Appendix

An Interview with Girish Karnad

The following interview of Girish Kamad was taken through email. The questions were emailed to him on 26 October 2011. The researcher received the email reply on 23 November 2011.

Researcher: You have written 12 plays in Kannada, with one of them a rewritten play (Odakalu Bimba). Seven of these have been translated to English. One has been written only in English (Flowers) and one more has been rewritten in English (Bali: The Sacrifice)

Karnad: All of them have been rewritten in different editions. I don’t believe in a fixed text. Bali was commissioned by the Leicester Haymarket Theatre. So was in English. It is not a translation of Hittina Hunja, but totally original.

Researcher: Can you ratify the year or duration during which you wrote these plays?

Karnad: Your list seems correct.

Researcher: Why did you choose to translate to English and in the later phase to Kannada yourself?

Karnad: I chose to translate into English since I wanted my plays to be available to anyone anywhere in India as I meant them to be understood. If I had known Hindi I would have translated them into Hindi. But I don’t. I work with the Hindi Translators closely. When someone wants to translate my play into Kashmiri or Nepali, I advise the translator to use both Hindi and English, since English cannot convey vernacular activities, ritualistic or Sanskrit words.

Researcher: What made you self-translate?
Karnad: Translating plays is a very tough job and unless the translators have been on stage (in English) themselves and know how English dialogue is spoken, they make a hash of the spoken rhythm—as most Indians who translate plays into English do. If I translate myself I can control not only the words used, but also the rhythm of the sentences, the pauses, the exclamations etc.

Researcher: Is self-translation a different process compared to translation?

Karnad: Yes, I can take liberties with the translation of my own play, use a better phrase or even a different one if it occurs to me in English, very often passages in English are different than in Kannada.

Researcher: You have translated Mahesh Elkunchawar’s from Marathi to Kannada and Badal Sircar’s from Bengali to English. How was this process different from translating your own works?

Karnad: Of course. With Mahesh particularly since I was translating from Marathi I was careful to be as close to the original as possible. In Mahesh, even pauses, exclamations and curses are very important. As important as the spoken dialogue. So I used North Karnatak Kannada dialect of the Brahmins which is very close to his idiom.

Researcher: Do you know others who self-translate in India and abroad?

Karnad: Tagore with disastrous results. Samuel Becket.

Researcher: How far concerns of faithfulness apply to self-translations?

Karnad: Answered above

Researcher: Although you are quite proficient in Hindi, why did you not translate to it?

Karnad: I am not proficient in Hindi.
Researcher: You also know Marathi and Konkani. Did you not think of writing or translating in these languages?

Karnad: No. I know Marathi well enough to judge a translation but not to translate myself. Why should I translate plays into Konkani?

Researcher: What say did you have in determining the paratexts in your texts?

Karnad: Never heard that word before.

Researcher: Was *Odakalu Bimba* first rewritten in English or Kannada?

Karnad: Both. In parts.

Researcher: What were the plays done for Madras players?

Karnad: *Evarn Indrajit*.

Researcher: What was the motivation to translate the English plays to Kannada?

Karnad: The only plays I wrote in English first are *Bali, Flowers, and Dreams of Tipu Sultan*. *Flowers* was written for Naseeruddin Shah although he didn’t do it. Hence in English. *Dreams of Tipu Sultan* was written for BBC Radio on the 50th Anniversary of Indian Independence and so was meant broadcast in English. All the archival material was available in English.

Researcher: Are you going to translate *Yayati* back to Kannada?

Karnad: I rewrote it in Kannada first.

Researcher: Have there been English translations of Kannada plays even before the Kannada plays were published? I suspect *Nagamandala* to be that. Why did you delay English publication of *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* and *Nagamandala*?

Karnad: The publishers may have delayed the publications. No particular reason.
Researcher: What strategies you use to translate your titles?

Karnad: Make them crisp with a clear reference to the Kannada title.

Researcher: Are translation and self-translation different processes.

Karnad: Of course.