaveri to translate it. It was followed by a translation of *King Lear* in 1983. Hence, it was Joshi who selected the texts *Othello* and *King Lear* for translation into Gujarati. Jhaveri also acknowledges the same in the preface to his translation of *King Lear* published in 1983. He states:

The true credit for the rare good fortune of rendering the translation of Shakespeare's third tragedy into Gujarati which is credited to me should actually go to Umashankar Joshi. After going through my translation of *Hamlet*, if he had not written to me, "Please translate as many of Shakespeare's plays as possible for you", I would have not translated *Othello* and *King Lear*. (i)

Although Umashankar Joshi did not provide a full-fledged translation of any of Shakespeare's plays, he played a vital role in facilitating the translations in Gujarati. Without his intervention, the translations of *Othello* and *King Lear* would have not seen the light of the day. This is one of the many instances that depict how translators and scholars in 20<sup>th</sup> century Gujarat made efforts to facilitate the translation of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati.

Krushnashankar Ambashankar Vyas translated *The Merchant of Venice* into Gujarati in the year 1975. He was a Dakshina Fellow at Gujarat College, Ahmedabad and retired as a Deputy Collector. Vyas's translation is unique since it falls in neither category of prose nor verse translation. He devised a prose translation that carried the rhythm of verse, i.e. *Gadhyapadhyatmak* form. His decision to invent this form is explained in the preface to the translation. He states:

Hansa Mehta had published a few translations of Shakespeare's plays in verse form using *Anushtup* metre. A few years back, some lecturer working in MTB Arts College, Surat (read: Jayant Patel) had also published a couple of prose translations of Shakespeare's plays. During the same time, Madhusudan Parekh, Lecturer, H.K. Arts College, also published some of Shakespeare's plays in the form of stories. But I am not aware of any translator who rendered Shakespeare's plays using *Gadhyapadhyatmak* translation (prose translation that carries the rhythm similar to verse). As a result, the literarily inclined readership in Gujarat is not able to fully relish Shakespeare's plays. I have felt this for a long time that Gujarati literature would also become richer if we could address this shortcoming. Hence, I translated 'The Merchant of Venice' in *Gadhyapadhyatmak* form in around 1963-64. (1)

This statement can be seen as a statement on translation history itself. He mentions the chronology of previous translations and his strategy and rationale as well behind choosing the form for his translation. Vyas served in the British government before independence and was not a litterateur per se, unlike most other translators of Shakespeare. Although he was barely connected to the scholars, poets, writers and translators in

the literary circles, he was aware of the translations done by his predecessors and decided to translate *The Merchant of Venice* in a form that was never heard of before. Given his background as someone who worked in a completely different field, this feat is nothing short of exceptional.

Mohamed Rupani is a unique instance in translation history of Shakespeare's works since he is the only translator who has translated both- Shakespeare's sonnets and at least one of the plays. He translated Shakespeare's *159 Sonnets* and the play *As You Like It* into Gujarati in the years 1977 and 1979 respectively. His preface to the translation of *As You Like It* does not reveal how he got interested in undertaking the translation. Even his preface to the translation of sonnets does not mention how it all transpired and he chose to render sonnets in Gujarati unlike every other Shakespearean translator who chose to translate his plays. However, his preface to the translation of British poetry in Gujarati titled *Angal-Kavya-Darpan* mentions that it was during his tenure at Baroda College during 1934-38 that his teachers of English introduced him to the world of English poetry. When he was introduced to English poetry of Shelley and Keats, Rupani was mesmerised and decided to try his hand at writing poetry. Fortunately, he was also taught prosody at Baroda College which proved to be helpful. While Rupani was keen on writing poetry in English, it was Prof. Romans who persuaded him to write poetry in Gujarati. Since he loved English poetry immensely, he must have decided to translate and usher them into Gujarati so the readership could also relish the beauty of those poems.

In his preface to the translation of *As You Like It*, he mentions how he tried to introduce a version of blank verse in Gujarati. He also mentions how his predecessors such as Hansa Mehta had tried to use different metres to render Shakespeare in Gujarati, which shows his awareness of the existence of other translations. Rupani's translation of *As You Like It* is important because he improvised blank verse in Gujarati and tried to find a different way to render Shakespeare. The translation of *As You Like It* carries a foreword by Santprasad Bhatt, the renowned Shakespeare scholar. Bhatt also reviewed it and provided his feedback for it. This was a unique experiment carried out by a translator who was not even a part of the litterateurs' community. As a matter of fact, he never lived in India long enough to study how community of Gujarati writers, scholars and translators translated but he kept a track of how translations were attempted. Additionally, he consulted every known scholar of the day and tried to seek guidance from them. Some of the translators who attempted to render Shakespeare before Rupani had mentioned how challenging the process was because Gujarati language did not have an equivalent of blank verse. In that sense, Rupani's translation was a breakthrough and also a symbol of how the approach towards translation had evolved over the years.

The translation of *The Tempest* by Nalin Rawal came into existence due to intervention by a fellow scholar, Umashankar Joshi. He reached out to Nalin Rawal and asked him to translate the play *The Tempest*. In a personal interview with the researcher, Rawal states that Joshi asked him to translate the play after reading his article on Shakespeare in a Gujarati magazine called *Kavita*, edited by the renowned Gujarati poet Harindra Dave. In the preface to the translation, Rawal states that Umashankar Joshi had carried out the "co-reading" of the translation with him. He also mentions that Joshi made several important suggestions for the improvement of the translation. Joshi belonged to the set of scholars who commemorated Shakespeare by providing their guidance and support in ushering the translations in Gujarati.

## 5. Major Translators

The proper study of mankind is man. If this adage is true, it would be apt to study the translators and under what circumstances they carried out their work of translation. Studying them and their times can offer new insights into the cultural life of their times too. The preface and introduction to their translations offer great insights into the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Gujarati society. N.P. Dave dedicates the translations to His Highness Maharaja Sir Bhavsinhji Gohil who extended his support not merely for publication of the translation but also for his education and played a vital role in his employment as a teacher in Samaldas Arts College. He also tells how the then *diwan* (Prime Minister) Prabhashankar Pattani read, reviewed and discussed the translations with him which enriched his understanding of the dramaturgy of Shakespeare's plays. Since his primary needs were taken care of by the support he received from the Princely State, he could focus on his endeavour of negotiating Shakespeare's art without worrying about making ends meet. Dave was a part of this ecosystem which comprised of kings and *diwans* who were not only cognizant about Shakespeare's works but also encouraged a first time translator like him to render the plays in Gujarati and also provided valuable insights on how to improve them. Hansa Mehta states in her preface that she undertook the translation of *Hamlet* after she came across the remarks of B.K. Thakore and R.V. Pathak who lamented how none of the Gujarati poets tried to usher Shakespeare in Gujarati. She even expresses gratitude towards B.K. Thakore who provided her with valuable guidance during the process of translation. He even provides an introduction to her translation wherein he states that this is an experiment by Hansa Mehta since she has chosen *anushtup* metre to render it in Gujarati. He hopes that this will inspire writers to experiment with other forms and translate more plays of Shakespeare in Gujarati. He also provides a brief review of other translations of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati which he has

read so far. Towards the end he tells the readers to compare Mehta's translation of *Hamlet* with the one done by Dave and asserts that they will surely notice the beauty and simplicity of Mehta's work. The role played by B.K. Thakore in facilitating the translations by Hansa Mehta is similar to that of Umashankar Joshi in facilitating the translations of Shakespeare's plays by Mansukhlal Jhaveri and Nalin Raval. Mansukhlal Jhaveri's translation of *Othello* carries a preface by Umashankar Joshi wherein he expresses his gratitude towards Jhaveri for his endeavour of translating the play in Gujarati. Similarly, in the preface to the translation of *King Lear*, Jhaveri gives the credit to Joshi for being instrumental in ushering these two translations in Gujarati. Nalin Raval states in the preface to the translation *The Tempest* that Umashankar Joshi provided guidance to him and also carried out "co-reading" with him.

## 6. Conclusion

Translation plays a crucial role in the formation and development of languages, literatures and cultures. It is through translations that literary and cultural traditions are formed, formulated and evolved. If Shakespeare was not translated into Indian languages to the extent that he was, or if Moliere had not been translated into Indian languages to the extent that he was, then Indian languages would have not taken the trajectory that they have. Hence, it is important to look at translations in terms of how they impact different literary and cultural traditions. Since translation is a process that involves at least two cultures, translation history can facilitate our understanding of cultural practices during the time when the translation took place. The same can be inferred for the translation history of Gujarat in the light of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati. The fact that so many translators and scholars engaged with Shakespeare in various ways shows the social and cultural transformation that the society was undergoing at that time. In a way, it also subverts the notion of the masses about women of 20<sup>th</sup> century society in Gujarat, which is they did not participate in literary activities. Translators such as Hansa Mehta not only rendered Shakespeare in Gujarati, but also experimented with the form and translated using verse form. Translation scholars such as Dhruva went to the extent of devising a metre (*Vanveli*) that could lend itself to the translation of Shakespeare's plays in Gujarati. Umashankar Joshi and Santprasad Bhatt made lasting contribution by being instrumental in facilitating Shakespeare's translations in Gujarati. The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Gujarati society that engaged with Shakespeare and other writers through translation deserves its due in the cultural and intellectual history. Even if Gujarat is no match for Bengal in terms of art and culture, Gujarat has its own place in the cultural history of India and it needs to be recognised as such. However, mainstream history books have fallen short of capturing these aspects. Hence, translation history of this kind can shed new light on the cultural and intellectual traditions of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Gujarati society..

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