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## Making *Nativepeer*: The Process of Transformative Aesthetics

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# MAKING NATIVEPEER: THE PROCESS OF TRANSFORMATIVE AESTHETICS

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## INTRODUCTION

This article describes the process of developing *NativePeer*,<sup>1</sup> a transcultural adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's text *Peer Gynt*<sup>2</sup> that I made in 2015 within the post-colonial Indian context. The adaptation was part of an assignment to direct the play at the National School of Drama, New Delhi. However, this article is limited to reflections on and handling of approaches and challenges in the adaptation process.

I intended to make a text that would communicate with present-day Indian readers and audiences. It required a deep-rooted process, far beyond merely a textual translation. The fundamental task was to negotiate the source text within the socio-political-cultural context of colonially mediated modernity, representing the juncture between tradition and modernity of contemporary India. This juncture is the meeting place between two different political visions for economic and social reform after partition in 1947: the Gandhian project of reviving the village economy,<sup>3</sup> and the Nehruvian vision of prosperity through rapid industrialization as a part of a Western-inspired secular modernization project.<sup>4</sup> This divide still characterizes the socio-political climate in India. Moreover, one could understand the present situation in India as part of a wider notion of colonialist interpellation, which is implanted within the postcolonial structure. As Partha Chatterjee argues in his book *The Nation and Its Fragments*:

The postcolonial state in India has after all only expanded and not transformed the basic institutional arrangements of colonial law and administration, of the

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courts, the bureaucracy, the police, the army, and the various technical services of government. (Chatterjee 1993, 15)

Likewise, the constitutional historian M.V. Pylee underlines that the postcolonial state “inherited the British system of government and administration in its original form. The framers of the new Constitution *could not think* of an altogether new system” (Chatterjee 1993, 15).

This perspective interprets the topographical condition of “India’s World”<sup>5</sup> as internal colonialism, implying that structures of power and inequalities largely persist within the “new” world order, through class and caste divides. Another relevant characterizing feature is the persisting gender inequalities. Furthermore, the rise of Hindu nationalism has increasingly challenged Nehru’s secular vision in recent years. These aspects of “India’s World” are reflected in Episode I of the adapted text *NativePeer*.

The transcreation process was demanding. The task was thus to ensure a contemporary Indian flavour to the text by changing time and space. In this regard, two contextual aspects were crucial: First, the *topics* of Ibsen’s text should be maintained, implying that the challenge was to adjust their contextual expressions to Indian conditions. Second, and closely related to the first, is the *sentential context*. I aimed to maintain the sentences in Ibsen’s text to the greatest possible extent but often had to adjust by infusing literal and cultural materials into the textual fabric. In particular, in Ibsen’s Act IV, the local also contains a strong geopolitical aspect in terms of contemporary economic and political conditions.

In the transcreation process, I benefitted from two guiding principles which I used in combination, notably Homi K. Bhabha’s concept of “A Third Space” as described in his book *The Location of Culture* and Erika Fischer-Lichte’s approach “interweaving performance cultures” (2011, 7). Erika Fischer-Lichte’s argument is that the concept of *interweaving* is useful in creating a new “whole”—the Third Space—as it has the potential of reducing the cultural tension between “source” and “target.” My experience is that this is a more open and seamless approach

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compared to intercultural concepts which contain distinctions between “Self” or “Own” and “Other.”

OWNERSHIP CHALLENGES AND THE CREATION OF A  
THIRD SPACE

My experience as a theatre director has taught me that attitudes to and handling of “ownership” are the major reasons for tension when a non-western country stages a western text. This is in line with Erika Fischer-Lichte’s observation on problematic aspects of practicing theatre with materials from another culture. She discusses how ownership of the source text may impact the ability to adapt the text for the target culture. Fischer-Lichte problematizes two common assumptions: First, “... if the play in question is the ‘property’ of a Western nation, Western culture is always involved when it is performed in a non-Western context,” and second, the “owners” have the right to explain to the non-western users the correct meaning of the text. In this respect, they feel entitled to claim superiority” (2014, 7).

For me, the term “intercultural” is problematic due to its tendency towards “intervention” and “naturalization” within the conceptual frame. As a result, the core concept is linked with conceptions about “essentiality,” “authenticity,” and “absoluteness,” which are critical aspects of ownership. The politics of ownership lies in the concepts of “Self” (or “Own”) and “Other.” My view is that such intercultural approaches within theatre practice are disturbing in the sense that they create contradictions and limit the creative space. Intercultural theatre approaches have frequently led to accusations and disputable questions from both sides, and such approaches are becoming more and more controversial and debatable, including in India.

This tension was always in my mind when making *NativePeer*. I realized that the solution to overcome the distinction between “Self” and “Other” was to change the perception towards emerging of the future through the creation of a new political performance space that accommodates aspects of “Self” and “Other”

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within a living symbiotic condition. I am in this regard heavily indebted to Patrice Pavis, who underlined:

In the sense of collectivities possessing their characteristics, certain cultures may be defined in terms of their power relationships and their economic or political strength. Here it is difficult to avoid the dichotomy between dominant and dominated, between majority and minority, between ethnocentric and decentred cultures. From there it is only a small step to seeing interculturalism as an ethnocentric strategy of Western culture to reconquer alien symbolic goods by submitting them to a dominant codification, ... But this is the step we should avoid taking ... (1996, 4)

At this time, Homi Bhabha had already pointed to how the concept of *A Third Space* could serve this purpose:

The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space. (1994, 53)

Bhabha's political notions of "in-betweens" helped me understand the silent conflict and politics of transporting power within the realm of the transculturation process:

contradictions and conflicts, which often thwart political intentions and make the question of commitment complex and difficult, are rooted in the process of translation and displacement in which the object of politics is inscribed. (1994, 39)

### *DEFINING THE CONTEXT OF A THIRD SPACE: TRADITION AND MODERNITY*

With such ownership problems in mind, I started thinking about how I could meaningfully adapt Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* in India. Cultural adaptation requires a considerable amount of negotiation and replacement to make the adapted text contemporary and relevant within the frame of time, space, and being. Thereby, I had to replace images, symbols, and metaphors in the source text with Indian ones that express similar ideas.

In my attempt to create a new artistic expression, it was essential to negotiate with the interlocking of socio-linguistic plurality, ethnicity-based cultural diversity, growth of strong Hindu nationalism, religious hegemony despite the declared secularism of the Republic of India, the swift development of a capitalistic and

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market-based economy and entry of multinational corporations, migration, power politics, caste and class inequalities, lack of women empowerment as well as the sexuality and body politics characterizing the contemporary social fabric in India. Life patterns had increasingly changed, all based on the backdrop of colonially mediated modernity.

Based on my own observations and work experiences in various states of India, I had a clear impression that authentic living local cultures did not exist anymore. The proto-nationalist agenda of “theatre of roots,”<sup>6</sup> that attempts to discover and return to tradition, motivated me to dig into the body of Indian traditions.

The Indian contemporaneity is metaphorically reflected in the poem “Nargol” by Gieve Patel:

Walking to sea I carry  
A village, a city, the country  
For the moment  
On my back  
(Rajan 2012, 190)

This metaphorical basket expresses two basic aspects of the interior mindset, notably Indianness and Modernity, at the same time as it contains the culturally fragmented geopolitical and heterogeneous position of the State of India. As a result, I had to negotiate between contemporary socio-political aspects and cultural modernity.

However, the adaptation process is not only aesthetic but also a political process to create a new space within the “liminal” condition, which helps to create an image through disjunction and displacement within the domain of cultural contemporaneity in India:

(The) liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a

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cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (Bhabha 1994, 5)

### *INTERWEAVING AS AN INSTRUMENT IN THE TRANSFORMATIVE POLITICAL PROCESS OF AESTHETICS*

An interesting feature of the play is that Peer Gynt crosses borders and encounters other cultures throughout his journey. This creates a point of departure for re-examining the text within the frame of the sociocultural-political climate of present-day India.

Furthermore, Ibsen's text is complex, cryptic, ambiguous, and amorphous and therefore well suited to connect to the diversity of the present Indian heterogenous reality. While recreating Ibsen's text, the crucial task was to demythologize and demystify *Peer Gynt* through the process of transculturation. The challenge was to create a balanced relationship between Ibsen's text and major characteristics of the Indian socio-political and cultural situation. As in the source text, the central topical context in *NativePeer* consists of the cultivation of the Self.

In the process of creating a *Third Space*, it was crucial to break away from cultural specificity by identifying culture-neutral operations. My experience as a theatre director is that this is the most important task in order to establish liminality. The process required several negotiations—between the source and target cultures and materials, and between tradition and modernity in India as well as between different aspects of India's contemporary reality, including in terms of similarities and dissimilarities.

The aim of remaining close to Ibsen's text also implied that the major relationships between the characters remained the same but I had to adjust them to the contemporary global and Indian contexts.

The idea behind my process was thus connected to different temporality and materiality within the socio-cultural-political context of contemporary India. I tried to explore how this notion could benefit from Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of "interweaving." The end result of this process is what she calls

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“transformative aesthetics” which she regards as a new theatre aesthetic process. Central to my purpose was her claim that “a new theatre aesthetic through processes of interweaving performance cultures must be regarded as a political development” (2011, 8).

To me, “interweaving” is a metaphor pointing to a continuous motion of inwards, outwards, inwards. It is fluid and dynamic in character. This is because the characteristics of such operations can be synchronized to occur as in the correct sequence of threads without interfering or disturbing one another. It is like the weaving cycle.

Such an encountering process is all about transportation, displacement, and replacement. It is a socio-political-cultural negotiation process. It is a game between co-existence of elements and materials, loss of elements and materials, and inclusion of new elements and materials. The sensible selection and distribution of elements and materials along with their reasoning is what I would term “politics in aesthetics.”

It is my reading as well as experience as a theatre director that the notion of “interweaving” is a useful theoretical roadmap for exploring cases where a text from one culture and time period is used in other settings. The core of this notion is “cultural translation” or “transculturation.” It is a matter of making a text meaningful to the audience, through merging and converging of socio-cultural materials through a political process. As Diana Taylor argues:

Transculturation affects the entire culture; it involves the shifting of socio-political, not just aesthetic, borders; it modifies collective and individual identity; it changes discourse, both verbal and symbolic. (1991, 61)

This approach is based on assumptions about the relevance and potential impact of the performance itself. The concept of “interweaving performance cultures” thus implies examination from two perspectives. In Fischer-Lichte’s words: “both from the perspective of the artistic process that allow for their emergence in performance as well as from that of their ethical, social, and political implication in and beyond performance” (2014, 12-13).



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*CROSSING BORDERS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF  
TRANSCULTURATION*<sup>7</sup>

When I used the concept of “interweaving cultures” to demythologize and demystify Ibsen’s text and further to create the new performance text *NativePeer*, I entered a two-step process. The first step was the decontextualizing process, which implies displacement of time and space, including body and mind, from Ibsen’s textual corpus. The next step was the re-contextualizing process whereby a new corpus was created through negotiation and replacement within the context of the contemporary Indian modernization process.

In order to facilitate such a process, I decided to shift from Ibsen’s dramatic structure to the traditional South Asian dramatic structure. Features of the dramatic structure of the source text supported this shift. In contrast to the typical dramatic structure of a modern western classical play, characterized by a linear process, *Peer Gynt* contains many different stories. Therefore, the step towards a South Asian “frame-narrative” structure was short. The episodic structure in *NativePeer* implies that it is fragmented and that there are stories within the story and even stories about the story. *NativePeer* thus structurally resembles a broken mirror.

Regarding the character Peer Gynt, my intention was to place him in a local context within the dimensions of fantasy, symbolism, allegory, and mysticism. My aim was to make the character recognizable to everyone as a post-colonial fragmented body. This was why I changed the title of the play from *Peer Gynt* to *NativePeer*. Ibsen’s phrase “*Gå utenom*” (“*go round and about*”) fundamentally guided my recreation of Peer. I maintained Peer’s inclination to fantasy and the interplay between dream and reality as well as his own self-centeredness and wildness. However, decontextualized into a postcolonial Indian body, the notion of freedom was made more explicit, particularly in Episode I. I made use of Fischer-Lichte’s view on “openness”: “the new transformative aesthetics aims to generate the greatest possible openness” (2014, 12).

SHIFTING AND RESHAPING THE TEXTUAL BODY

My reading is that the direction of Ibsen's text moves from consistent (corresponding to Acts I to III), to inconsistent (Act IV), and further to hyper-inconsistent (Act V). This is the basis for the structural formation of *NativePeer* into three episodes: Episode I: Folk Peer, Episode II: Global Peer, and Episode III: Naked Peer. In line with the traditional South Asian dramatic structure, each episode consists of several stems (in Sanskrit "Kand"), instead of scenes. Each stem is a complete story. It is interesting to note that the stem construction also fits well with the fragmented structure of the source text which is similar to the structure of Indian Epics.

*Episode I: Folk Peer*

In this episode, based on Ibsen's acts I to III, Peer is placed in the countryside. The geographic location is close to the Himalayas, in the valley of Uttarakhand. I selected this location because Uttarakhand has several resonances with the source text. Since Uttarakhand was where Nehru had the first hydropower dam built, this location also offers the opportunity to implant a seed of "modernity at large,"<sup>8</sup> which is the juncture between tradition and modernity reflected in globalization. The location thus supported my intention of relating Ibsen's text to the contemporary reality in India. It further helped me create a smooth passage to enter Episode II: Global Peer.

The episode deals with the same philosophical aspects as acts I-III of the source text, notably Peer's fantasies about freedom and power, his self-centeredness and wildness, dream and reality, and the role of women in a patriarchal social structure. Like in the source text, the episode's direction is an increasing isolation from the local community. The essence of the storyline is thus the same as in Ibsen's text but is recontextualized into a postcolonial Indian rural setting, with the notion of socio-political and cultural oppression characterizing "India's World," and a stronger quest for freedom. The latter is also illustrated through the

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inclusion of the first stanza of Mickey MacConnell's version of the Irish folk song *Only Our Rivers Run Free*,<sup>9</sup> thus making use also of material from a country with a parallel colonial past:

When apples still grow in November  
When blossoms still bloom  
When leaves are still green in December  
It's then that our land will be free  
I wander her hills and her valleys  
And still through my sorrow I see  
A land that has never known freedom  
And still only our rivers run free.

Episode I is divided into nine stems which each illustrates, in a post-colonial Indian context, one or more of the philosophical aspects mentioned above. The following serves as examples of how the interweaving process was done.

### *Stem two*

The storyline follows the source text. To understand the interweaving process throughout the adaptation, it is crucial to note that the replacements made regarding Peer's dream serve to prepare for the contemporary geopolitical flavour of Episode II *Global Peer*. It is a good example of how a Third Space is created through the interweaving process throughout the adaptation, without making any disturbance. The notion is the same—dreaming about becoming an Emperor.<sup>10</sup> However, the characteristics of this power position are modified by combining it with the role of Army General, which is a common feature among Heads of State in many autocratic and war-torn countries. This gives a more explicit association with militarism as a source of power than in the source text. Also, the geographical horizon of the dream is adjusted towards a regional focus (the reference to “desert emperors”) which is elaborated in description of Episode II below.

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*Peer Gynt as translated by Fjelde, Act I, Scene Two (pp. 21-22)*<sup>11</sup>

*NativePeer, Episode I, Stem Two (p. 9)*

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PEER GYNT:

What an odd-shaped cloud! Like a horse almost.  
Someone's riding him-he's saddled and reined -  
(*With a quiet little laugh*)  
...  
Peer Gynt rides ahead, with an army in tow-  
His harness is silver, his mount is gold-shod.  
He wears gauntlets, a scabbard, a fine saber blade,  
And a cape flowing long and silken-lined.  
They're the salt of the earth, the men of his band;  
Yet not one sits so bold in his saddle as Peer,  
Or glitters like him in the sunlit air.  
Bellow by the road people gather in groups,  
Tipping their hats, and everyone gapes.  
The women are curtsyng. Who hasn't heard  
Of the Emperor Peer Gynt and his thousand-man horde?  
Pieces of silver and new copper coins  
He scatters like sand till his pathway shines,  
And every citizen's rich as a lord.  
Then Peer makes the ocean his boulevard.  
On a far-off shore stands Engelland's prince,  
And all Engelland's maidens wait in suspense.  
And Engelland's nobles and Engelland's king,  
As Peer canters up, rise from parleyng.  
Their emperor takes off his crown and speaks -

FOLK PEER:

Look at the cloud. Strange! Like a horse with a man on it. Saddle and bridle.  
...  
I am Peer. Army General. I am in the war field. Look, Peer's vehicle is khaki with a general's star signs. Peer is wearing war costume and carrying a machinegun. But none sits in his vehicle as proudly as Peer, or glitters as him against the sun. Below, by the road, people gather in groups and everyone owling in gapes. The women all know Peer, the General and the Emperor, and his thousands of soldiers moving towards the war field. Peer sails the ocean up in the sky, rides over the seas. The desert emperors raise their crowns and welcome him.

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*Stem three*

Women's subordinate and vulnerable position is still a typical feature of the present socio-economic structure and the cultural conceptions in India. The story about the abduction of the bride

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in the source text (Ibsen's Act I, Scene Three) is therefore still highly relevant. However, the text was adjusted in order to make it easier for the readers and the audience to consider the story as their own. For this purpose, I used cultural material from the Indian epic *Ramayana* extensively. Since Ibsen's story about the abduction of Ingrid is very similar to the abduction of Sita in the *Ramayana*, I was able to follow Ibsen's text stringently, merely making some replacements with textual material from the *Ramayana*. It was necessary to get rid of the pig-reference in the source text since this animal is considered impure according to Hindu customs. The replacement is the devil Ravana. The excerpts below serve to illustrate how Ibsen's textual threads and the threads from the *Ramayana* were interwoven:

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*Peer Gynt* as translated by Fjelde, Act I, Scene Three (p. 38)<sup>12</sup>

*NativePeer, Episode I, Stem Three* (p. 14)

BRIDEGROOM (*sobbing*)

Mother, how he carries her - just like a pig!

INGRID'S FATHER:

(*Comes up, bareheaded, white with rage*)  
I'll have his life for stealing the bride!

BRIDEGROOM: (*weeps*):

Oh, mother, he is carrying her, like Ravana!

INDRANI'S FATHER:

Look everybody; Ravana catching Sita<sup>13</sup> in his arms. Bride rape! I shall have his life for stealing the bride! Oh Jatayu,<sup>14</sup> strike him with your wings. Oh! Sugriva,<sup>15</sup> Vali,<sup>16</sup> Angada,<sup>17</sup> Makardhwaja<sup>18</sup> ... Come and help to kill the Asura.<sup>19</sup>

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### *Stem four*

Women's inferior position is the central theme also in this stem. As seen in the first excerpt below, a line with the expression "untouchable shit" is added. I included it in order to connect female inferiority to the broader hierarchical and patriarchal socio-political structure and the cultural conceptions in India. A sexually abused or raped woman is considered impure, similar to an outcast. When Peer compares Ingrid with Solveig (named Sharoda in the adaptation), the religious connotation is

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maintained. However, the Christian image (the hymn book) is replaced by the Hindu scripture *Gita*. This adaption transforms Peer's conception of Solveig representing ideal womanhood into the Hindu purity ideal through the goddess Saraswati.<sup>20</sup> This replacement is meaningful because Peer's description of Solveig's personality is very similar to the description of Saraswati in Hindu tradition. Most fundamental, both are ideal characters. The meaning of "Saraswati" is "essence of one-self" or "one who leads to the essence of self-knowledge."

The last excerpt below points out common contemporary weaknesses in the application of justice in India, due to the preservation of traditional values of inequality and inferiority.

The stem ends with Indrani (Ingrid) singing a song expressing the agony and sufferings typical for women in "India's World." The core phrase of the song is from Ibsen's text "The devil takes all memories! The devil takes all women" (Ibsen 1980, 39).<sup>21</sup> However, through the interweaving with the contemporary situation of Indian women, the song appears as an exchange of arguments, and the direction of the accusation is at the end reversed:

Here, our life is just funeral fire,  
Burning, burning, and burning!  
All memories belong to the devil,  
The devil takes all women,  
All women belong to the devil.  
Who cares about our pain in this world?  
None can see our dry tears.  
Tell me, tell me, what to do, where to go?  
Our Life is just like a dust,  
Oh God how it can be!  
Save me save me from the devil,  
Life is just burning!

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*Peer Gynt as translated by Fjeld, Act II, Scene One* (pp. 40-41)<sup>22</sup>

*NativePeer, Episode I, Stem Four* (pp. 15-16)

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PEER GYNT:

Go away! Back where you came from!  
To your father, quick!

...

INGRID:

Ruin me first - then cast me off!

PEER GYNT:

What do you wrap your prayer book in?  
Does your hair fall golden at your throat?  
Do you gaze down into your apron?  
Your mother's skirt, do you hold it tight?  
Answer!

INGRID (*threatening*):

You won't escape till the price is paid!

PEER GYNT:

The highest price would seem  
like nothing.

FOLK PEER:

Go away! Back where you came from! To  
your father, quickly!

INDRANI:

Don't throw me out like an untouchable  
shit. You are my beloved, please!

...

INDRANI:

You seduce me, and then leave me! Ruin  
me first, then cast me off!

FOLK PEER:

Do you keep the prayer book holy Gita  
inside your heart? Does your hair fall in  
waves at your throat like Devi Saraswati?  
She is pure and cleansed. She is a moon  
shining in the autumn sky. Can you hold  
and play vina?<sup>23</sup> Answer!

INDRANI (*threatening*):

You cannot escape till the price is paid! I  
will make it public. I shall go to the court  
and file a case. I will tell to the police, you  
eloped with me.

FOLK PEER:

Ha! In this country (*laughing*)?

---

### *Stem five*

This stem follows the structure of Act II, Scene Three, in the source text, and maintains the emphasis on sexual fantasies. However, it was necessary to negotiate with Hindu cultural values. In India, young girls would never be herding in the mountains without a male family member. Neither would it be acceptable to play out Peer's sexual fantasies about young girls on the stage. I therefore made an adjustment in Peer's imagination, from human beings (herding girls) to supernatural beings (troll girls). Scenes Five and Six of Act II of the source text inspired this twisting.

I also connected to the purity conception in Hinduism by incorporating a political dimension through a satirical focus on its orthodox interpretation by the growing Hindu nationalist movement under the present ruling party, BJP (Bharatiya Janata

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Party). I found the clue for this twisting in Act II, Scene Three, when the herding girls offer Peer the home-brewed drink mjød (mead). A strong source for incorporating the nationalist political aspect was found in Act II, Scene Six, of the source text, when Dovregubben (Troll King) offers Peer home-made beverage, “mead” given by the bulls. This has a clear parallel in Gau Jal: Marketed as an alternative soft drink to Coca Cola and Pepsi, the BJP associate Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) developed a beverage made of cow urine,<sup>24</sup> called Gau Jal (literal meaning “Cow Water”), which is claimed to have a purifying effect. By referencing this, I also prepared for the focus on Hindu nationalism in Stem Six of Episode I.

The following phrases show how I, through interweaving, incorporated cultural and religious-political aspects and materials of contemporary India into the text:

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*Peer Gynt as translated by Fjelde, Act II, Scene Six (pp. 56-57)<sup>26</sup>*

*NativePeer, Episode I, Stem Six (pp. 20-21)*

TROLL KING:

Now, throw off your Christian dress.  
Everything's mountain-made with us;  
From the valleys we get nothing else  
But the silk bows that adorn our tails.

PEER GYNT (*Angrily*):

I have no tail!

TROLL KING:

We'll get you one.  
Steward, my Sunday best! Tie it on.

PEER GYNT:

Lay off! You think I've lost mind?

TROLL KING:

You can't court my daughter with a  
smooth behind.

PEER GYNT:

Turn man to a beast!

TROLL KING:

You're wrong, my son;  
I want you decked out like a proper swain;  
You'll get a flame - yellow bow to wear,  
And that rates the highest honors here.

PEER GYNT (*thoughtfully*):

Well, they say that man is only a mote,

TROLL KING:

Now, throw off your dress, which we  
consider as a Christian dress. You must  
know the great glory of my kingdom.  
Everything here is made within the  
mountain. Nothing comes from the valley  
except the holy hibiscus flower, which we  
tie with our shikha.<sup>27</sup> The symbol of our  
superiority and of cleanliness. Part of our  
Mantra: “Priyangu-kalika-shyamam,  
Roopenna-pratimam-budham” (*I pray to  
Mercury, dark like the bud of millet*).

FOLK PEER:

I have no shikha!

TROLL KING:

Well, then you must have one. Prime  
Minister, put my Tuesday shikha crown on  
his head. Steward, tie the holy flower on  
it.

FOLK PEER:

Why Tuesday?

TROLL KING:

In our system, Tuesday is dedicated to  
Lord Hanuman,<sup>28</sup> our Monkey King. We

(Continued)



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(Continued).

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*Peer Gynt as translated by Fjelde, Act II, Scene Six* (pp. 56-57)<sup>26</sup>

*NativePeer, Episode I, Stem Six* (pp. 20-21)

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So custom and fashion have to guide us a bit.  
Tie away!  
...  
PEER GYNT:  
Ha, there's more you want of me still?  
Would you also like my Christian faith?  
TROLL KING:  
No, you can keep that under your breath.  
Faith is free; we impose no tax;  
A troll is known by the way he looks.  
Once we're the same in manner and clothes  
You're free to believe in what a troll loathes.

must satisfy Lord Hanuman before we accept you as a member of our Sangh Paribar.<sup>29</sup>  
FOLK PEER:  
I will be damned if you will! Do you want to make a fool of me?  
TROLL KING:  
You cannot court my daughter without having the symbol of troll values, shikha crown.  
FOLK PEER:  
Turn man to a beast!  
TROLL KING:  
My son, you are wrong; I want you decked out like a proper troll. You will get a shikha crown tied with 'Blue ballerina' hibiscus flower, and that rates the highest honours here. Listen, Shikha allows our God to pull us to the heaven from the material world of Maya.<sup>30</sup>  
FOLK PEER (*thoughtfully*):  
Oh god, man is no more than dust ... And one should fit in with the local ways. Fix it!  
...  
FOLK PEER:  
Hm! Now what else do you want me to do? I suppose I must give up my own faith?  
TROLL KING:  
No, that you can willingly keep in peace - faith is free; we impose no tax; a troll is known by the way he looks. Once we are the same in manner and clothes, you are free to believe things that we find revolting.

---

*Stem six*

This stem is highly allegorical. As in the source text (Scene Six), the surface is folkloristic. The troll concept is maintained, with some crucial replacements and adjustments to align with Hindu nationalism. As is typical for nationalists in general, the motto of Hindu nationalists is to go back to their roots, that is, to the pre-

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Vedic period. This stem has thus a strong political undertone, to come to grips with a new development in the contemporary political frame in India, the predominance of Hindu nationalism. My intention behind this move was to explore how religion and ideology-based politics undermine the secular basis of the State of India.

My understanding of “troll-hood” as described in the source text, is that the trolls live in a closed and largely self-sufficient community underground, in darkness, and with their own beliefs and customs. Their major identity markers are their tails. In the adaptation, “troll-hood” is understood as “Sangh Paribar,” which is the community forming the political core of Hindu nationalism (Hindutva). It was easy to identify a suitable replacement for the troll tail since the traditional identity marker of male members of the Sangh Paribar is the “shikha,” a lock of hair at the top or back of a shaved head (pigtail). The “Sunday tail” in the source text is replaced by “Tuesday shikha” because Tuesday is the prayer day for Lord Hanuman (the Monkey King). Hanuman is one of the major gods in Hindu religion, dating back to the pre-Vedic period, and is still worshipped by members of the Sangh Paribar. Similar to how trolls get hold of silk from outside for their tails, orthodox Hindus use hibiscus flowers to tie their shikhas. The hibiscus flower is a symbol of power and energy. Traditionally, the colour of the hibiscus flower used was blue, which the adaptation equates with the troll community’s darkness. To me, this is reflected in the mantra quoted in the adapted text below: *Priyangu-kalika-shyamam, Roopenna-pratimam-budham* (I pray to Mercury, dark like the bud of millet). The comparison below serves to illustrate how the interwoven fabric emerged because of a process of negotiation, displacement, and replacement. It is thereby also a good example of how to reduce the tension between the source text and the target culture:

*Episode II: Global Peer*

Episode II is based on Act IV of Ibsen’s play. The story remains the same. However, in order to make it contemporary and relevant to the Indian situation, I made substantial changes to the action

lines. This is in line with Elisabeth Oxfeldt's view that it might nowadays be useful to consider "placing Peer-turned-capitalist" within a post-colonial framework (2005, 135). This meant that an extensive process of decontextualization, negotiation, and recontextualization was necessary. It required huge amounts of displacements and replacements, sometimes also in terms of removing or adding action lines.

In contrast to the other acts of the source text, this act is outward-looking, in a way that literary critics often call "Orientalism."<sup>31</sup> In Episode I of the adapted text, a seed of "modernity at large" was planted. In Episode II, it is in full bloom. The outward looking approach in Ibsen's text was maintained but required maximum negotiation in order to adjust with the contemporary regional and global geopolitical situation.

The way I made this episode, also turned the space into what I will call "Self-Exotic Orientalism," the core of which is capitalism and which implies that elements of the "Self" are commoditized. The "Self-Exotic Orientalism" is expressed in the episode through "Hotel Incredible India." "Incredible India" is the main slogan of the Indian tourist campaign, which juxtaposes "India without Indians" within the frame of global capitalism.

The whole episode takes place within the five-star "Hotel Incredible India," which I used as an imaginary heterotopian space. Subsequently, this allowed me to ensure a high level of theatricality in the performance. Ibsen's text facilitated this move through the phrase in Act Five "man dør ei midte i femte akt" (Ibsen 2000, 132).<sup>32</sup> When making this part of the adaptation, I was also inspired by Shakespeare:

All the world's stage.

And all the men and women merely players;

They have their exits and their entrances.

(Shakespeare 2007, 496)

The location is Mumbai due to its highly cosmopolitan characteristics and its status as the financial capital of India—including the epicentre for all kinds of underground activities and dirty

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business,<sup>33</sup> and its localization by the Arabian Sea. This particular location on the west coast of India is crucial because it means easy access by sea to the most burning conflict zones in the world today (see the text excerpts below).

The episode deals with issues like an imaginary wish to colonize the world, underground business with human and drug trafficking and supply of weapons and mercenaries to present war zones in Northern Africa and the Middle East, global corporate capitalist-industrial power, market-based cosmopolitan consumption, the role of the Bollywood oligopoly, and lunatic asylum as represented by an Islamic State camp.

As in the source text, capitalism and the quest for power meet in this episode. The character Global Peer is a capitalist who wishes to become an Emperor or Superstar in a post-national<sup>34</sup> imaginary world. Being a superstar in Bollywood movies is an entry ticket to political and economic power circles in contemporary India.

The essence of the episode is condensed in the following monologue:

I am a man, citizen of the world, lord of creation - damn you, damn all.

If I rule as emperor of the country, then I must be myself entirely; every inch should be mine, from top to toe ... I invested billions in the present war business. Supplied weapons, chemicals and gas, mercenaries, women, drugs ... I wanted to be an actor in this present world drama.

*Stem three*

This is the stem that connects to the contemporary global and regional geopolitical context. The situations described in Ibsen's text, for example the slave trade, large-scale missionary activities, and smuggling of bibles, no longer exist. The task was thus to identify replacements which convey the same purpose (profit) and similar characteristics (illegal and non-ethical activities) as the source text. The replacements of objects helped me adjust the transport routes, focusing on contemporary conflict zones. The excerpts below serve as crucial examples of the negotiation between Ibsen's text and the present geopolitical situation:

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*Peer Gynt as translated by Fjelde, Act IV, Scene One* (pp. 95-97)<sup>35</sup>

*NativePeer, Episode II, Stem Three* (pp. 34-36)

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PEER GYNT (*lighting a cigar*):

Dear friends,  
Consider the career I've traced.  
What was I when I headed west?  
A ragged boy with empty hands.  
I had to grub hard for everything,  
And, believe me, I came near despair.  
But life, my friends, life is dear,  
And death, as they say, has a sting.  
Well! Luck, as you know, was kind to me;  
And old Fate showed liberality.  
Things moved. I took them flexibly And,  
step by step, rose up the ladder.  
Within ten years I bore the name  
Of Croesus with the Charleston traders.  
Port after port declared my fame,  
And fortune rode in all my hulls -

COTTON:

What was the trade?

PEER GYNT:

I made my deals  
Mainly in slaves for Carolina  
And pagan images for China.  
...  
What to do? To end the trade  
With China was insupportable.  
I saw the answer, pushed ahead  
With something else exportable.  
In the spring I sent out idols still -  
But added missionaries in the fall,  
Providing them with every need,  
Like stockings, Bibles, rum, and rice -

COTTON:

At a profit?

PEER GYNT:

Why, naturally, yes.  
Things moved. They worked like mad.  
For every idol sale we closed,  
They got a coolie's soul baptized;  
The result - was equilibrium.  
The missions' business never lacked;  
For the idols came in a steady stream,  
And the preachers kept them  
neatly checked.

GLOBAL PEER:

My dear friends consider my own career.  
What was I when I headed west? A ragged  
boy with empty hands. A penniless fellow.  
I had to struggle to get food. Believe me,  
things were very hard. But life, my friends,  
is sweet; and death is bitter. Luck was kind  
to me; fortune smiled upon me as you see.  
Old fate showed liberality. Things moved.  
I took them flexibly and step by step,  
climbed up the ladder. Within ten years,  
Mumbai ship-owners called me Kuber,<sup>36</sup>  
the Lord of the Rich. Some business men  
called me Lord Leathers.<sup>37</sup> Luck sat in my  
sails. My name and fame spread from port  
to port. Good fortune of my Salvation  
Cargo.

TULA RAM:

Should I know, what is the trade?

GLOBAL PEER:

Illicit trafficking by sea. Sending narcotics,  
weapons, and people within, and via, the  
Indian Ocean to conflict zones. Persian  
Gulf states. Terrorism in Pakistan, here in  
Mumbai, Saudi Arabia; insurgency in  
Yemen and Iraq; state failure, civil war,  
and famine in Somalia. High-volume drugs  
sent to Russia and Europe from  
Afghanistan via Pakistan, Iran, Central  
Asia, Turkey, the Balkans ...

...  
To stop the Persian Gulf trade is  
impossible. Why? First, the Persian Gulf  
remains the global market's most  
important source of crude oil. Second,  
whole regions are conflated with pressures  
of insurgent conflict, terrorism, political  
insecurity.

Yes, these are essential for my business,  
illicit trafficking of all kinds, and supply of  
mercenaries for piracy and vessel hijacking.  
What is the crucial risk? (*Pause*) The  
existential pressures of geopolitical fragility,  
internal political upheaval, insurgency from  
the southern Red Sea and the Horn of  
Africa to the southern Arabian Peninsula.  
At the same time, from the Asian  
continent to the eastern Arabian Peninsula

(Continued)

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(Continued).

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Peer Gynt as translated by Fjælde, Act IV, Scene One (pp. 95-97)<sup>35</sup>

NativePeer, Episode II, Stem Three (pp. 34-36)

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and the Persian Gulf.

*(Laughing loudly)* Without having such a business, nobody would dream to be the emperor of the world!

BALA SHET:

Sir Peer, I like to know more about the flows of illicit weapons, ammunition, drugs, human ...?

*(Map termed "Smuggling routes and zones of interception" is projected on the screen. The map illustrates the sea pathways for drugs, Small Arms and Light Weapons, and human trafficking.)*

GLOBAL PEER:

Small Arms and Light Weapons in these areas follow the familiar logic of supply and demand, moving from source to areas of conflict, where they can fuel insurgency or, to a lesser extent, terrorist activities.

*(Taking a stick from the wall, pointing to the map while explaining.)* SALW, sent from Iran to Yemen and onwards to the Eastern Mediterranean via the Suez Canal, and between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa.

The sea areas of my greatest concern, the Gulf of Aden and the southern Red Sea. Right now, this is the best route for high volume trafficking between Somalia and Yemen through Bosaso and Berbera. For my business, Yemen is the epicentre, why? As simple, it is a conflict-torn country.

I sent women from all conflict and violent zones to the biggest sexual and domestic servitude markets in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. *(Pause)* Not so easy. Extremely tough and inhuman!

TULA RAM:

All at a profit? *(Lowering his voice.)* A modern form of slavery and a crime against humanity. Disgusting.

GLOBAL PEER:

Morality that too, got the better of me. When one reaches a certain stage in life, it dawns on one that such traffic may be wrong. Well-doers, terrorists, wind and weather, they can all conspire.

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*Stem nine*

The absurdity expressed in Ibsen’s scene about the lunatic asylum, in particular, the phrase “absolute reason died last night,” inspired me to borrow some material from William Shakespeare’s *King Lear* which helped me connect to the absurdity of the present world, as represented by the Islamic State. The stem thus starts with Global Peer’s dialogue: “What, art mad? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes” (Shakespeare 2007, 2059).<sup>38</sup>

The excerpts below illustrate how some lines from the source text were kept whereas others were recontextualized:

<i>Peer Gynt as translated by Fjelde, Act Four, Scenes 12-13 (pp. 139-141, p. 149)<sup>39</sup></i>	<i>NativePeer, Episode II, Stem Nine (pp. 44-45)</i>
PEER GYNT ( <i>to himself</i> ): This man is incredibly talented; Nearly all he says goes over my head. ( <i>Looking about.</i> ) So here we are, in the Scholars’ Club? ... BEGRIFFENFELDT ( <i>draws him into a corner and whispers</i> ): Absolute Reason Died last night at eleven o’clock. ...	GLOBAL PEER ( <i>looking around</i> ): This man is incredibly talented; nearly all he says goes over my head. Great disorders lead to great devotion. ( <i>Again, looking around</i> ) So here we are, in the religious world? ... DIRECTOR ( <i>pulls GLOBAL PEER into a corner and whispers</i> ): Absolute reason passed away at 12 o’clock last night. ...
PEER GYNT: You mentioned the hour; my time is short - ...	GLOBAL PEER: My time is short- DIRECTOR: Come forward. The new age is announced. Reason is dead. Long live Emperor Peer!
BEGRIFFENFELDT: Come forth! The veil of the future is rent! Reason is dead. Long live Peer Gynt! ...	GLOBAL PEER: The time is a plague, when madmen lead the blind.
BEGRIFFENFELDT: ( <i>Presses the wreath down on PEER’s head and shouts.</i> ) Hail, all hail the Emperor of Self	DIRECTOR: When the world goes spinning, we have to spin. <sup>40</sup> When the world turns over, we must do the same. Bring all infidels. ( <i>They bring captives, preparing to kill with a sword. After a while they are executing them</i> ) GLOBAL PEER: Don’t make God naked. Don’t kill the

(Continued)

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(Continued).

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*Peer Gynt* as translated by Fjelde, Act Four,  
Scenes 12-13 (pp. 139-141, p. 149)<sup>39</sup>

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*NativePeer*, Episode II, Stem Nine (pp. 44-45)

God. (*They are chopping one*). Oh, God has died!<sup>41</sup> Brilliant false deeds. Lighting of my wisdom! Pull out their eyes. Ignorance and lack of love of the truth. The awful deep mysterious ground, who will proclaim it to the world?

DIRECTOR:

The Emperor. Long live the Emperor of the Self!

(*The inmates put a false crown on Peer's head*)

---

The atmosphere at the end of this stem is in sharp contrast to the bloody horror action line performed earlier by the Islamic State. It also counters the dominance of Hindu nationalism in Episode 1, Stem Six. The change in the atmosphere is done in order to prepare for a secular condition in Episode III. For the same reason, new material has been added at the very end of the stem:

GLOBAL PEER: Dear citizens, in this new world, under my rule, there will be freedom of worship for all citizens of the Empire. The doors of my palaces are open to every faith. We shall build a new court free from the fear, from the suspicion and flattery, from the tyranny of the past. The time is over. My fearless captain Director, I assign you to root out the corruption that has lurked for too long in the country. (*Loud destruction sound, the set collapses. Fire and smoke.*)

### *Episode III: Naked Peer*

This episode, based on Ibsen's Act V, brings us back to the countryside and finally to his own village, and the cartography is thus the same as the source text. The episode is substantially condensed compared to the Act V of the source text and consists only of three stems.

The notion of the episode is to create a secular condition. This was done through a two-fold metaphorical construction process: On one side is Naked Peer, a man without core identity, which is close to Act V of the source text. On the other is the body-



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land association through the concept of Mother India. Sharoda's (Solveig's) body symbolizes the land and the nation. This emerges through the following (in Stem Three) and also contains a strong reflection of Gandhi's concept of "Indian-ness":

*Deep inside the forest. A hut is passing into the stage. Very thick fog. A middle-aged, fair and beautiful woman, SHARODA, sits in the door opening, removing thread from the spinning wheel and singing. NAKED PEER crosses the stage in the opposite direction.*

SHARODA (*singing*):

Didn't I tell you  
Don't run away from me!  
Didn't I tell you  
In this empty fantasy  
Even if for centuries, you wander angrily  
You'll never find another true  
Companion like me  
Since I'm your source of life  
And your final destiny  
You'll have to come back to me.

Through the process of cultural negotiation, it was necessary to remove associations to Christianity in the source text. As a counteraction to the present fragility of the secular position of the Republic of India and the rise of Hindu nationalism (Hindutva) in a heterogeneous society, I wanted to end the play with a secular tone. For this purpose, I had to include new material. I created the secular atmosphere through a song inspired by the Sufi mystic and poet Rumi:

I'm not from the East or the West  
I'm not Black, not White nor Mulatto  
I'm not Jew, Christian, or Muslim  
I'm not Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, or Zen  
I don't belong to any established religion

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Or any cultural system.

I'm neither body nor soul

For I belong to the soul of my beloved.

The existential issue of the Self is maintained, but the references are limited to a few critical lines from different scenes in Act V of the source text. The challenge was to find meaningful placements of these dialogues in the recreated text. The number of characters is drastically reduced, and the many characters representing Peer's inner voices in the source text are transformed into one, the Fool. The peeling onion metaphor is maintained.

The melodramatic end of the source text is removed and recreated in a more tragic direction but which also implies that *NativePeer* is more open-ended:

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*Peer Gynt* as translated by Fjælde, Act V, Scene Ten (p. 209)<sup>42</sup>

*NativePeer*, Episode III, Stem III (pp. 48-49)

BUTTON-MOLDER'S VOICE (*from behind the hut*):  
We'll meet at the final crossroads, Peer;  
And then we'll see - I won't say more.  
SOLVEIG (*her voice rising in the early light*):  
Sleep in my arms; I'll watch over thee -  
Sleep and dream, my dearest boy!

FOOL:  
This is the third time the roads cross, Peer.  
NAKED PEER:  
Forward and backward is equally far. Out  
or in, I am confined (stops). Roundabout,  
said my Fool.  
FOOL:  
The account, Peer?  
NAKED PEER (*digging a grave*):  
There, yes there, are my sins. Cry out how  
sinfully I have gone astray! Cry out my  
guilt. Tell me, then! Where was myself,  
my whole self, my true self? (*Lights fading*).

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## CONCLUSION

I used Fischer-Lichte's "interweaving" concept to create a third space by shaping and reshaping Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* into a contemporary Indian and global context. The result was brought about through an extensive negotiation process of displacement and replacement. The challenge was to transcend the boundaries by

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transforming the source text into a “new” body, a Third Space, expressing the doubleness of the parallel textual aspects of the two locations. Due to the characteristics of its doubleness, the transformative aesthetics is like a cross-fertilization process where we can observe co-action, co-ordination, and co-experience. It is not just embodied but distributed, embedded, enacted, and situated as well.

I wanted the readers and the audience to understand *Peer Gynt* as their own story, not as an alien story. This is a matter of communication. Most fundamentally, it requires that the distance between the source text and the contemporary characteristics of the target culture must be reduced. My experience from adapting and later staging *NativePeer* was that Homi Bhabha’s concept of “Third Space” and Erika Fischer-Lichte’s concept of “interweaving” were useful tools for achieving the intended “reduction.” The end result was like an “interwoven fabric” balancing Ibsen’s text and contemporary burning issues emerging from the socio-political conditions in India and the present geopolitical situation. The core of the aesthetic of my transcultural adaptation process thus also supports Fischer-Lichte’s claim:

Theatre is to be regarded not only as an aesthetic, artistic space but also as a social, indeed political, one. (2011, 7)

I want to underscore that this type of transcultural adaptation process, which removes the distinction between “Self” and “Other,” is extremely demanding. Knowledge—about the source text and source culture and the target culture—is the key. In order to make conscious choices in connection with the numerous questions about “what,” “where,” “how,” and “why” that pop up during the adaptation process, it is also helpful to have experience from theatre practice.

## NOTES

1. *NativePeer*, a transcultural adaptation of Henrik Ibsen’s *Peer Gynt*, was made by me in English, as a part of an assignment to direct the play with final year students of the National School of Drama, New Delhi. The premiere

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took place on 28 September 2015. The performance text has been translated into Hindi, Urdu and Bangla. The Bangla version was published in January 2020.

2. *Peer Gynt* is, in contrast to Ibsen's social plays, not well known in India and other parts of South Asia and has rarely been staged. Rustom Bharucha staged it in 1995, called *Gundegowdana Charitre*, in Mysore in the Indian state of Karnataka in the Kannada language. In 2004, Bansi Kaul staged *Gappu Gope Gopanggamdas* in Hindi with the NSD Repertory Company, New Delhi. *Peer Chan*, in Bangla, was directed by Kamaluddin Nilu in 2000 with Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT), Bangladesh.
3. Described in Joshi (2002).
4. As emerging from Jawaharlal Nehru, in *Selected Speeches: Volume-2: 1949-1953* (2017).
5. I have borrowed the term from the book *India's World: The Politics of Creativity in a Globalized Society*, edited by Arjun Appadurai and Arien Mack (New Delhi: Rain Tree, 2012).
6. "Theatre of Roots" is a term coined by Suresh Awasthi in a 1985 essay titled "In Defence of the 'Theatre of Roots'". He explains: "This was part of the whole process of decolonization of our lifestyle, values, social institutions, creative forms and cultural modes" (Awasthi 2009, 295).
7. The term was coined by the Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz in 1947. Transculturation process: 1) The phenomenon of merging (combining in a single entity) and converging (coming together from different directions) cultures. 2) Encompasses more than transition from one culture to another: it does not consist merely of acquiring another culture (acculturation), losing, or uprooting a previous culture (deculturation). 3) It merges these concepts and additionally carries the idea of the consequent creation of new cultural phenomena (neoculturation).
8. The term is borrowed from *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996) by Arjun Appadurai.
9. Mickey MacConnell's version of the Irish folk song is available at [https://www.irishsongs.com/lyrics.php?Action=view&Song\\_id=283](https://www.irishsongs.com/lyrics.php?Action=view&Song_id=283)
10. Regarding Folk Peer's dream, it is interesting to note Frantz Fanon's statement in *The Wretched of the World*: "And it is true there is not one colonized subject who at least once a day does not dream of taking the place of the colonist" (2004, 5).

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11.

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*Peer Gynt, Act I, Scene Two* (pp. 20-21)

PEER GYNT:

For en underlig sky. Den ligner en hest.  
Der er en mann på med, og sadel – og grime –  
...  
Peer Gynt rider først, og der følger ham mange.  
Hesten har sølvtopp og gullsko fire.  
Selv har han hansker og sabel og slire.  
Kåpen er side og med silke foret.  
Gilde er de som følger ham i sporet.  
Ingen dog sitter så staut på folen.  
Ingen dog glitrer som han imot solen.  
Nede sår folk i klynger langs gjerdet,  
Løfter på hatten og glaner i vaeret.  
Kvinnene neier seg. Alle kan kjenne  
Keiser Peer Gynt og hans tusen svenne.  
Tolvskillingsstykker og blanke marker  
Ned han som småsten sparker.  
Rike som grever blir alle i bygden.  
Peer Gynt rider tvers over havet i høyden.  
Engellands prins står på stranden og venter.  
Det samme gjør alle Engellands jenter.  
Engellands stormenn og Engellands keiser  
der Peer rider frem, seg fra høybordet reiser.  
Keiseren letter på kronen og sier -

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12.

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*Peer Gynt, Act I, Scene Three* (p. 32)

BRUDGOMMEN (*gredende*):

Han baer' henne, mor, som en baer' en gris!

HÆGSTADBONDEN (*kommer barhodet og hvit av vrede*):

Jeg tar hans liv for det bruderov!

---

13. Sita (also spelled Seeta or Seetha) is a central female character of the *Ramayana*. She is the spouse of the Hindu god Rama and is highly regarded as a paragon of spousal and feminine virtues for all Hindu women. She was stolen and kept captive by Ravana.
14. In the *Ramayana*, Jatayu is a demigod, with the form of a vulture. He tried to rescue Sita from Ravana when he was on his way to Lanka after kidnapping Sita.
15. In the *Ramayana*, Sugriva was a ruler of the monkey kingdom Kishkindha. Sugriva aided Rama in his attempt to liberate Sita from the captivity of Ravana.
16. Vali was another king of Kishkindha and the elder brother of Sugriva. According to the *Ramayana*, Vali was very brave and courageous. Once when Vali was doing his regular sunset meditation (*Sandhyavandanam*),

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- Ravana called him for fighting. Vali became furious and took Ravana in his tail to pull him around the entire world.
17. Angada is in the *Ramayana* a group of monkey soldiers (vanara) helping Rama to find his wife Sita and who fought with her abductor, Ravana.
  18. Makardhwaja (Magardhwaja) is according to the *Ramayana* the son of Hanuman (the Monkey God).
  19. In Hinduism, the asuras are a group of power-seeking deities in the form of ghost spirits. They constantly battle with the other gods.
  20. Saraswati is the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, arts, wisdom and learning. Saraswati is commonly depicted as a beautiful woman dressed in pure white and often seated on a white lotus which symbolized light, knowledge, and truth. Saraswati, sometimes spelled Sarasvati, is a fusion of the Sanskrit words of Sara (which means essence) and Sva (which means self). The meaning of "Saraswati" is thus "essence of one self" or "one who leads to the essence of self-knowledge."
  21. Translated by Rolf Fjelde (Ibsen 1980).
  - 22.

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*Peer Gynt, Act II, Scene One* (pp. 33-34)

PEER GYNT:

Gå! Gå dit du kom ifra! Fort! Til far din!

...

INGRID:

Lokke først, - og så forskyde!

PEER GYNT:

Har du salmebok i kledet?

Har du gullfaks over nakken?

Skotter du nedover spredet?

Holder du din mor i stakken?

Svar!

INGRID (*truende*):

Ja, men boten blir deg dyr!

PEER GYNT:

Dyrest bot får kalles billig.

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23. Vina (or Veena of Saraswati) is a dominant string instrument in Indian art.
24. Huffington Post 03/14/2009, updated May 25, 2011, <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/india-cow-urine>

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25.

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*Peer Gynt, Act II, Scene Three* (p. 38)

ANNEN JENTE:

Vi har mjød!

PEER GYNT:

La den flomme!

*Act II, Scene Six* (p. 45)

DOVREGUBBEN:

Dernest må du laere å sette pris

På vår hjemlige levevis.

*(han vinker: to troll med svinehoder, hvite natthuer, osv. bringer mat og drikke.)*

Koen giver kaker og stuten mjød;

Spør ei om den smaker sur eller sød;

Hovedsaken er, det får du ei glemme,

Den er brygget her hjemme.

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26.

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*Peer Gynt, Act II, Scene Six* (pp. 45-46)

DOVREGUBBEN:

Dernest må du kaste dine kristenmannskleder;

Ti det skal du vite til vårt Dovres heder:

Her er all ting fjellvirket, ingenting fra dalen,

Unntagen silkesløyfen ytterst på halen.

PEER GYNT (*vred*):

Jeg har ingen hale!

DOVREGUBBEN:

Så kanst du få.

Hofftroll, bind ham min søndagshale på.

PEER GYNT:

Nei, om du får! Vil I gjøre meg til nar?

DOVREGUBBEN:

Beil aldri til datter min med baken bar.

PEER GYNT:

Gjøre menneske til dyr!

DOVREGUBBEN:

Min sønn, du feiler,

Jeg gjør deg bare til en høvelig beiler.

Du skal få en branngul sløyfe å baere,

Og det gjelder her for den høyeste aere.

PEER GYNT: (*betenksomt*).

Der sies jo mennesket er kun et fnug.

Og litt får en lempes efter skikk og brug.

Bind vekk!

...

PEER GYNT:

Hå, vil I ennu mere meg tvinge?

Krever I også min kristenmanns-tro?

DOVREGUBBEN:

Nei, den kan du gjerne beholde i ro.

Troen går fritt; den legges ingen toll på;

det er skorpen og snittet en skal kjenne et troll på.

Bare vi er ens i lader og kleddsel,

kan du gjerne kalle tro hva vi kaller redsel.

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## Making NativePeer: The Process of Transformative Aesthetics

27. Shikha or Sikha is a long tuft, or lock of hair (pigtail), on the top or the back of a shaven head. It is the major sign of a male orthodox Hindu. Traditionally all male Hindus were required to keep a shikha. The belief is that the shikha allows the Bagwan (God) easily to pull the men from the material world. In *NativePeer*, the shikha is the cultural replacement of the troll tail. In the same way as the tail is the symbol of troll-hood, the pigtail is the symbol of Hindu-ness (Hindutva).
28. Hanuman, the Monkey King, is a Hindu god and devotee of Rama.
29. Sangh Parivar (literal meaning family of Sangh or communities) refers to the family of Hindu nationalist organizations established by members of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The Sangh Parivar represents the Hindu nationalist movement in the adapted text *NativePeer*.
30. The literal meaning of “Maya” is “illusion.”
31. The term “orientalism” stems from Edward W. Said’s book *Orientalism* (2003).
32. From the dialogue of the Passenger, Act V, Scene Two.
33. The novel *Narcopolis* by Jeet Thayil (2012) gives an interesting description of opium being part of the dirty business going on in Mumbai (formerly Bombay).
34. “... a post-national” area, dominated by the globalizing forces of an international division of labour, transnational companies, great power blocs, an ideology of mass consumerism, and the growth of vast networks of communications.” In John Hutchinson & D. Smith (1994, 11).
- 35.

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*Peer Gynt, Act IV, Scene One* (pp. 72-77)

PEER GYNT:

Kjaere venner;  
Betenk mitt levnetsløp forresten.  
Som fattig kar med tomme hender.  
Jeg måtte slite sårt for føden;  
Tro meg, det falt meg titt nok svaert.  
Men livet, venner, det er kjaert;  
og, som man sier, besk er døden.  
Vel! Lykken, ser I, var meg føyelig,  
og gamle fatum, han var bøyelig.  
Det gikk. Og da jeg selv var tøyelig,  
Så gikk det stette bedre, bedre.  
Ti år derefter bar jeg navn  
av Krøsus mellem Charlestowns redre.  
Mitt rykte fløy fra havn til havn;  
Jeg hadde lykken innen borde-  
MASTER COTTON:  
Hva gjaldt trafikken?  
PEER GYNT:  
Mest jeg gjorde

---

(Continued)



## KAMALUDDIN NILU

i negere til Carolina og gudebilleder til China.

...

Hva var å gjøre? Stanse farten  
på China gikk umulig an.  
Jeg fant dog utvei, åpnet snart en  
Forretning til på samme land.  
Hver vår jeg guder eksporterte;  
Hver høst jeg prester utklarerte,  
Forsynte dem med det fornødne,  
Som strømper, bibler, rom og ris-

...

MASTER COTTON:

Ja, mot profit?

PEER GYNT:

Det gikk. De virket ufortrødne.  
For hver en gud hist over kjøpt,  
de fikk en kulier grundig døpt,  
så virkningen nøytralisertes.  
Misjonens mark lå aldri brakk;  
ti gudene som kolportertes,  
av prestene ble holdt i sjakk.

- 
36. Kuber (also spelt Kuvera or Kubera) is the Lord of Wealth in Hindu mythology and the owner of the treasures of the world.
  37. Mr. Leathers was a former shipping magnate who was brought in by Churchill to run the British Empire's merchant shipping during the Second World War.
  38. From Act 4, Scene 5 in *King Lear* by William Shakespeare.
  - 39.

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*Peer Gynt, Act Four, Scenes 12-13* (pp. 112-114, p. 121)

PEER GYNT (*før seg selv*):

I sannhet en begavet mann,  
nesten alt han sier, går over ens forstand.

(*Ser seg om*)

Så dette er de lærdes klubb?

...

BEGRIFFENFELDT (trekker ham hen i et hjørne og hvisker):

Den absolutte fornuft avgikk ved døden i aftes kl. 11.

...

PEER GYNT:

De nevnte klokken, min tid er knapp-

...

BEGRIFFENFELDT (*åpner en dør og roper*):

Herut! Den vordende tid er forkynt!

Fornuften er død. Leve Peer Gynt!

...

BEGRIFFENFELDT (*trykker kransen på ham og utroper*):

Han leve! Leve selvets keiser!

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## Making Nativepeer: *The Process of Transformative Aesthetics*

40. This phrase is taken from an earlier dialogue in Scene Thirteen in the source text:  
BEGRIFFENFELDT: “Når verden snurrer, så snurrer vi med. (*tvinger dem inn et bur*) (Ibsen 2000, 113). In Fjelde’s translation: BEGRIFTENFELDT: “When the world goes spinning, we have to spin” (*Forces him into a cage*) (Ibsen 1980, 139). I twisted the text in order to connect to the horror of IS.
41. The phrase is borrowed from Friedrich Nietzsche who said “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him,” quoted from Carol Langford: ‘God is Dead’—The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (Langford 2001). As explained by Langford in the same article: “In saying this Nietzsche meant that society no longer had use for God. God was, as a cultural fact, cognitively superfluous. The absence or presence of faith makes no difference to humanity and this belief in God is redundant” (Langford 2001, 1).
- 42.

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*Peer Gynt, Act V, Scene Ten* (p. 167)

KNAPPESTØPERENS STEMME (*bak huset*):

Vi treffes på siste korsveien, Peer; og så får vi se om -; jeg sier ikke mer.

SOLVEIG (*synger høyere i dagglansen*):

Jeg skal vugge deg, jeg skal våke; -

sov og drøm du, gutten min!

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