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Introduction

The present study looks at the cultural transactions of the colonial period with reference to early modern Kannada literature, focusing on the writings and translations of B.M. Srikantia (1884-1946), popularly known as Kannadada Kanva (The Kama of Kannada), and the Acharya Purusha (The chief spiritual guide) of modern Kannada literature. This study tries to trace the development of nationalist thought in the context of Kannada literature and its relation to colonial discourse.

In this introductory chapter, I shall try to place the issue I have taken up for research in the context of postcolonial studies that informs the English discipline today. Then I have touched upon the issues that I have taken up to examine in this study - the issues of colonialism, nationalism and the question of "English". The main hypothesis of my study is to pinpoint the peculiarities of the nationalist discourse and its politics in the context of Kannada literature and to argue that in Princely Mysore/Kannada context we witness both pan-Indian and Kannada nationalism.

Since the publication of Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978) which exposes the complicity of orientalist discourse with colonial rule and the nexus of knowledge/power, there have been an increasing number of studies on our colonial past. One of the strands of these studies on colonial discourse took up the critical examination of the discipline of English at the end of the 1980s. Masks of Conquest (Vishwanthan. 1989) exposed the complicity of the language/discipline in the colonial project. Seminars were organized first in Delhi (late 1980s and early 90s), later in Hyderabad (mid 1990s), Bangalore (late 1990s)
and other places to address the uneasiness of the teachers of English with the
discipline. A part of the deliberations and proceedings of these seminars have
been published and widely discussed. Some of these publications include
Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India (Sunder Rajan, 1992). edited
Provocations (Ramanan, et.al., ) and Subject to Change (Tharu, 1998).

If English education or in general, English (both literature and language) is part of
the colonial discourse, then to which discourse do modern literatures in regional
languages or translations from English into regional languages, which were born
out of a zeal that came with the study of English literature in schools and colleges,
belong to? Can we say that the modern regional language literatures and
translations are derivative of the colonial discourse? If they are not, then we need
to explore in what way they are different from the colonial discourse and what is
the politics of this difference. By extension, this leads us to the question whether
there was a scope for the native elite to maneuver the colonial discourse. And also
to one more crucial issue: what is the relation between English education and the
native elite in the context of colonialism?

The question can also be framed in the following way: If what was taught in the
schools and colleges during the colonial period was colonial discourse, and it was
a move to colonize the natives, then what was the outcome of it? Did the native
elite who was educated in English get inscribed into the subject position of the
discourse of colonial education or did some other discourse emanate from the
mediation of the native English educated elite?

These questions have led to the analysis of the nationalist discourse in India. One
of the earliest studies on nationalist thinkers like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar.
Bankimchandra Chatterjee. Aurobindo and M.K. Gandhi is The Intimate Enemy:
Loss and Recovery of Self Under Colonialism (Nandy, 1988 (1983)). But the
pioneering study in analyzing the structure of nationalist discourse is Nationalist
Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse? (Chatterjee, 1986). In this book, Partha Chatterjee analyses cultural nationalism and traces the development of nationalist thought in India. After looking at the western liberal doctrines of nationalism and Marxist discussions of nationalism in general and in India in particular, he says that there is a seeming contradiction in Indian nationalism. According to him nationalism "produced a discourse in which even as it challenged the colonial claim to political domination, it also accepted the very intellectual premise of ‘modernity’ on which colonial domination was based” (Chatterjee, 1986: 30). The liberal and Marxist doctrines of nationalism do not explain this "contradiction”, according to Chatterjee.

He employs the categories, ‘thematic’ and ‘problematic’ to explain this seeming contradiction in nationalist thought. He tries to

separate the claims of an ideology, i.e. its identification of historical possibilities and the practical or programmatic forms of its realization, from its justificatory structures, i.e. the nature of the evidence it presents in support of those claims, the rules of inference it relies on to logically relate a statement of the evidence to a structure of arguments, the set of epistemological principles, and finally the set of ethical principles it appeals to in order to assert that those claims are morally justified.

He calls the former as problematic and the latter its thematic.

The thematic, in other words, refers to an epistemological as well as ethical system which provides a framework of elements and rules for establishing relations between elements: the problematic, on the other hand, consists of concrete statements about possibilities justified by reference to the thematic.

His contention is that

the problematic in nationalist thought is exactly the reverse of that of Orientalism. That is to say, the ‘object’ in nationalist thought is still the Oriental, who retains the essentialist character depicted in
Orientalist discourse. Only he is not passive, non-participating. He is seen to possess a 'subjectivity' which he can himself 'make'. In other words while his relationship to himself and to others is 'posed, understood and defined' by others, i.e. by an objective scientific consciousness, by Knowledge, by Reason, those relationships are not acted by others. His subjectivity, he thinks, is active, autonomous and sovereign (Chatterjee, 1986: 38).

Chatterjee is trying to show that at the level of the thematic the nationalist thought is adopting the same essentialist conceptions of 'the East' and 'the West', the 'typology created by a transcendent studying subject, and hence the same 'objectifying' procedures of knowledge constructed in the post-enlightenment age of western science'”. His central concern is to explore the 'relation between the content of nationalist discourse and the kind of politics which nationalism conducts'". He says that

It is part of the ideological content of nationalism, which takes as its adversary a contrary discourse- the discourse of colonialism. Pitting itself against the reality of colonial rule - which appears before it as an existent, almost palpable, historical truth - nationalism seeks to assert the feasibility of entirely political possibilities. These are its political claims which colonialist discourse haughtily denies (Chatterjee, 1986: 40).

Thus both colonial discourse and the national discourse share a similar epistemology of the post-enlightenment world (the thematic) but the arguments, which are derived from it, are different, as the politics of both the discourses are different. One seeks to produce a problematic that justifies its colonial rule; the other produces a problematic that questions the colonial rule. Further, Chatterjee tells us that the relation between nationalist discourse and the forms of modern western thought is not a simple relation of correspondence, or even of derivation. First of all nationalist thought is selective about what it takes from western
thought. He asserts that it is indeed deliberately and necessarily **selective**, as its politics is to oppose the colonial rule and reject the immediate political implications of colonial thought so that it can argue in favor of political possibilities which colonialist thought refuses to admit. **Chatterjee’s hypothesis** is that a nationalist discourse is "a different discourse, yet one that is dominated by another (colonial discourse)".

Then, using **Gramsci’s concept of ‘passive revolution’** he tries to show how through an historical process nationalist discourse constitutes itself. Gramsci, while trying to trace the ascendancy of bourgeois nationalists through a passive revolution in Italy identifies three moments of the process: The first is objective **structure**, 'independent of human will' that is conducive to claim hegemony. The second is relation of political forces, 'the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness and organization attained by various classes". The third is that of the relation of military forces.

Chatterjee uses certain nationalists texts from **India**, to be precise, that of Bankim Chandra - a Bengali writer of the colonial period, Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, by giving ideological unity to the diverse strands of nationalist thought, using the theoretical characterization based on Gramsci’s notion of passive revolution. He traces the historical constitution of this unity in terms of certain stages, which he calls as moments, "each having a specific form of combination of the thematic and the problematic and each bearing certain historical possibilities in terms of the relation of ‘subjective forces’".

i) The moment of departure: Here nationalism accepts the essential cultural difference between East and West. It asserts the superiority of the West in its material culture like science, **technology**, and the love of progress. But the East is seen as superior in the spiritual aspect of culture. Nationalism seeks to bridge this gap through modernization and by cultural synthesis. Chatterjee demonstrates this through the analysis of the writings of
Bankim Chandra. As this stage comprises an elitist program, it cannot mobilize the masses, who are essential for a capitalist transformation i.e., for a passive revolution.

ii) The moment of manoeuvre: It combines the war of movement and the war of position and historically consolidates the nation by decrying the ‘modern’, the preparation for expanded capitalist production, by resorting to an ideology of anti-capitalism. This moment is illustrated by a discussion of Gandhi’s thought.

iii) The moment of arrival: This is when nationalist thought attains its fullest development. Here it seeks to actualize itself in the unified life of the state and glosses over all earlier contradictions. This moment is illustrated by a study of the writings of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Chatterjee argues that ‘passive revolution’ is the general form of the transition from colonial to post-colonial national states in the 20th century. He further claims that his theoretical framework is not just applicable to Indian nationalism but also to nationalist thought in all colonial countries (Chatterjee, 1986: 50). In his later work The Nation and Its Fragments (1994) he reiterates this position:

(A)nti colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power. It does this by dividing the work of social institutions and practices into two domains the material and the spiritual. The material is the domain of the ‘outside’ of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology, a domain where the west had proved its superiority... The spiritual on the other hand is an 'inner” domain bearing the 'essential” mark of cultural identity…This formula is. I think, a fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa (Chatterjee, 1994: 6).
Partha Chatterjee's framework is indeed useful to analyze the nationalist discourse and pinpoint how in terms of problematic it is different from the colonial discourse. Also his analysis of nationalist discourse and women's question seems to hold good for the nationalist discourse in Princely Mysore/Kannada context. But the main problem is that in Princely Mysore we find other factors apart from a pan-Indian nationalist discourse. Prominent among these factors were the discourse of Kannada nationalism, loyalty towards the Maharaja of Princely Mysore and the Backward Class movement. These factors seem to have added to the complexity of the nationalist situation in Princely Mysore.

Partha Chatterjee clearly indicates that at the level of the problematic, we can relate the politics of a discourse to social classes and their interests:

> It is there (in the terrain of politics) that we can connect the ideology to its ‘social bases’, relate its theoretical claims to the state of the social structure and its dynamics, to the ‘interests’ of various social classes, their opposition as well as their coming together (Chatterjee. 1986:40-41).

In the case of the nationalist discourse, he traces the political claims of the nationalist discourse to the upper caste English educated elite group (the group that had newly emerged in the colonial period). But if there are multiple contradictory streams in a discourse which seem to be opposing each other at the level of problematic, how do we account for it? Partha Chatterjee, through his selection of texts and by giving a unity to the diverse strands of nationalist thought, escapes from this problem. He also divides the differences in the problematic of the nationalist thought into three phases, which share a relation of gradual evolution. He allows the possibility of change in the problematic if the historical forces change: "As historical conditions change so are new political possibilities thought out; the problematic undergoes a transformation within the
same structure of discourse" (Chatterjee. 1986: 41). But if we find different problematics within the same historical juncture how do we look at it?

What I am trying to suggest here is that if a particular historical bloc, the English educated elite, can change the colonial discourse into a nationalist one by changing the problematic to suit its needs, then isn’t it possible for another social class to change the colonial discourse into some other discourse by changing the problematic to suit its interests? My argument here is in the context of Princely Mysore where the historic specificities allowed a different kind of formulation of nationalist discourse. I shall talk about the specificity of the Princely Mysore Kannada context little later.

Political scientist G. Aloysius in his study Nationalism Without a Nation in India (1998) has argued that there was not one historical bloc in India during the colonial period, but two historical blocs, which were antagonistic to each other. For him, the elite bloc constitutes nationalism and the subaltern mass constitutes nation. Because these two blocs were antagonistic in nature. Aloysius says, the nation failed to emerge in India (Aloysius. 1998). Here Aloysius seems to be operating with an ideal notion of nation, which would encompass all the people social classes of that nation. But Aloysius’s point that there was no single historical bloc and the interaction between various historical blocs was antagonistic is well taken in the light of the various discourses that were prevailing during the colonial period and competing to be hegemonic discourses.

Here we can stretch Chatterjee’s theory of nationalist discourse a little bit to account for the existence of different historical blocs in India during the colonial period. The different social classes had different perceptions of nation and national movement. It is not that the nationalist elite did not make any attempt to have alliances or obtain the loyalty of these classes; the nationalist elite class did make an attempt and was also successful to some extent. But the question is that
of exploring the relationship between the colonial discourse, the nationalist discourse and various competing discourses.

My hypothesis here is that Karnataka, to be precise, Princely Mysore had a different socio-political setting during the colonial period. This point is discernible more easily at the outset in the sphere of politics. As I have taken up Kannada literature for analysis the problem of identifying a corresponding political entity for Kannada literature crops up. There was no corresponding single political entity for Kannada. The Kannada speaking regions of the colonial period were under various political/administrative regimes. Karnataka as a political entity materialized only in 1956, with the reorganization of states in India. But the formation of Kannada/Karnataka identity can be traced back to the late 19th century. Then Princely Mysore, a major Kannada-speaking region was under the indirect colonial rule, with the Maharaja, a Dewan, a Resident appointed by the British, a Representative Assembly and a Legislative council. Bellary and Mangalore were under the direct colonial rule of Madras Presidency. Kanvar, Dharwad, Belgaum and Bijapur were under the direct rule of Bombay presidency. Bidar, Gulbarga and Raichur were under the rule of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Apart from these regions there were several other princely states, a total of twenty in number. Each of these regions had its own historical and political peculiarity and it is very difficult to combine them in any analysis. So I have limited myself to Princely Mysore in this study, though I am looking at Kannada literature that emerged even in the other regions. Whenever it is necessary to make a comparison with other regions I have done so, though the central focus is on Kannada literature and in Princely Mysore.

James Manor, a political scientist who has worked on the socio-political changes during the colonial period in Princely Mysore, clearly states that given the enormous differences between the political systems established in British India and that of the princely states, any comparison between the two becomes difficult. He also warns that even a comparison between Mysore and other princely states is
difficult as the parallels are imperfect (Manor. 1977: 56). S. Chandrashekar, a historian of the nationalist struggle in South India, is not satisfied with the existing histories of colonial south India since most of them concentrate only on the Madras presidency, neglecting other regions. He suggests that the princely state of Mysore should be studied separately (Chandrashekar, 1985: 2).

If we analyze present day India's territory in terms of its political system during the colonial period, one-third of it comprised princely states ruled by Indian Kings, and constituted what Gandhi called "Indian India" as opposed to British India. Princely Mysore was hailed as a benevolent modern state. Gandhi went to the extent of calling it a Rama Rajya. S. Chandrashekar argues that the people of Mysore never thought that they were colonized (Chandrashekar, 1995: 266). If that was the case, then how did the issue of colonialism and nationalism come up at all? We don't see any major political events in Princely Mysore in the early part of 20th century. Only in the 1930s and 1940s were there some signs of Congress presence. In Mysore, Congress was explicitly dubbed as a Brahminical Party and was looked upon with suspicion by the people belonging to backward castes and dominant non-brahmin castes. These groups were mobilizing on the issue of entering the new institutions that were coming up in Princely Mysore with the modernization process. They spearheaded a backward caste movement which demanded reservation of jobs for the members of backward castes. Heeding to their demand, the Maharaja set up a committee headed by Miller. The Miller's committee recommended reservation to these backward castes in Government jobs. The Maharaja implemented the recommendations of the committee. But the Dewan who was unhappy with the reservation of jobs resigned from his position. The upper-caste groups, unhappy with the recommendations of Miller's Committee Report, seem to have veered towards the Congress party. But the official position of the Congress on Princely Mysore was that it was an Indian state. So, there was a difference of opinion between the Congress members from Princely Mysore and the national Congress body. The backward castes were with the Maharaja, and were opposing the Congress. But in
1937, both the groups, the Congress and Praja *Samyukta* Paksha (the party headed by backward castes), came together, and with this the Congress gained some ground in Princely Mysore. Only in the 1940s did the demand for responsible government, which was against the rule of Maharaja, arise in Princely Mysore and this can be read as an explicit statement about the indirect colonial rule. Thus the political events in Princely Mysore were entirely different from that of British India.

In this study, I am trying to see whether there exists any difference in the development of nationalist thought, if we look at cultural nationalism in Princely Mysore. My main focus is on early modern Kannada literature, specifically, B.M. Srikantia as he has been seen as the one who brought "renaissance" in Kannada literature.³ The emergence of modern Kannada literature is a result of the coming into contact of two different cultures at a particular historical juncture. When two cultures come into contact, and one of them is the culture of the dominant power and the other is a culture of the people subjugated by that power, the meeting takes place on an uneven plane. When they meet on an uneven ground, the kind of negotiations that takes place will be symptomatic of the power struggle that happens between the historical forces that partake in it. At this point, it is apt to explain what I mean by culture and what I mean by meeting of cultures. I use culture in the following sense - a signifying system that helps the members of a particular group to make sense of the world that is around them. The signifying system doesn't operate through abstract principles or get passed on to the new generation as an abstract rule to understand the world around it. It is embedded in our daily practices and activities and sometimes it also takes the form of textual representation which again gets passed on to other members. And culture is not a finished product but a process, which keeps on changing, as our perception of the world needs to change. New elements do erupt in a culture either within it due to the dynamics of its own processes or when it comes into contact with other cultures. According to Horni Bhabha, culture for its survival has to be always transnational and translational in a colonial and postcolonial context. When there
is a challenge from the hegemonic culture, the hegemonized culture tries to expand its boundaries to include new elements. The new elements enter either by being transnational, that is new elements from other cultures travel across the boundaries of a nation, or by being translational, that is new elements from other cultures travel across linguistic boundaries.

Travel and translation are two important means of transaction between cultures. These are the two means through which a culture changes itself to face new challenges to create new subject positions and signifying systems for its members, appropriate to the changing circumstances. Thus travel writing and translations offer good sites to explore the cultural transactions of the colonial period. But in this study, as I have focused on B.M. Srikantia, who has not written about travel. I focus only on the site of translation to look at the cultural transactions of the colonial period to explore the issue of nationalism, colonialism and modernity.

Translation is one of the crucial sites on which the encounter of cultures is easily discernible. Talal Asad, in fact calls the study of culture in ethnography as translation of culture, as the ethnographer, who hails from a different culture employs the categories of his/her culture to understand the culture of others (Asad. 1990). So other cultural elements get represented through the cultural elements of one's own culture. This was the case with the orientalists who took up the task of producing a body of knowledge on India. This creation of a body of knowledge is, as Tejaswini Niranjana has pointed out, also the process of the formation of "colonial subjects" and this formation depends on their representation in colonial discourse, which is a project of translation (Niranjana. 1992). Hence for her the notion of translation does not just indicate an "interlingual process" but indicates the problematic of representation and reality-authorized by traditional theories of translation, and also the problematic opened up by the poststructuralist critique of the theories, thus making translation always "more" than what is represented (Niranjana. 1992: 8). She has also pointed out
how through the project of translation, colonialism acquired a discursive power by subordinating the native texts to Eurocentric cultural narratives.

Veena Naregal in her study of the language politics during the colonial period in western India says that the colonizer tried to solve the "philosophical and cultural discontinuities between eighteenth century Europe and South Asia" by viewing it "as a 'mere' linguistic problem". For them the "potent technique of translation would iron out the cultural unfamiliarity" and "would place English as the new normative classical language against which the native vernaculars could be redefined and modernized" (Naregal. 2000b: 44). She further says that

To be fully effective, ways had to be devised for these discourses [English education] to be disseminated as a hegemonic programme of 'useful' learning among the natives. And if colonial discourse was to acquire a hegemonic influence, it needed to render itself more generally accessible: and this then brought up the question of its translation into the vernacular (Naregal. 2001b: 61. words in parenthesis are mine).

This process of translation of the colonial discourse into the vernacular resulted in the standardization of language and normalization of language forms, which in turn led to the emergence of vernacular language-based identities. Thus colonial subject formation and language-based identities are a product of English education, and as the above scholars have argued, are intrinsically related to the project of translation. Hence, the question of "English" during the colonial period doesn't just refer to language alone but signifies colonial subject formation, language-based identities, dissemination of both colonial discourse and nationalist discourse through the project of translation. English also signifies, as Tejaswini Niranjana has pointed out, the subordination of native texts to Euro-centric cultural narratives.
In order to probe the question of "English" in Kannada literature I have looked at the translations of the colonial period. Here I have used the term translation to describe the entire process of cultural transaction in the colonial period, including the process of “othering” and of constructing a "self" by the orientalist and nationalist discourses.

Following Partha Chatterjee, the social class which changed the problematic of the colonial discourse to suit the interests of its class and created the nationalist discourse is referred to in this study as the "nationalist elite". This social class, to be precise, comprised of upper caste. English educated men who were oriented towards constructing a "nationalist self. This was a very small class of intellectuals, exclusively endowed with the skills of translation and mediation. This class, the nationalist elite, acquired significance because as Veena Naregal puts it, language was "a site in the construction of state-society relations" and this "relation between the English sphere and the vernacular publics" offered a vital space to "the hegemonic efforts of this intelligentsia..." (Naregal. 2001b. 104). But the employment of the term "nationalist elite" would lead to a certain ambiguity in the context of Princely Mysore, where we find two kinds of nationalism, one is Kannada and the other, Pan-Indian. Where there is no ambiguity I have used the term nationalist elite to refer to the group that was mediating between English and Kannada, otherwise I have used the term Kannada nationalist elite in specific instances.

In the chapter following this Introduction, "Translating Tragedy: Politics of Genre and the Nationalist Elite" I have tried to show, by analyzing the debate around the absence of the genre of tragedy in Sanskrit literature as well as the attempts to translate tragedy into Kannada, how the Kannada nationalist elite operated with a notion of culture that was pan-Indian and participated in the construction of a pan-Indian tradition and ‘self’.
In Chapter Three, "Translating Nationalism: The Politics of Language and Community", by taking up the issue of the use of different varieties of Kannada for different genres by Srikantia as an entry point, I have looked at the process of imagining a Kannada community. I have called this chapter "Translating Nationalism*" not only because the entry point of the chapter is the issue surrounding the kind of language used for translation but also because language is the crucial site on which the project of translation - that of imagining national communities - takes place.

In Chapter Four, "Translating Englishness: English Geetagalu as a Canonical Text". I have tried to examine the characteristics of the dominant discourse of the colonial period in Princely Mysore. I have taken English Geetagalu as a representative of the discourse that was prevalent in Mysore and I have also addressed the question as to why English Geetagalu became a canonical text.

In Chapter Five, "Translation in Translation: Colonialism and Caste in the Princely State". I have explored the question of configuration of modernity and caste in Princely Mysore by looking at two moments of translation in Princely Mysore. By analyzing the debate around the notion of translation, I have also tried to show how it is necessary to go beyond the binaries of colonialism and nationalism. East and West and so on to address the politics of discourse.

In the concluding chapter, I offer a few tentative remarks on the relationship between Kannada nationalism and pan-Indian nationalism.