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JATINDER VERMA'S BINGLISHING THE BRITISH STAGE. TRADAPTATION OF *TARTUFFE* AS A CASE IN POINT

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ABSTRACT

Scholars in the field of translation studies have underscored that the nature of drama translation is contingent upon the type of theatre for which it is intended. A notable example is found in intercultural theatre, where the objective of translation is not merely to acquaint the audience with a foreign text, but rather to tailor the source text to suit the cultural context of the target audience. This essay aims to scrutinise Jatinder Verma's tradaptation of *Tartuffe*, performed for the intercultural Asian theatrical company Tara Arts in London. Verma adopted the term "tradaptation" (a fusion of "translation" and "adaptation") from the French Canadian director Robert Lepage, signifying the integration of old texts into new cultural frameworks. The play *Tartuffe* is transposed to the seventeenth-century Indies under French colonisation, illustrating the enduring influence of religion and deceit on individuals. Verma's selection of dramatic texts for performance was deliberate, consistently opting for plays that resonated with the contemporary socio-political landscape in Britain. This article delineates the rationale behind choosing *Tartuffe* and delves into the strategies employed to assimilate a foreign text, using it as a commentary on the prevailing political climate in Great Britain.

Keywords: Binglish; Jatinder Verma; *Tartuffe*; tradaptation; Asian theatre; theatre translation; minorities; postcolonialism; BAMA.

1. Introduction

Drama translation has been an issue explored in translation studies since 1990s. A number of scholars have focused on the specificity of translation for the stage proposing various concepts to describe its singularity, such as performability, playablility, speakability, theatricality and performativity (Bassnett 1980, 1985, 1991,

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1998; Espasa 2000; Che 2005; Baines, Marinetti & Perteghella 2011; Aaltonen 2013; Morini 2022). Also they have observed that the specificity of drama translation varies depending on the type of theatre for which a given translation is produced (Fischer-Lichte 1990, 1996; Cameron 2000; Aaltonen 2000). A case in point is the intercultural theatre in which the purpose of translation is not to familiarise the audience with the foreign text but to adapt the source texts to the needs of the target culture (as Erika Fischer-Lichte's and Sirkku Aaltonen's research convincingly demonstrate for the German and Finnish stage, respectively). In this essay, I wish to examine Jatinder Verma's tradaptation of *Tartuffe* as an example of creative translation for the intercultural Asian theatrical company *Tara Arts* in London. Verma borrowed the term *tradaptation* (a compound of the words *translation* + *adaptation*) from the French Canadian director Robert Lepage to define the annexation of old texts to new cultural contexts. The play *Tartuffe* is relocated to the seventeenth century Indies (a French colony) and shows the universal power of religion and false pretences over men. Verma's choice of dramatic texts for performance was never haphazard. He always chose those plays which reverberated with the contemporary socio-political situation in Britain.[2] In the following parts I will outline Verma's reasons for selecting *Tartuffe* and examine the strategies of accommodation of a foreign text to serve as a commentary on the contemporary political climate in Great Britain.

2. *Binglish*

Jatinder Verma listed various types of contemporary theatre (multicultural, cross-cultural, intracultural; Verma 1996c: 193) but none of them described the activities and projects undertaken by the Asian theatre group *Tara Arts* which he directed. Hence Verma proposed a different name which expressed the new aesthetic

[2] Due to space constraints I will mention only three of the early performances of colonial histories put in the contemporary frame to make them politically relevant for the British audience. In *Sacrifice* (1977) based on a play by R. Tagore, Verma's goal was to connect the historical world of the script and contemporary British issues by showing slides of M. Thatcher explaining the advantages of the 'free market'. In *Yes, Memsahib* (1979) Verma told the story of the construction of the East Africa railway by Indian workers for the British to underscore the correlation between the British Raj exploiting Indian labour and the ill-treatment of Asian workers in the UK implying that in both cases Asian employees were an "unwelcome necessity" (Hingorani 2010: 20–21, 25). *Inkalaab* (1980) focused on a historical event in India in 1919, the 'Amritsar massacre' when General Reginald Dyer opened fire on peaceful and unarmed demonstrators. The play makes a connection between the repressive Rowlatt Act in India which enabled the police to arrest any person without any reason and the so-called "Sus-law" in Britain that was a stop and search law that permitted the police officer to stop, search and potentially arrest anyone they found suspicious (Hingorani 2010: 26). Last, but not least, Verma's opposition to a 'colour blind' casting policy was one of the fundamental artistic tenets of *Tara Arts*. The representation of 'difference' was crucial for him because the audience cannot "be oblivious to my colour or the colour of the actors … . It is part of what makes me particular in the world today" (Verma 1996c: 201).

formula, the so-called *Binglish*, to designate the performances with Asian or black actors and produced by independent theatre groups (Verma 1996c: 194).[3] The aim of these theatre activities was to provoke or challenge fixed and dominant conventions on the British stage (the process discussed by Aaltonen 2000).

The word *Binglish* refers to the form of spoken English used by Asians in Great Britain as well as a *process*: "Asian and black life in modern Britain is self-evidently 'not-quite English'; and, equally, is characterized by the striving to 'be English'" (Verma 1996c: 194).[4] In other words, *Binglish* denotes not only modes of speech, but first and foremost, the way minorities find their place (and space) within English society: "If language is a way of structuring the world, then *Binglish* more accurately reflects the fractured world – the overlapping world – that is modern Britain" (Verma 1999: 198). It is this ambivalence, according to Verma, which characterises those minorities and which has been chosen as a distinctive feature of the new theatre praxis.

Binglish productions, which are a form of intercultural theatre, have four distinguishing traits. Firstly, they include the perspective of an "outsider" because minorities participate in British culture in a different and ambivalent way. Secondly, there is the use of 'other' texts. By the term 'other' texts Verma means a broad spectrum of European texts and their adaptations, new texts written by Asian and black writers, as well as texts from Asia and Africa. Their 'otherness' is based on provocation. The word *provoke* is used in a number of meanings: to excite or enrage but also to stimulate or irritate. Through this multi-layered understanding of the word, provocation should lead to novel ways of perception and re-interpretation of the classics (Verma 1996c: 195–196) (which will be demonstrated through the example of the play *Tartuffe*). The third characteristic feature of *Binglish* productions is "flirting with the English language" (Verma 1996c: 197) and introducing linguistic heteroglossia on the British stage. In the opinion of Verma, this aspect of multilingualism of drama is constitutive for *Binglish* performances:

> *Langue* … has therefore come to mean language, accent and mode of speech. And it is these varieties of *langue* that [English] audiences are having to negotiate in Binglish productions. Such negotiation of *langue*, I would argue, is a defining feature of Binglish … . It is this negotiation that modern audiences are most obviously confronted with in Binglish productions …; introducing them to a greater auditory experience and, by implication, challenging them … to acquire a wider auditory range. These varying languages – Caribbean, Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Ghanaian, Nigerian, Somali – form part of the linguistic map of modern Britain: they cannot be expected to be absent from modern British theatre.
>
> (Verma 1996c: 198)

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[3] He appropriated the term *Binglish* from the word used by contemporary Singaporeans to describe their spoken language, *Singlish.*

[4] See also Verma, *Binglish: A Jungli Approach to Multi-Cultural Theatre* (1996a).

The last distinctive trait of Binglish productions is the form of their presentation. These performances use imagery and other modes of scenic expression from non-European parts of the world, challenging the dominant European conventions. *Tara Arts*, for one, employs stage vocabularies of "movement, music and imagery" that are based on classical Indian aesthetics and draw from *Nāṭya Śāstra*, one of the earliest treatises on the theatre (composed about 400 AD) (Verma 1996c: 199).

3. Asian Tara Arts Theatre Company

Tara Arts was initiated by Jatinder Verma, who dubs himself a "translated man". He was born in Tanzania of Indian parents and raised in Nairobi, Kenya. He came to Britain as part of the Exodus of Kenyan Asians in 1968, at the age of 14 (Hingorani 2010: 18). Verma understands the word *trans-lation* literally as a "carrying over" (in his case from Africa to Britain), (and) in the case of his actors from various cultures and languages to the English culture and language (Verma 1999: 193).[5]

Asian Tara Arts Theatre Company started its activities in 1976 as a form of response to the racist murder of a 17-year-old Sikh youth, Gurdip Singh Chaggar in London (Verma 1996b: 284; Ley 1997: 349).[6] Verma was at university and the two other men who set up the company with him were studying law. They all reacted in the same way: "we need to do something" (Ley 1997: 349). In one of the interviews, Verma recalls: "I talked with friends about producing a magazine or making a film. But a theatre company seemed more practical and it involved immediate conversation with audiences. We wanted to make a statement that we were here to stay" (Verma 2020). Later, Verma specified its objectives as finding "a public voice as and for Asians" (Verma 1999: 192). Furthermore, *Tara Arts* aim was to "undermine the dominant convention of the modern English stage – the spoken word" by, among other means, introducing discourse with classical Indian dramaturgy. As he trenchantly put it "Gesture became speech, as much as a phrase of music a sentence – or the passage of time" (Verma 1998: 129).

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5 See also, Verma (1994: 57).

6 Gurdip Singh Chaggar was stabbed to death in Southall, West London on 4th June 1976. This unprovoked murder of a Sikh student by a gang of white youths, had an immediate impact on the Asian community. Hundreds of local Asians took to the streets to express their anger over Chaggar's death. The protests put centre stage the overt racism promoted by Enoch Powell and the National Front (NF). In consequence the Southall Youth Movement was established due to a communal desire for direct action. The SYM continued to be instrumental, both in defending Southall's Asian population against the threat of racism and in helping to inspire the foundation of other Asian youth organisations across the UK (Ramamurthy 2013; Ley 1997: 349); https://archive.discoversociety.org/2019/04/03/gurdip-singh-chaggar-the-southall-youth-movement-and-the-background-to-april-1979/. For an extensive discussion of race and discrimination, see Loomba (1998).

4. *Tradaptation*

Verma borrowed the term tradaptation (compound of *translation* and *adaptation*) from the French Canadian director Robert Lepage, who also appropriated it from his translator Michel Garneau to denote the "annexation of old texts for new cultural contexts" (Verma 1996c: 198). The term accentuates the processes of translation and transformation which are in operation during the modification and negotiation of source culture traditions and languages into the target culture. While Lepage and Garneau worked on European and Canadian texts, Verma used the form of tradaptation to express the heterogenic identity of British Asians, "Binglishing the English stage" (Verma 1999: 198).[7]

Verma used this term for the first time to describe his production of Molière's *Tartuffe* directed for the Royal National Theatre in 1990. As the first non-white director employing a wholly Asian cast, he decided to challenge the existing conventions (to provoke, to use Verma's vocabulary) and introduce a new form "to stimulate other ways of seeing" (Verma 1999: 193) (as discussed above). He recorded his objectives in a production notebook at that time:

> I am setting out to translate a seventeenth-century French farce through an all-Asian company of performers. This entails a double translation: once from the French original to English; and secondly to an English spoken by Asian actors, who have their own history of acquisition of English speech. In other words, who are themselves 'translated' men and women – in that they (or their not-too distant forebears) have been 'borne across' from one language and culture to another. In order then to lay bare the full dimension of 'translation', I must take account of the specificity of my performers (their history): by conveying Molière's original play-text into a form that allows the performers to make creative connections between their ancestral traditions and their English present.
>
> (Verma 1999: 194)

Tradaptation, as stated by Verma, is a thorough transformation and reconsideration of a classic text and then its translation and translocation to a new cultural, non-European aesthetic context (Cameron 2000: 17). Its aim is to induce the viewer to confront her/himself through the exposition to a re-written (Aaltonen 2000: 75) (most often) canonical playtext (Morini 2022: 48, 57).

The choice of texts by Verma is never haphazard because each time it is based on extensive research and the attempt to establish a relation to the contemporaneous socio-political context (Ley 1997: 355).[8] And in the case of Molière it was no different. Verma sheds light on the selection of this play in the nineties:

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7 This theatre praxis employed by other theatrical companies was discussed by Buonanno, Sams & Schlote (2011).

8 See note 1. For an extensive discussion of the connections between Verma's stagings and current social and political issues, see Hingorani (2010).

> This comic farce exposing the sham of religiosity seemed an obvious choice: barely a year had elapsed since the fatwa pronounced on Salman Rushdie and it seemed to me [Verma] that *Tartuffe* offered a salutary reminder of the absurd actions that sometimes pass under the guise of religious fervour. … The political circumstances certainly played a part in choosing to work on this particular story.
>
> (Verma 1999: 193)

It is noteworthy to refer again to Aaltonen's apposite findings and observations about the functioning of foreign playtexts in the receiving culture. As maintained by the Finnish scholar, theatre is always a form of response to the current issues arising in a given community: "The role of foreign plays is significant in lending a voice to a range of issues which are on the agenda of the entire society or important for some section in it. There are many examples where foreign classics have been brought into the service of a patriotic cause and subverted to serve local issues" (Aaltonen 2000: 90).

Verma noticed correspondences between the comic traditions in Molière's comedies (which were influenced by *commedia dell'arte*)[9] and *bhavai* (Gujarati-based popular theatre conventions) (Verma 1999: 193; Ley 1997: 354),[10] hence his production combined both theatre praxis in the form of the play-within-play staged by a pair of wandering actors from the Deccan province. This in turn was framed by a visit of a French traveller Françoise Bernier[11] to the court of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.[12] The play is relocated to seventeenth century India in a period of India's history which was parallel to that in which Molière

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9 There are numerous parallels in Molière's plays with the *commedia dell'arte* because he wrote several adaptations of plays derived from such comedy. Also, he borrowed some of his characters from the *commédia dell'arte*, reproducing both their names and their behaviour. The similarities are not only textual but also in thee acting style: physical and verbal virtuosity, and above all the use of facial expressions to demonstrate his characters' emotions. The creative process was based on improvisation as the *commédia dell'arte* actors understood it: a continual adaptation of the shows' content to fit the need of a particular performance for a concrete audience (Andrews 2005; Bourqui & Carrà 2022).

10 See also Buonanno, Sams & Schlote (2011: 5).

11 Bernier was a friend of Molière who travelled to the court of this emperor between 1660–1676 (Verma 1998: 131; Buonanno, Sams & Schlote 2011: 5). France started its colonial expansion in India in the second half of the 17th century. The French East India Company was formed under the auspices of Cardinal Richelieu. In 1673, the French acquired the area of Pondicherry (Pondichéry) and under their administration it developed from a small fishing village into a flourishing port-town. "French India" (accessed 11/03/2023), https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/India,_French.

12 Aurangzeb (1658–1707) was the sixth emperor of the Mughal Empire and under his emperorship, the Mughals captured nearly the entire Indian subcontinent. His reign is characterised by quick military expansion and his conquests acquired him the title *Alamgir* ("Conqueror"). His biographer, Brown (2007: 78), noted "The very name of Aurangzeb seems to act in the popular imagination as a signifier of politico-religious bigotry and repression, regardless of historical accuracy".

originally wrote it. One of the actors proposes to entertain the emperor by performing the play written by a certain "Mooliey"[13] and translated from "farangis" by a fellow actor-cum-poet Pandit Ravi Varma.[14] The ruler accepts this type of entertainment pointing out to the French guest that it would be "a fitting tale to recount to your king on your return – how, in the courts of Aurangzeb, in far-off Hindustan, you were reminded of home!" (*Tartuffe*, 2).

According to Buoananno, Sams & Schlote, the emperor's approval of the performance by the actors from Deccan (a region hostile to Mughal rule) depicts the tyrant Aurangzeb as a more tolerant sovereign than contemporary Iran ayatollahs. The scholars state that:

> in the wake of Khomeini's decree and its violent suppression of dissent, and of its global consequences for Rushdie and for Muslims worldwide, the play's satire of false piety and patriarchal tyranny within a Hindu household … highlights the ways in which the entwining of the domestic, the local, and the global is neither a strictly Muslim nor uniquely contemporary phenomenon.
>
> (Buonanno, Sams & Schlote 2011: 6)

5. *Tartuffe* tradapted by Verma

The translation of *Tartuffe* by Verma is a model example of tradaptation, in other words of relocating the classics into new cultural contexts. As it was stated above, in the case of this type of drama translation the stress is laid on cultural transformation. In what follows, the tradaptation (translation and adaptation) will be examined on two planes: micro- and macro-textual.

On the macrotextual level Verma changed the structure of the play, limited the *dramatis personae*, shortened or omitted the scenes and introduced new threads. As it was discussed above, Verma used the convention of the play-within-play and introduced a frame play (the visit of a French traveller and a troupe of actors to the court of the emperor Aurangzeb). The actors propose to stage a play entitled "A tale of Tartufee-ji in the House of Orgon" (*Tartuffe*, 20). The play is composed of three parts (similarly to Molière's first version of the comedy) and ends with the expulsion of Orgon and his family from their house which is taken over by Tartufee-ji. This denouement is criticised by the Minister who threatens the Poet with death so that he is forced to compose a happy ending. It is an allusion to the complex history of the composition of Molière's comedy and hostile attitude towards it in the court of Louis XIV (Peacock 2006: 185).[15]

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13 Jatinder Verma, *Tartuffe: A "Translation" from the Play by Moliere*, 2 (Script unpublished), Tara Arts Archive. Hereafter cited as *Tartuffe* in parenthesis in the main text.

14 Obviously, the name of the poet-actor-translator who performs in front of the emperor is an allusion to the name of the director of the play Jatinder Verma, who translated Molière's comedy.

15 Although *Tartuffe* was received well by the public and even by Louis XIV, it immediately

Verma depicts the intrigues in the emperor's court evoking the scheming against Molière to demonstrate that the criticism and curtailing of the freedom of artistic expression in seventeenth century France, India or contemporary Iran (Rushdie's affair), although it can take various forms, is essentially the same in its nature. The Minister shrewdly and successfully incites the emperor against the artists:

> Minister: I fear these performers may have tricked us, Majesty.
> Emperor: Explain yourself.
> Minister: This poet – even if he were only echoing the words of that foreigner, Muliey – is denying Justice. Consider, Majesty, to suggest that no justice exists in this world – that in this world a hypocrite and trickster can, in the sacred name of God, turn evil into good – is to deny even that a just Emperor exists, an Emperor who has the power to do good. This can scarcely be an apt message for our foreign guest to take back to his King in far-off France!
> Emperor: I am Justice!
> Minister: Just so, your Majesty – a fact this poet and his woman here have chosen to ignore.
> Emperor: Cut off their heads!
>
> (*Tartuffe*, 31)

Additionally, the nuance that the same actor plays the role of sultan and then Orgon in a mask, foregrounds the inextricable relationship between absolute power and bigotry. Noël Peacock (2006: 186) maintains that Verma's tradaptation shows the close relation between politics and religion, reflecting those countries in which absolute power is upheld by fundamental religious beliefs and practices.

The frame of the play is based on the convention of popular Indian theatre. The poet-actor puts on the mask of Ganesha[16] and begins composing the play

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precipitated conflict among various groups who were offended by the play's portrayal of the clergy. The factions opposed to Molière's work included the hierarchy of the French Catholic Church as well as members of the bourgeois and aristocracy. *Tartuffe*'s popularity declined when the archbishop of Paris issued an edict threatening excommunication for anyone who watched, performed in, or read the play. Molière attempted to assuage church officials by rewriting his play to be more secular and less critical of religion, but the archbishop would not budge. The revised, second version of the play was called *L'Imposteur* and it was staged only once. Throughout Molière's conflict with the church, Louis XIV continued to support him. Although public performances of the play were banned, private stagings were organised. In 1669, after Molière's detractors lost much of their influence, he was finally allowed to perform the final version of his play. Originally, the play was in three acts and was first staged on 12 May 1664. Because of the attacks on the play and the ban that was placed on it, this version was never published, and no text has survived, giving rise to much speculation as to whether it was a work in progress or a finished piece. The second version, *L'Imposteur*, was in five acts and performed only once, on 5 August 1667. The largely-final, revised third version in five acts, under the title *Tartuffe, ou L'Imposteur*, appeared on 5 February 1669 at the Palais-Royal theatre and was highly successful. This version was published and is the one that is generally performed today.

16 Ganesha – is one of the best-known Hindu deities. He has an elephant's head and a man's body.

with its trunk. The actress recites a ritual prayer in Hindi and explains the play (exposition [*Tartuffe*, 2–3]). The entire exposition is written in verse, which again is a reference to Molière's comedy. Furthermore, on the macrotextual level, Verma crossed out the characters of Valere (Orgon's daughter's suitor), Cleante (Orgon's brother-in-law) and some servants and introduced new figures of the Poet, who composes and translates the play, talks to other performers as well as the audience (who is an emanation of the role of Verma in creating a new theatrical form), the actress (the Poet's partner), who also talks to other characters of the play, the audience and the Poet to nag him to compose further parts of the play, and the figures of Aurangzeb, the Minister and Bernier.

On the microtextual level, Verma replaced the European cultural realities with Indian ones. Since the place of action is the seventeenth-century India, every culture-specific element refers to this period and place. Here are several examples from various areas of life: religion ("Ganesha", "Ravana", "Parvati", "Sita", "Shaitan", "Hanuman", the belief in reincarnation [*Tartuffe*, 1, 21, 10, 12, 12, 17, 20, 16]); customs ("caste of Brahmin priests", "caste of Untouchables", "Tamasha" – a grand show, performance, "circle the fire seven times as man and wife", "spend one's life praying on the banks of Ganges", "fakir" [*Tartuffe*, 2, 2, 4, 8, 22, 15]), forms of address ("Bernier-sahib", "Ji sahib?" [*Tartuffe* 2, 4]), proper nouns (Almirah (Orgon's wife), Bibi (Orgon's mother), Munmauji (Orgon's daughter), Tameez (Orgon's son), Zhorbai (the maid), the suffix –ji added to the end of the names to express respect: Tartuffe-ji, Almirah-ji, Orgon-ji [*Tartuffe*, 24, 22]), the forms of greetings and farewell ("Namaskar", "Salaam" [*Tartuffe*, 6, 20]), names of garments ("kameez" – a long tunic, "dhoti" – traditional male item of clothing, "salwar" – a pair of light, loose, pleated trousers [*Tartuffe*, 4, 4, 12, 14, 17]), food names ("brain massaal", "quails in tandoor", "saffron", "sherbet" [*Tartuffe*, 4, 4, 12, 20]), illnesses ("kala-azhira", "Dum-dum fever", "Delhi boil" [*Tartuffe*, 4]) and some other lexemes not included in the previous categories (e.g.: "Durbar" – the court of an Indian ruler, "kismet" – destiny, "Koh-i-noor" – diamond, "chup" – be quiet! [*Tartuffe*, 1, 3, 15, 18]). I will quote one excerpt *in extenso* to illustrate the process of replacing the culture-bound components – it is the scene of the first meeting of Orgon and the fakir Tartuffe in an Indian temple. The text tradapted by Verma:

> *Orgon:* Oh, if only you had seen him that first morning I met him … . He came into the *temple* … wearing a face like that of the great *Buddha*. Gently *sat cross-legged* next to me – a simple coat on his body, a yellow *sash* round his waist, dirt on the soles of his feet, the very picture of a man who has found God's ear by devotion alone! He mumbled *mantras*, kissed the dung-caked floor time and again and when I got ready to leave, he ran on ahead to offer me, at the *temple* gate, holy water from

Being 'a scribe' of the Mahabharata who allegedly wrote down the text to Vyasa's dictation, he is a patron of the arts and sciences.

> the *Ganges* itself … . And since that day it [my house] has flourished as if graced by *Goddess Lakshmi* herself!
>
> (*Tartuffe*, 5, emphasis added)

Let us juxtapose the episode with the text of the comedy by Molière (in English):

> *Orgon*: Oh, had you seen Tartuffe as I first knew him
> Your heart, like mine, would have surrendered to him.
> He used to come to our church each day
> And humbly kneel nearby, and start to pray.
> He'd draw the eyes of everybody there
> By the deep fervor of his heartfelt prayer;
> He'd sigh and weep, and sometimes with a sound
> Of rupture he would bend and kiss the ground; …
> At length, Heaven prompted me to take him in
> To dwell with us, and free our souls from sin.
>
> (*Tartuffe*, 12, [trans. R.Wilbur])

On the basis of this sample scene we can observe how deeply the text was changed by the translator to mirror the Indian culture: the church was altered to a temple, God to Buddha, kneeling to sitting cross-legged, praying to mumbling mantras, the holy water to the water from the Ganges, and Heaven to Goddess Lakshmi.

Most of the realia in Verma's tradaptation is easily understood or at least recognizable by the English audience, but there is also a number of lexemes that are incomprehensible and not translated. For example words such as "Durbar", "tamasha", "Raam, Raam!", "Namaskar", "Shabaash", "Shantih", "Tujhko paana zindagi hai…", "Jai Shiv Shankar", "bhaia", "haraam zada" (*Tartuffe*, 1, 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 29),[17] which are used in their original form without any explanation. In the entire play there are more than sixty inclusions in Hindi, Punjabi and Bengali, which foreignise the performance and do not allow the audience to forget that they are watching Molière from the Indian perspective. This heteroglossia is a deliberate artistic decision by Verma and a distinctive feature of his novel theatre praxis (*Binglish*). Verma wanted to trigger interaction among the multinational audience because he believes that "community is diverse":

> it creates a situation where different communities share different moments of engagement with a performance. Most interestingly, it creates a dialogue within the audience: what was he saying? what's so funny? why are people exclaiming? These are all the questions I have heard white members of the audience ask their Asian neighbors. These are moments of real frisson, where one section of the audience has the feeling of not being 'in'.
>
> (Verma 1999: 195)

[17] I wish to thank dr Sabina Sweta Sen-Podstawska for the explication of several words in Hindi and Bengali.

Many a time Verma criticised allegedly multicultural performances in which all actors (white and black) spoke more or less successfully with received pronunciation. Contrary to this approach, the cast in *Tartuffe* uses various languages, dialects and accents.[18]

To conclude, Jatinder Verma's theatre praxis is emblematic of the creative approach to stage translation in intercultural theatre. He invented the concept of *Binglish* and introduced not only various dialects of English but also different languages into *Tara Arts* performances, breaking out of the received pronunciation straitjacket. His practice of tradaptation, that is, relocation of classical texts into new cultural contexts when the original text is *re-written* to suit the socio-political needs of the receiving community, took precedence over the much-explored theoretical categories (performability and speakability) used to analyse drama translation in traditional forms of theatre. Hopefully, this essay has proved that in discussing stage translation we should focus not only on the terms that may be employed for analysis but rather on the type of theatre for which a given translation is produced.

As the first minority company to garner support from the Arts Council England, Verma's first English-language Asian theatre paved the way for other ethnic theatres to establish their artistic form (Tamasha, Kali, and Yellow Earth, among others). Initially, they followed in the *Tara Arts* footsteps but later developed their own unique voice (Crow & Banfield 1996; Gilbert & Tompkins 1996). At present, *Tara Arts* continues to respond to the current social and political issues in post-Brexit Britain (e.g., in 2015, Verma directed a touring version of *Macbeth* featuring transgender Hijras as the witches, and in 2017 he co-produced the staging of *Combustion*, a play confronting the issue of child sexual exploitation).[19] In the speech announcing his stepping down, Jatinder Verma trenchantly summed up his career: "Salman Rushdie memorably talked of introducing a 'different sort of noise in English' with the publication of his ground-breaking novel *Midnight's Children*. The past 40 years have seen British Theatre take on the challenge of embracing difference, with a host of new writers, directors, performers and designers. I feel privileged to have played a part in changing the landscape of modern theatre. While cultural diversity has increasingly become an accepted norm, the challenge of diversity, sadly, remains as acute as ever (staff writer)" (Verma 2020). However, he observed that it was an exciting time for a new generation of artistic leaders to continue the "connecting worlds" story of *Tara Arts* theatre.

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18 Verma quoted by Cameron (2000: 21).

19 Thanks to Verma's continuous efforts, *Tara Arts* is the only BAME company to own a distinctive theatre building. It echoes his vision of connecting worlds because it combines architectural elements from India and Britain (IANS 2016). In 2020, Verma stepped down and handed over *Tara Arts* to the new artistic director Abdul Shayek.

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