

Role of Translation in Girish Karnard's *Hayavadana*

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Abstract

Girish Karnard well known playwright of Kannada. His plays have been translated into English and some Indian languages. Kannada is his language of choice. When Karnard started writing plays, Kannada literature was highly influenced by the renaissance in Western literature. Writers would choose a subject that looked entirely alien to manifestation of native soil. Translation during this period became part of larger process of resistance to alien domination and a determining factor in the expression of cultural identity and the reassertion of the native self. Girish Karnard is the most celebrated media personality in the contemporary India and a leading playwright. *Hayavadana* is a play on the search of identity in the midst of twisted relationships. Devadatta, the man of intellect and kapila, the man of the body, are two close friends. Devadatta and Padmini are married, but kapila falls in love with padmini .as a result the two friends kill themselves. But the comic feel is seen when padmini transposes their heads, giving Devadatta Kapila's body and Kapila Devadatta's. Karnard's plays are chiefly written in Kannada and then translated into other languages. He has enriched the Indian literary scene by his part to art, culture, theatre and drama. But the most significant contribution which he has made to Indian English Drama is his go to regain the cultural and mythological rich tradition of the Indian past. In his plays we find that he returns to the roots and tries to restore the local culture and tradition. Girish Karnard is one such dramatist who makes an attempt to retrieve the treasure of culture and tradition.

Keywords: Role of translation, Supernatural element, use of language...

Translation of the novel *Hayavadana* from Sanskrit to English

Hayavadana (1971) was based on a theme drawn from *The Transposed Heads*, a 1940 novella by Thomas Mann, which is originally found in the 11th-century Sanskrit text *Kathasaritsagara*. Herein he employed the folk theatre form of Yakshagana. A German

version of the play was directed by Vijaya Mehta as part of the repertoire of the Deutsches National Theatre, Weimar. Much of these folk traditions and culture have survived into the contemporary era through the effective medium of folk theatre. The main plot of the play *Hayavadana* begun with Kapila, who finds his best friend Devadatta glumly dreaming about Padmini. Kapila went to arrange Devadatta's marriage .and he realizes that Padmini is as clever as she is beautiful. Although Kapila is fascinated to her, he never exposed it, and Devadatta and Padmini are married. Padmini is herself attracted to the strong – bodied Kapila, and Devadatta is obsessive by jealousy. After their marriage the three travels to Ujjain to affair. On the way of the Kali temple the two men behead themselves in the Kali temple. The pregnant Padmini, afraid that she might be accused for their deaths, then decides to kill herself. Kali stops her and offers to bring the men back to life. Padmini rearranges the heads so that Devadatta's head is on Kapila's body and associate the same to Devadata's body and asks the goddess to do her magic.

KALI (sleepy): Yes, it's me. There was a time –many many years ago-when at this hour they would have the *mangalarati*. The devotees used to make a deafening racket with drums and conch-shells and cymbals. So I used to be wide awake around now. I've lost the habit. (yawns.) Right. What do you want? Tell me. I 'm pleased with you.

PADMINI : Save me Mother.....(32)

In the puzzlement that ensues after the transposition of heads, Padmini makes it clear that she wants to be with the Devadatta head/Kapila body. Her wish is granted by an ascetic who mediates the contradictory claims from both men to be her husband. With his new body Devadatta returns to the city with Padmini and they begin a delightful marital life. Karnad introduces two dolls that Devadatta presents to Padmini as gifts for the anticipated child. Karnad through the use of dolls reveals very effectively to the audience the thought processes and inner psyche of character. The two Dolls brought by Devadatta from the Ujjain fair talk with each other, but their conversation is inaudible to the other characters.

DEVADATTA : Why are you –crying?

KAPILA : What's wrong?

PADMINI : What shall I tell you, Devadatta? How can In explain it, Kapila? you cut off your heads- but the goddess gave you life-but-I-I-in the darkMother ,only you can protect me now –Mother !I –Mixed up your heads –I mixed them up! Forgive me –I don't deserve to live –forgive me...

KAPILA (looking at Devadatta): You mixed up (32)

Girish Karna belonging to the postcolonial group of writers, his plays is rich in Indian responsiveness and tradition, drawing brainwave heavily from the classical Indian dramatic tradition, myths, legends and folktales. He has always taken his inspiration from the Indian mythology, history and folklore. In his plays he has endeavored to keep the Indian spirit and ethos whole through the use of a wide range of techniques and devices adopted from the folk theatre, story-within-a-story, supernatural elements, etc. In fact, Karnad's contribution to the revival of the art of folk theatre by bringing it out of regional context into the mainstream of national theatre is immense and noteworthy. Through their own dialogues, the dolls describe the dynamic changes occurring in the family.

KAPILA : But what has she got to do with you now?
 DEVADATTA (stops) : What do you mean?
 KAPILA : I mean Padmini must come with me, shouldn't she? She's my wife, so he must.... (Exclamations from Devadatta and Padmini)
 PADMINI : What are you talking of Kapila?
 KAPILA : I mean, you are Devadatta's wife. I have Devadatta's body now. So you have to be my wife...
 PADMINI : Shut up.... (36)

Devadatta's body changes from its rough beefy Kapila-nature to a soft, pot-bellied Brahmin body. This expose that Padmini has given birth to a disfigured son and that she has now begun dreaming about Kapila again. Use of dolls by Karnard the theatrical device through which Padmini sends Devadatta to Ujjain. So she can use his absence to sneak away with the child to the forest where Kapila resides. Back in the forest, Padmini finds the rough and well-built Kapila again. He is surprised to see Padmini, and she reveals her desire for his well-muscled body. Devadatta, armed with a sword and two new dolls, finds the lovers, and the two men decide to kill each other since their love for Padmini cannot be submissive. Padmini then decides to commit Sati. She entrusts the boy to Bhagavata and leaves instructions for him to be raised both as Kapila's son and as Devadatta's son. Similarly Hayavadana is the son of a prince who had fallen in love with a horse. It is a Gandharva cursed to be horse for a misdemeanor. His problem is how to get rid of his horse's head... In response to Hayavadana's prayer the goddess makes him a complete horse, not a complete man and into this, Hayavadana still leftovers with his human voice. His release is complete only when the five year child of the woman in the transposed heads story asks to laugh and the laugh soon turns into a proper neigh.

Conclusion

The colonial period saw a spurt in translations between European languages and Indian languages, especially Sanskrit. While there were exchanges between German, French, Italian, Spanish and Indian languages. English was considered privileged by its hegemonic status as it

was used by the colonizers. The British phase of translation into English culminated in William Jones's translation of Kalidasa's *Abhijananashakuntalam*. *Shakuntalam* as a text has now become a marker of India's cultural prestige and one of the primary texts in Indian consciousness. This explains how it came to be translated into more than ten Indian languages in the 19th century. The (colonial) British attempts in translation were determined by the orientalist ideology and need for the new rulers to grasp, define, categorize and control India. They created their own version of India while the Indian translators of texts into English sought to extend, correct, revise and sometime challenge the British understanding though the whole battle was fought around ancient texts rather than the contemporary ones. Raja Rammohan Karnad thus uses the logic of myth. *Hayavadana* and the boy in effect complete each other the one as a human child returned other as fully animal. In his plays we find that he returns to the roots and tries to revive the local culture and tradition. Karnad's contribution to the revival of the art of folk theatre by bringing it out of regional background into the mainstream of national theatre is immense and noteworthy. Girish Karnad is one such dramatist who makes an attempt to retrieve the treasure of culture and tradition. In the fields of philosophy, religion, linguistics and literary theory, Sanskrit renewed its role as a donor language for translations into English and other European languages. In fact in the nineteenth century, Europe discovered India as much as India discovered Europe and the mutual influence was perhaps equal.

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