CHAPTER II: TOWARDS FOLK REALISMS

‘What is realism?’ is a primordial question. Western academia has interrogated this question in as varied disciplines as philosophy, art, literature, ethnography, psychology, sociology and recently, in Qualitative Research Methods as well. Philosophers have questioned the very premise of Realism-existence of ‘Real’. Realism in art and literature meant representing ‘the thing as it is’. Psychology considers the unconscious as realm of realism; the realisms considered in Sociology and Ethnography is equally divergent as the former discusses the
realisms of society, the latter discusses realisms as cultural manifestations. As each
discipline attempts to grasp realism in its perspective, a facet of Realism emerges.
Apparently, any conclusion to this query seems quite impossible as the vision of
this question is an all inclusive one.

But Realism in literature, specifically, is understood in two ways:
Realism as a philosophy that emerges from a study of reality without any
exaggerations; realism as an artistic movement that experimented with new ways of
representing reality in literature. However, this chapter studies Folk realisms as an
indigenous epistemology that emerges from a study of reality presented in the three
primary texts. Before discussing Folk realisms, a brief outline of R/realism in
Western (‘Western’ here is used as a nomenclature, a general term of description)
academia becomes important and necessary to understand the role of realisms in
indigenous literatures. The influences of British and Western literature on Indian
literatures from the Colonial Period onwards is undisputable and undisputed. Since
the focus of this research is to identify Folk realisms with reference to
contemporary literary discourses, a panoramic view of realism becomes a necessity.
Also, any effort to understand contemporary without comprehending a trajectory of
past influences is incomplete. Thus, a brief reference to the discourses of R/realisms
in Western academia is attempted first.

Initial discussion of realism in literature by Greek Philosophers
focused on verisimilitude and the nature of representation in literature. Plato
considered Mimesis a precondition of literature and so, any discourse of literature
was illusionary. (Norton Anthology) Literature held the centre once again with
Aristotle’s *Poetics*; while mimesis was accepted as a fundamental feature of literature, structure of a drama was essential to convey the reality. So, discussions of Realism in early literature—be it written literatures and/or myths—meant a literary representation of reality, where the relationship of the individual with society was more important. Realism in these literatures meant presenting the belief of the community; of course, this does not exclude a critique of the belief.

It was in the Nineteenth century that Realism emerged as major movement, with its own set of characteristics that aimed at verisimilitude in both art and literature. This movement was dominant especially in Britain, France and Europe, aiming at depicting the thing as it is. Other literary movements like Expressionism, Naturalism Dadaism and Modernism, a direct off-shoot of the disruptive effect of the two World Wars, opposed realism with their unique methods. Literary movements such as these, with the use of effective symbolic/abstract ways of referring to the states of mind, presented personalized point of view of the artist/author. Also, in an effort to comprehend the changing contemporary reality, literature explored realism with innovative literary narrative techniques, viz. stream of consciousness, use of shocking analogies and breaking the accepted rules of genres to convey the shattered experiences of World War II.

Emergence of Structuralism as a major philosophy in nineteenth century shifted the focus of discourses emanating from a study of literature from realism as representation to the study of literature as a signified system whose meaning is embedded in the structures within rather than representation of realism outside of the text. Post structuralism went further than the signifying system of
Structuralism. It focused on the interpretation of literature beyond its immediate meaning available to the reader within the literary text itself to establish a discourse between literary texts, society and the reader. Similarly, Feminist and Marxist literary critical approaches establish their perspectives of reading the contemporary situations influencing literatures in the manner of representing personal experiences. (Eagleton:2003) An entire gamut of literature was being re-looked at by the perspectives offered by these socio-political philosophies. That is, in literature, the philosophy of Realism was broadened to include everyday life realisms of—socio-political, gender, class realities. Noticeably, each era has experimented and emerged with both an approach and a comprehension of realism unique to the experiences of that age and people.

From this understanding of realism in literature emanates questions of representation of socio-political realisms. These discussions of representations of realities and stratified re-presentation of realism are different from both the philosophical discussion of Realism and realism as delineated as an artistic movement. So, realism in western literature moves towards comprehension of complex external realities and the connection of this reality to both the individual as well as the society.

To reiterate, firstly, where philosophical Realism was to identify the existence and/or facets of Realism from varied philosophical positions (ethical realism, moral realism, etc), literature, explores realism differently. Realism in literature is both a process and a method of coming to terms with everyday life. Secondly, Terry Eagleton notes that the history of literary philosophies reflects the
swing between realism and idealism at different points of time. (Eagleton: 2003)
This indicates to the fact that the western literary discourses of literature are
inevitably linked to socio-political realities, pointing to the fact that discussions of
realisms is contextualized in historicity. Or, in other words, history and historical
changes is one of the determining factors in directing the discussions of realisms.

Now, realism is also explored as a research methodology. In *What is Realism, and why should qualitative researchers care?* Joseph A Maxwell
observes,

A wide range of terms have been used for such versions of
realism, including “critical” realism (Archer et al., 1998;
Bhaskar, 1989; Campbell, 1974, 1988; Cook & Campbell,
(and, later, “perspectival”) realism (Giere, 1999), “subtle”
realism (Hammersley, 1992a), “emergent” realism (Henry,
Julnes, & Mark, 1998; Mark, Henry, & Julnes, 2000),
“natural” realism (Putnam, 1999), “innocent” realism (Haack,
1998, 2003), and “agential” realism (Barad, 2007); Wimsatt
(2007) didn’t give his approach to realism a formal name, but
used the phrase “multi-perspectival realism” (p. 12) to
describe this. I will use the term “critical realism” in a broad
sense to include all of these versions of realism. (Maxwell
2002: 2-3)
After listing such plethora of descriptions of realism, Maxwell says - “A distinctive feature of all of these forms of realism is that they deny that we can have any “objective” or certain knowledge of the world, and accept the possibility of alternative valid accounts of any phenomenon. All theories about the world are seen as grounded in a particular perspective and worldview, and all knowledge is partial, incomplete, and fallible.” (Maxwell 2002: 3) From such a standpoint as this, the framework of realism broadens further as it enables a distinction of realism as a philosophy and a method of qualitative enquiry. That is, realism is noticed as a method with ‘defined’ processes to study real-life situations as well as moving towards an empirical determiner of experiences. Then, without causing confusion or being embroiled in hairline distinctions, it draws attention to the fact of vitality of multi-centers, its relevance in the contemporary global scenario.

At this point, it is important to note the beginning of Folkloristics as a discipline. Folk tales are a repertoire of cultural codes that are region specific; they also are recognized for their ability to incorporate contemporary realities, without giving up the traditional features of a tale. (Dundes: 2007) Folk tales and their collection were exploited for establishing colonial folkloristic-ethnographic supremacy is known. A study of the situation under which collection of folktales were undertaken supports a re-look at history from the indigenous perspective. It is to be acknowledged that the emergence of Folkloristics as a discipline has also enabled juxtaposition of two different genres of literatures-written and oral. But, in cultures where the oral and the written have co-existed, it no longer remains juxtaposition; it is an intermingling of the two. In such a scenario, the study of
literary writings that use folk tales and/or folk motifs consciously, even in the contemporary literary scenario, is an enriching experience. It facilitates an in depth understanding of both literature and reality they seek to represent; also, they succeed in presenting the complex indigenous realisms and so, realities.

With this background, it is evident that the function of folklore has seen an inversion—from the time folklore began as a community endeavor to keep them together to the present attempt of a writer to re-present the community to the globalized contemporary literary scenario. So, folk tales that survived in and as orality is now collected, printed, and read. As the discourse in Folkloristics moves to view folk tales as a repertoire of culture and memory, imagination is understood as an agency to negotiate everyday life realities. Yet, folk tales are in a marginalized space in comparison with the written literary narratives. (Rosenberg: 1991) It is so because folk tales were thought of as having its root with the lowly class and/or illiterate people. Secondly, the veracity of events/action that the lore discusses was doubted because historicity of the action could not be verified. Since folk tales were associated with ‘illiterate peasants and women’, (Zipes: 2010) it was rarely given a serious thought, let alone being studied. Given such an attitude and perception of folk tales, it is interesting to trace the history of folk tale collection in the contemporary literary scenario.

However, the first acknowledged Folkloristic endeavor is traced to the publication of Brothers Grimm’s *Fairy Tale*. The Grimm brothers were scholars with an ambition to see a United Germany. This was the driving force behind their publication of *Fairy Tales*. Jack Zipes notes in his introduction to *The Complete
Fairy Tales of Brothers Grimm Fairy Tale, that a united Germany of their desire was non-existent and never happened either. Inferentially, the Grimm Brothers visualized function of folk tales differently. Yet, its publication initiated a study of folk tales in Europe, ensuing in similar endeavors of collection of folklore. (Zipes:2009)

Morphology of Tales by Vladimir Propp was much ahead of its time. He problematizes the motif and tale types; his influence reverberates in the works of Claude Levi Strauss and Roland Barth’s structuralist approach to analyze tales and myths. The initial attempts of collecting tales gave way to sort this mammoth collection. Aarne Antti, followed by Stith Thomson set the tone of work for tale-type index of folk tales. The Tale Motif Index helped to make a study of the variations of a folk tale recorded in different parts of the globe. Even today, perusal of this index is agreed to be essential for any serious folkloristic endeavor. (In 2004, Hans Jorg-Uther has revised the early publication of tale type index.) Since the types are formulated only after identifying and then classifying the tale motif and structure, the formulation of index made possible for a close reading of the tales. Also, an in-depth analysis of folk tales and identification of common motifs reveals the paradox of universality of tales, while establishing the cultural specificities of the folklore. A K Ramanujan notes in Who Needs Folklore “. . . Folklore items such as proverbs and tales participate in an international network of motifs, genres, types, and structures—using them all, of course, to say something particular, local, and unique. One arrives at the paradox that the classics of a culture, like the well-wrought epics or plays and poetry, are culture bound forms, but large portions of
the so-called little traditions are not. The latter mold and express the values and concerns of the culture nonetheless.” (Ramanujan A K: 5)

These early attempts at folk tale scholarship followed certain methods in collection and discussion. German Folkloristics followed mainly historic-philological approach (Grimm Brothers); British folklorists too followed the historical method in their collection and analysis of folk tales, and American Folklorists follow ethnographic method of documenting folk tales. With feminist and Marxist approaches, some of the tales and discourse surrounding it came for harsh criticism of folk culture and values held up held in folk tales. And Postcolonial countries look to Postcolonial Studies both to understand and research Folkloristics. But, the intention of collection of folklore—especially folk tales—is varied and as also the reason why scholars have turned to folklore. With the collection of tales, the function of folk tales underwent a drastic change. While some folklore scholars looked to establish a unified Germany (Fairy Tales by Brothers Grimm), some looked to understand the association of emergence of folk epics with the establishment of states (Morphology of Folk tales & Theory and History of Folklore by Vladimir Propp). With Alan Dundes begins psychoanalytical study of folklore (The Meaning Folklore: Analytical Essays by Alan Dundes); and such unique endeavors continue with Jack Goody’s ethnographic study of Lodagaa (Myth, Ritual and the Oral).

However, with rapid and extensive colonization, Colonial Folkloristic endeavor led to collection of folk tales that enriched colonial Folkloristics but spelt doom for indigenous folklorists—Anna, Chaube and many
anonymous indigenous folklorists whose help was taken by colonial folklorists. In the beginning, these folk tales contributed to the ethnographic discourses.

Recognition of Folkloristics as an independent discipline in the twentieth century, especially in India, folklorists have begun new discourses in the context of Postcolonial discourses. It is in this context that Narayan and Naithani draw attention to the implications of collection of folk tales by colonial folklorists in their edited work *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* by Mary Frere and *In Quest of Indian Folk tales* Ram Gharib Chaube and William Crooke. The different method of collection points to the varied possibilities of interpretation of folk tales, it also shows that Folkloristics lends itself to interdisciplinarity.

The outcome of academic attitude to folk tales is that interdisciplinarity (apart from the obvious Postcolonial implications) is recognized as a key feature of Folkloristics. That is, many aspects of literature, society, imagination, politics, gender and philosophy are discussed in its complexity rather than an examination of an aspect in its singularity. Since folk tales are part of everyday life and presents everyday life realities, it presents realisms not as abstraction but as an actual reality that affects and influences people’s lives directly. Of course, it is the same everyday life that is presented in written literatures too. The apparent similarities of intention gives way to a better understanding when differences in objectives and the function of stories in written and the folk tales are traced. One of the basic differences is traced to the mode of dissemination -oral and written form. Also, the role of folk tales primarily, apart from the obvious task of entertainment, is to represent realities to the community, which again is true of short
stories and novels in written literatures. But as Vladimir Propp says in *Folk tale and Reality*, in written literatures, the focus is on verisimilitude—near to true; whereas in folk tales, the plot and the happenings are far from being true (*sic*). Yet, the realism that emerges from these tales is as true to life as the realism that is presented to the reader in written literatures. For example, Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* and *Cinderella* are obviously incomparable; yet, they do share the common concern—of presenting realisms of society. The purpose and so, the role of the two literary genres run parallel to each other but do present tangible realisms to the reader.

Secondly, each age has its concerns, anxieties and traumas. Literatures—oral and written—are concerned with exploring, analyzing and interpreting reality and realisms at each point of time. Literary representations of realities are influenced by the existing discourses—both in terms of academically influential disciplines (be it feminist perspective, Marxism, psychoanalysis etc) and/or literary genres that gain popularity in a specific age. As with written literary genres, the folklore genres too have evolved and played an important role in the life of people and society. For example, Vladimir Propp notes this with reference to Russian folk epics in *Historicity of Folklore*: “When a people begins to form a state, its epic poetry changes considerably. Old epic poetry undergoes reworking, and a new epic poetry arises that reflects the state and its interests (cf. bylinas about the struggle with the Tartars). . . . When historical reality changes, epic poetry absorbs the new reality. The process of absorption continues later as well. Epic poetry is like those layers of earth containing deposits of various geological epochs.” (Propp
Thus historical perspective is an important in this attempt at presenting realisms.

Though much western academic thought has influenced indigenous Folkloristics through these discourses, indigenous approaches to folk tales and their realisms are indeed different. The differences arise not only because of the different locale of the folk tales; it arises because the worldviews indigenous people imbue into their folk tales are different. Secondly, it is also because modernity has affected the Orient differently from the Occident and at different period in time. So it is necessary to recognize the difference in the discussions and the discourse of R/realisms in indigenous situations.

The significance of studying differences amongst the Postcolonial nations and its importance cannot be denied. But, equally vital is the study of regional experiences and cultural expressions of realisms articulated in indigenous vernacular literatures. It helps to trace the experiences of individuals and community to cultural imperialisms, forms of resistances to such imperialisms and the mode of adaptation to the changed scenario. These adaptations alter the understanding of R/realism, makes it distinct from the Western understanding and representation of R/realisms. So, a study of realisms in literary texts of regions and region specificities are significant not just as a study of resistances to colonization. It signifies a step toward regaining some relevant indigenous epistemologies. In the present ruthless globalizing trends that tend to universalize and/or where, ironically, it is easy to fall prey to commodifying culture in an effort to resist cultural
exoticization, a conscious the contribution of region specific studies in this direction can’t be undermined.

At this juncture, it is important to recognize the concerns that demand the formulation of Folk realisms. Of course, Post colonial criticisms have elaborately dealt with the politics of representation in literatures. But a study of vernacular literatures, in the context of its regional specificities of history, story, imagination, subjectiveties and stories reveals interesting contribution of vernacular literatures to the global conversations of world of literatures. Thus, it is important to comprehend and discuss vernacular literatures in their own context. Also, there has always been a healthy interaction amongst the vernaculars of India- folk tales and written literatures- that makes Indian literatures complex and interesting. Folk realisms is formulated in this background of understanding and desire that indigenous epistemologies shall be discussed in their context. So, before discussing Folk realisms, a panoramic but brief account of Indian literatures in historical context is endeavored. And in this context, some of the concepts that are re-looked at are—realism, Post colonial exotic, imagination, subjectivity and the significance of story itself. But first, the background discussions.

Until the colonial period, in spite of many foreign invasions that India faced, the indigenous socio-political systems did not face the danger of extinction or a complete revamp. And whatever adjustments were made by the people to the existing socio-economic-political systems, it was made with sense of awareness of protection- sometimes beneficial and at times, detrimental to people- viz sati system, child marriage.(Metcalf : 2006) Whenever these realities were told
as tales, realism was both depicted and emerged from tales. This representation of realities emerged from a direct interrogation of people’s experiences. As these tales are told and re-told, though the core concerns are rarely transformed, the fringe changes in the tales hinted at the altered realities. It must also be remembered that, though the experiences are a direct recording of realities, the tales emerge from stratified places in society-caste, gender, age etc. A study of the tales from each of these perspectives helps to identify the multiple centers of a society that point to different experiences and so different realisms. Also, such a perspective to tales enables a different perception of history, gender, tradition etc that is not static, but that which is alive and real in the contemporary scenario. It is in this understanding of realism that folk tales are essentially different from written literatures as well as Western literatures—realism in folk literatures is not only mimetic, it is experiential. In recording these experiences, folk tales capture the quintessential contemporary, opening way for discussion of realisms.

In India, initially, the colonial aggression was confronted at the regional level by the kings and their subjects. Such confrontations and the ensuing loss of independence meant uprooting the indigenous systems-social, political as well as cultural. The in-fights amongst smaller kingdoms, ruthless rules that led to rigidity in the relationship between the British and Indian, and the undistinguishing colonial gaze meant destruction of the delicate balance, the guiding vision that pervaded indigenous life. Regional and cultural identities that were kept alive by the King’s administration were submerged/ vanished into obscurity. With the
emergence of unified national struggle for freedom in the later part of Nineteenth century, cultural imperialisms were resisted and subverted in different ways.

During the colonial period, at each point of time, two interestingly opposing trends are noticeable. (Metcalf 2006) On the one hand, certain modernizing trends were received and later subverted. For example, English language and literary influences; the indirect social mobility ushered in through ‘admittance’ of Indians to Civil Services in the lower rungs of the British administration. [This corroborates Anna Liberata D’souza observation on the appointment of soldiers: “In those days the soldiers were not low-caste people like they are now. Many were high caste men, and come from very far, from Goa, and Calicut and Malabar, to join the English.”(Narayan 2005: 21)] Simultaneously, vernacular languages were strengthened with new thoughts infused by English literature as well as the print media; traditional art and festivities were revived to retain and foster indigenous identities to combat colonial modernizing efforts and influences. That is, even as these ‘modernizing’ trends were welcomed, the socio-political ideologies of the region and cultural specificities are willfully kept alive. The question of socio-political justice and equality were sown during this period of fight for independence. And these changes that evolved over a century laid the foundation for some current political and social trends. The depiction of these changed realities and the response to it differs from vernacular literatures to Indian English Literatures. And it is in this difference that one recognizes the region specific critique of modernity that took place during the colonial period. Indian English literatures negotiate and represent the concerns of nation-space to global
readership in a manner that is distinct from vernacular literatures. Thus, at present, there is much to be learned from a study of vernacular literatures—about history, society and/or culture.

Secondly, it is important to recognize and discuss colonial times as traumatic for the individual—the royalty, the common man, as well as society. With the formal taking over of the British East India Company by the Queen and British domination of India, there were continuous modernizing factors and various changes made to the indigenous systems. Beginning with annexation of the provinces to the British Crown to the radical but gradual attitudinal changes to religion, destruction of indigenous architectures and/or construction of buildings to commemorate British rule and most important, the changes in the economy of the country—people had to witness and cope with extreme alterations taking place in the society as well as people around them. (Metcalf 2006) Such alterations in indigenous systems were detrimental to people, their everyday life and changed the direction of progress entirely. To participate in these modern, foreign systems that did not benefit indigenous people was traumatic; estranging people in their own familiar set up.

In literatures—folk and written—realities as these and such associated experiences are told as stories. And Folk tales, from time immemorial are recognized as sites of expression of joy, comfort and fellowship. Yet, their connection with intimate, varied aspects of life is never divorced and thus they are also a source of healing. The tales/stories, arising out of constantly changing and evolving realities, hold mirror to life and altered realities, responses of people and
their community to changes. Common man, ever aware of such changes-socio-political as well as psychological, s/he learns to survive the larger socio-political realities, to emerge with their realisms. These realisms are incorporated into their lore and stories. In folk tales, the anonymous and collective author/s embeds the tales with the imagination of the individual and the community. Thus imagination in folk tales is two pronged—it emerges from an ability to connect the mundane life realities to realisms and on the other hand, it merges real life situations with the vision of life. Imagination, in Folkloristics, is also the agency of the common man as it holds their intimate truths and emotions. In fact, imagination brought apparently diverse realisms of life—socio-political-psychological and philosophical—together.

The function of literature-especially of written literatures, changed drastically during the colonial and Postcolonial periods. The zeal of writing in new genres like the novel/drama from a new position was evident; but more obvious is the fact that there is an added intention of re-presenting the changed socio-political consciousness through these indigenized genres. And the already different functions of folk tales and written literature increased to such an extent that there was a complete disconnect between the folk and the written literatures in terms of the kind of discourse they gave rise to and the role of the author. One of the reasons could also be traced to the emergence of modernity. Michael Foucault draws attention to this difference in function of author in What is an Author?

“...there was a time when those texts which we now call “literary” (stories, folk tales, epics and tragedies) were
accepted and circulated and valorized without any question about the identity of their author. Their anonymity was ignored because their real/supposed age was sufficient guarantee of their authenticity. Texts that we now call “scientific” (dealing with cosmology and heavens, medicine or illness, the natural sciences or geography) were only considered truthful during the middle ages if the name of the author was indicated.” (Foucault 1969: 1624)

Though his observations are made with respect to the Western scenario, the fact of change in function of both literature and the author in Post-colonial situation is obvious. And so, the discourses that the written literatures are engaged with changed. No wonder that in the early twentieth century Premchand called for a literature that reflected *Jeevan ki sachhai*, and V M Inamdar observes of literature of the twentieth century- ‘Realism brought literature closer to life.’

Apart from influential pan-Indian movements like Bhakti Movement to the emergence of Nationalism in the Eighteenth century, there have been region-specific socio-literary movements. Each movement, in its own manner, was liberating the society from the old/redundant ideology and strengthening it with this liberation at the same time. With specific reference to Kannada literary scenario, Sharana and Bhakti Movements (as early as twelfth century) Kannada literature was infused with a new vision and ideology of socio-religious equality and freedom from hegemonic brahminical rituals. It liberated literature too from the clutches of scholars. The liberating ideology and the ensuing new kind of
imagination pervade Kannada literary tradition is hardly an exaggeration.

Modernity, understood in this background, with all its repercussions, was not detrimental to human progress. With the incorporation of such influential and liberating ideologies, the vernacular literatures have played a significant role in forming and formulating contemporary literary epistemology and move towards a better understanding of Postcolonial literatures.

In spite of these influential movements the two literary traditions—written and folk—continue to co-exist. This is evident even in the literatures that were written during the colonial period. They influenced each other is unquestionable. However, the basic allegation against folk traditions is that they are not reliable due to their adoptability. (For example, the folk vocabulary is known for its ability to absorb current vocabulary; Anna’s narration is rich in such adaptations of language) Ironically, it is this very feature of folk traditions that helps to trace the changes in the society. The written history documents the socio-political changes in a society. Whereas, folk traditions, with the advantage of multiple voices, is an invaluable document of not only historical facts but of the more important, deeply impacting changes that affect the lives of people. As noted earlier, the interest of the written and the folk traditions run parallel at different levels; up to twentieth century rarely has there been a conscious effort to infuse the two traditions together.

It is in the twentieth century that writers began consciously experimenting, re-presenting elements of folk tales, or folk tales as such, and myths in written literatures like drama and novels. With English literary influences, the
vernacular literatures experimented with the new literary genre, expressed a new liberating and a progressive vision. With such enthused thoughts that engendered socio-political and literary changes; writings of twentieth century interrogated its tradition and the modern in vernacular literature. Thus, vernacular literatures present a complex indigenous literary genre, rich in cultural complexity that are in a vibrant space of constant reinvention. And this trend is visible in the literatures written during the colonial period too, with special references to translations-be it the Shakespearean plays by early playwrights or translations of English poems by B M Srikantaiah. That is, vernacular literatures and writers functioned with the consciousness of the region-specific cultures and responses of the people to the contemporary happenings. It is such a presence of realisms that fires the imagination in the present literatures.

However, in India too, written literary space enjoyed a central position in comparison with folktales. The folklore as such was marginalized. Slowly, with colonial literary influences, written literatures moved to a hegemonic position, archiving folk tales. One of the reasons of this hegemonic position of written literatures is the fact that it was used as a powerful medium to communicate with the world during the colonial rule. So, writing also became a medium through which significant changes could be ushered in; at the same time, it was also the medium of self-expression and assertion. It must be observed that even as these changes were taking place, concerns about the insistence on literacy and its supremacy are expressed. For instance, in *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy*
Legends, Anna talks about the changes in stories themselves as well as the context of telling tales:

My mother used to tell stories too; but not so many as my granny. A few years ago there might be found several old people who knew those sort of stories; but now children go to school, and nobody thinks of remembering or telling them—they’ll soon be all forgotten. It is true there are books with some stories something like these, but they always put them wrong. . . . they read it to me, but it’s all wrong, so that I get quite cross, and make me shut up the book. (Narayan 2005: 27)

But, by 1896, this anxiety of loss of orality had already given way to Colonial Folkloristic endeavor. Naithani notes *In Quest of Indian Folktales* Pandit Ram Gharib Chuabe and William Crooke: “One of the main features of the colonial British collection and publication of Indian folk narratives in the second half of the nineteenth century was the transformation of orality not just into written words, but into the written words of another language. As Indian folklore has been textualized, it has moved from dialects to foreign language(s).” (Naithani 2006:19)

And in *Sirigannada*, Shanbhag says:

Even with the anxiety of diminishing readership, the overall literary environment is charged with the enthusiasm and energy. This has been inspiring for new writers and has provided opportunities to publish their writings. There are
readers who continue to be wildly passionate about poetry. New novels are read with great interest. Short stories are in abundance. While many literary journals are active, new ones are being born. Newspapers, journals, literary forums and websites still keep a democratic space for dialogue, agreements and disagreements between writers alive. Juxtaposed with concerns of language survival, this dynamic environment may appear as a paradox, yet it is nevertheless true. I am aware it is a small world, but it is vibrant with rigor and conviction and holds promise. (Shanbhag 2010: 7)

Thus, a re-look at the stories of the colonial times told and re-told in many works of literatures hold important implications to understand the representation of realisms. A study of realisms expressing such traumatic experiences of colonization, though historically belated, has important implications in regaining both ontological and epistemological indigenous realisms. And in this belated address there is a shift in focus of discussions. The shift is in an attempt to grasp the manner of both response to and dealing with changes that were made to the society-the individual, comprehension of negotiations that individuals make in such situations and their perceptions of realisms. And an expansive and inclusive study is possible only when the written and the oral texts are placed with each other. It is in this direction that the primary texts are explored.

The literatures written during Colonial Period had a heightened self-consciousness about themselves and the immediate socio-political context in which
the writers were writing. Such literatures, creating a heightened awareness of the immediate realities along with indigenous attitude to life, are important documents of history. That is, self reflexivity is consciously built into literatures of this period. And a study of this element of self reflexivity of the text-meta fiction - provides an opportunity to consider the historical situation holistically - in the context of the present, situated in the past. Due to this, the manner of incorporation of western influences of realisms in the contemporary literary scenario has drawn the attention of indigenous academics. Thus to begin a discussion of R/realism in Postcolonial nations in indigenous context provides significant insights about the responses to colonization. Culture and region specific systems of ethics have influenced the responses to colonization. A study of the responses to colonization, paradoxically, is rooted in indigenous realisms. In such a situation, literature is a rich resource of historicity that highlights the indigenous perceptions and meaning of history itself. That is, just as the rationale for the use of realism has varied from time to time, so also, there are region and culture specific differences of realism. The primary texts - *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends, In Quest of Indian Folk tales* and *Sirigannada* - are layered stories of individuals who belong to different time-periods, showcases different aspects of realisms. And imagination, central to folk tales, brings disparate facts together, functions as an agency to relate complex experiences of contemporary realities. The twentieth century writer uses the existing icons/symbols to re-present altered contemporary realities and also to present an alternative to the Postcolonial complicity that has entered the present
realities. Thus, imagination is one of the key facets of Folk realisms and a further exploration of this facet will be taken up later in this chapter.

Also, folk literatures present a facet of realisms that arises from the common man’s perceptions of realities. Folklore, especially folk tales, with their fluidity to incorporate the present into their stories is invaluable documents of cultural history. And Folklore provides ample space to study such responses to the changes – that which was thrust upon as well as that which was chosen for acceptance. Folk tale is known for its imagination as well as its ability to encode cultural messages in them; their contemporary spirit enables the encoding of the present in the lore. This contemporaneity and survivance of folklores present a unique opportunity to discover presence and re-presentation of realisms. The chief trait of folklores is their orality. Though written literary traditions have held folk in disdain, yet, folk and written literatures in India are not in such a mutually exclusive space, that the emergence of one threatens the other. And, so, it is possible to trace the features of folk in written literatures as well. Two of the primary texts- *Old Deccan Days* and *In Quest of Indian Folktales* - deal with the collection of folk tales throw light on some of political developments that are rarely discussed are brought to notice. *Sirigannada* an anthology of twentieth century writings translated into Kannada is studied for realisms in the wake of interrogating the modern in the twentieth century. The written texts are chosen to present realisms in Kannada literatures and also, their inclusion provides an opportunity to explore Folk realisms in its complexity. Folktales from the primary texts shall be analyzed to identify folk elements that play an important role in presenting pertinent realities viz. traditional
folk icons, symbols and elements of narration; also, in the process of presenting realities, a myth forms and becomes a part of the folklore. This is also observed to be a part of written literatures, especially in the work of writers who consciously have tried to move toward indigenous identities. This myth making has to be probed for socio-political realities and is a step toward regaining aspects of indigenous identity and epistemology. A study of this phenomenon is an essential facet of Folk realisms as it allows to present historical perspective that allowed a myth-making and its necessity in the present.

In the initial stage of colonization, Western literatures were held as the standard of literature. And as western literatures were perused with interest, the genres were adopted by indigenous writers consciously. By the Nineteenth century, one part of the Indian society were already English educated; Raja Ram Mohun Roy spear headed the social reformations. India experienced different places and spaces at the same time. This is perceived in the literatures of the time-be it Toru Dutt’s poetry or Aurabindo’s vociferous call for Indian aesthetics in his poems and literary essays alike. It was during the same time that Premchand called for employing realism in literature. Ulka Anjaria notes in *Realism in the Twentieth Century Indian novel colonial difference and literary form*:

In earlier times we might well have been impressed by fairy tales, ghost stories and accounts of star-crossed lovers, but those have little interest to us anymore,” he declared.

“*In order to produce an impression in literature it is necessary for it to be a mirror on life’s truths jeevan ki*
“sachaiyon ka darpan” (“Sahitya” 75). This statement and the meeting at which it was read represented a revolution for Indian letters. The desire to break away from elite aesthetic traditions was greeted with elation by writers; this marked the possibility for a new literature suited for the modern world, and for India’s imminent independence from colonial rule. (Anjaria 2012:12)

Premchand’s call for re-presenting realisms in indigenous literatures is to be probed for its implications to Indian literatures and the discussion of modernity in India. His observation - “In earlier times we might well have been impressed by fairy tales, ghost stories and accounts of star-crossed lovers, but those have little interest to us anymore,” has multiple implications. First, it is a statement that recognizes the colonial interferences and literature as a way of confronting and retaining indigenous identities. When vernacular literatures write to reflect ‘the truth of life’, it implies a critical eye turned inward to recognize ‘maladies’ of Indian society and of course, would never exclude to represent certain changes inflicted on India. That is, the role of literature is envisaged differently now- in the changed and so perhaps, also estranged, socio-political scenario. Sanskrit, Vernacular and Folk literatures represented realisms of India interrogating the socio-political scenario that was not to exclude the philosophical outlook of life. And when Premchand calls for a focused representation of ‘jeevan ki sachhai’, it is a call to represent, ruthlessly, realities of people in the current political-economic conditions, without encasing it in any symbolic or iconic framework. The shift that
took place is quite evident—from representing realisms in literatures to a probe and re-presenting of realities. It also means that now realism is not only a philosophy that emerges from the contemporary life in literatures but is an agency that makes a self-critical re-presentation as well as an effective manner of confronting colonialism and colonial representations with indigenous epistemologies and vision of life.

Secondly, from this period onwards (Nineteenth - Twentieth Century), both Indian literature and realism take a new journey. Colonial confrontations and changed realities of indigenous life restructured some of the poetics of indigenous realisms. The literatures written in vernacular and, especially Indian English literature during the early independence period interrogated many aspects of life that was changed completely and/or re-presented indigenous life contextualizing it in the contemporary milieu. (Viz. works of Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand and R K Narayan and most literatures written in vernaculars in the early 1980’s- the works of K.V.Puttappa, Maasti Venkatesha Iyengar, U R Anantha Murthy, Vaidehi, Sara Abubakkar, etc) delved into the socio-political realisms as well as spiritual aspects of life. (sic Mugali 2006)

It was about the same time that many oral epics were documented by indigenous folklorists. G S Paramashiviah was the first to publish an edited version of the Kannada folk epic Manteswamy Kavya in 1973. Also, an anthology of folk epics of Karnataka and the world was brought out in Kannada by C N Ramachandran in Hosamadiya Mele Chaduranga. (Ramachandran: 2010). These folkloristic studies were a step toward documenting culture that contributed to the
existing vision of literary studies in Kannada literary scenario; they also brought
discussion of folk epic into the main stream discourses of literature. It adds a new
dimension to the existing discussions of literature because the folk epics carry the
wisdom through the ages. And unlike in the West, the collection and documentation
of oral epics and folktales is not driven by fear or desire to preserve folk literature
nor is it an enterprise of anthropomorphic study. The endeavor is a focused study to
retrieve the cultural representations of indigenous life as well as understand a part
of the socio-political consciousness that arose during the colonial regime. There are
extremely interesting and significant steps taken in turning to storytelling sessions
to deal with trauma in the contemporary scenario. Vaayu Naidu’s Story-telling
Company, based in London did laudable work during 2004 with rehabilitating
fishermen, rehabilitating them through story telling sessions; Kathalaya situated in
Bengaluru regularly holds storytelling sessions along with training teachers to tell
stories as a teaching methodology. This was one of the prime functions of
folktales— to heal, to share and be re-absorbed into the community. That is,
Folklore is a space that facilitates complex perspectives to subject and subjectivity.

In such a scenario, identifying “Who are folk?” is important.
Answering this important query helps to recognize the different ways in which
folklores originate and the different ways in which the relationship between folk
and lore is understood. This understanding is crucial to the discussion of Folk
realisms. American folklorists, beginning with Alan Dundes, have decentralized the
initial meaning attached to the ‘folk’ as peasants to ‘folk is us’. Perhaps, one of the
prime reasons of extension of ‘folk’ with people is the emergence of modernized
urban space and tagged along is the urban folklore. This extension of ‘folk’ to ‘us’
is a recognition of the use of folklore in everyday life situations; but it does not
necessarily mean that everybody is equipped with initiating folktale. It is agreed
upon by scholars of folklore that there were ‘professional storytellers’ who ‘told
stories’. Of course, these stories were modified accordingly by the rest of the
community and acquired layered meanings or new realities and so realisms emerged
from these tales.

According to Marxist Folklore critics, Folklore is resistance to the bourgeoise literature and so, Folklore would disappear once social equality was
established. (Dundes: 2007) This, of course, is contested by folklorists from various
perspectives; but, in India, the fact that the oral and written co-exist, that writers in
the twentieth century incorporate folktales, myths and elements of folktales in their
works and the contemporary experiments with the possibilities of folktales in
healing trauma (this understanding arises out of the primary function of folktales),
make it impossible to understand Folklores as resistant culture. In fact, folk epics
and/or folktales and/or folk arts, has always questioned the hegemony of elite
culture – be it the brahminical supremacy or of the generic supremacy of written
literatures. In a manner, the twentieth century writers have effectively used the
agency of folklore to present indigenous realisms. New perspectives about
indigeneity are presented through indigenous literatures and studies. This does not
mean, theoretically, moving back to the earlier binary divisions or Postcolonial
exoticization. This is possible when multiple voices and region specificities
presented through vernacular literatures are discussed.
The need to identify the pervasiveness of folktales in urban places and in popular medium is crucial to the formulation of Folk realisms. Today’s urban places are multiplexes of people, experiences and folklores. There is a constant of flux of people and urbanity is the necessity of people. And tales that arise from urban spaces need not be exclusively / essentially urban; the tales are usually a combination of the urban sensibility with the awareness of an inclusion of elements of folktales. Comics for children such as Supandi, Chanda Mama, Vikram and Vetaal series etc, to a large extent, fill the space of storytelling sessions. In the strict sense of the term, they are not folktales; some elements of folktales—especially their ability to incorporate the immediate reality, observation on the contemporary and its critique—make it a part of contemporary folktale discourses. Even in these adaptations survivance of folklore is evident. (“Even written and mass media forms,” he says, quoting other scholars, “are folklore to the extent that variations occur.” (ibid) (Muhawi:2)

Another important aspect that needs to be discussed in the context of Folkloristics is the question of subjectivity. This is vital to formulate Folk realisms because as understood from earlier discussions, folk and their lore are not divorced from each other. They share a symbiotic relationship. In the contemporary global scenario, where subjectivity is to a large extent identity, Folkloristics offers a different perspective that needs to be understood. The written literary texts’ use of folktales and/or folk motifs retains the connection between the folk and their tales in the manner of narration, retaining the worldviews and examining the world view in the contemporary scenario. The use of such techniques by the writer in the textual
use of folktales helps to establish and retain a similar community of the writer, the
narrative and reader/s. Of course, more often, the folklore is used to interrogate both
indigenous identity and establish an indigenous epistemology that is relevant to the
contemporary scenario. Thus, the twentieth century writers’ conscious experiment
of folk, myth, and legends interrogates and re-presents indigenous life and realism
also. A study of literary writings that portray indigenous approaches and world
views provides an opportunity to re-look the concept of subjectivity differently.
Formulation of Folk realisms as a concept that presents indigenous epistemologies
must include these relevant discussions as they are part of not only literary
theoretical discourses but are an important phase in recognizing indigenous literary
studies.

The primary texts—Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends, In
Quest of Indian Folktales and Sirigannada—help to explore and present Folk
realism. This is possible by giving precedence to retrieve indigenous epistemologies
that are embedded in the texts. So, in order to arrive at a hypothetical statement of
Folk realisms the primary texts are explored to identify elements/aspects of
indigeneity.

As each primary text interrogates the contemporary situation, it is
placed in spatiality rather than the chronological temporality. The contemporariness
of texts is in the fact that the stories are situated in the contemporary literary
discourses. So it re-locates the texts by re-placing the contexts in which the stories
were told / written to the present. This re-location makes possible for re-
interpretation of the existing Postcolonial discourses as well as to move toward a
better understanding of indigenous situations in the present. Thus, re-locating
important discussions is an opportunity to re-present and interrogate history as well
as historicity. In this context, history forms the larger framework under which both
historicity and spatiality are presented. Also, within this framework of history and
historicity are placed the contemporary concerns of gender, power and language. It
is in this context that Folk tales from *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends, In Quest of Indian Folktales* and writings from *Sirigannada* are selected for
analysis.

Another striking feature of the primary texts is the opportunity it
provides in re-looking at the discourse of translations and interrogates translation in
indigenous situations to re-present indigenous literatures. Here, the discussions of
translations in the West are referred because though the concepts—be it equivalence,
authenticity or untranslatability—have not ‘ruled’ the translations from the vernacular
to English, their discussions of translations have also brought the difference in
indigenous approaches to translations. The politics of literature during the colonial
rule is well understood and at various levels discussed and countered. But, the
discussions of politics of language in translation are comparatively recent
(Translation Studies itself is quite a new discipline); and discussion of translations
privileging cultural context is as recent as the Twentieth Century. Of course,
emergence of cultural translations becomes quite obvious in the background of Post
colonial criticisms. A study of translations undertaken during the colonial period
show that the Indigenous translators take creative freedom— for example, early
translations of Shakespearean plays to Kannada. D A Shankar observes this in his
discussions of translation of Shakespeare’s Macbeth into Kannada in

*Transmogrification of Macbeth*. (*Macbeth* is titled as *Prataparudradaeva* in Kannada translation.) “. . . Prataparudradaeva, we see that the process of indigenization begins with the title itself. Unlike Shakespeare who names the play after the central character, Macbeth, Srikantesha Gowda names the play after Malcolm, a very minor character who is Prataparudradaeva in the translated text. This happens because Sanskrit poetics expects a play to be named after the *Nayaka*, the hero-virtuous, and not after a *Prati-nayaka* or an anti-hero.” (Shankar 1999: 17-18) But, the discussions of cultural turn in Twentieth Century translation studies have drawn much attention in contemporary literary scenario especially in the Western discourses of translations.

At the same time, it is interesting to note the differences in discussion of translations in local and global contexts. Where indigenized translations adopt freely by taking support of its traditions, with the consciousness of the changes brought into the source texts, discussion of translations in global scenario, the path of translations is tread cautiously. Lawrence Venuti observes:

. . . In contemporary translation theory informed by Continental philosophical traditions such as existential phenomenology and post structuralism, language is constitutive of thought, and meaning a site of multiple determinations, so that translation is readily seen as investing the foreign-language text with a domestic significance (see, for example, Heidegger 1975, Lewis this volume, Benjamin
Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there. (Venuti 2004: 468)

That is, in the globalized space, the politics of language is understood and exercised differently. This may be so because the power-knowledge dynamics play a vital role here; whereas, in indigenous situations, amongst vernacular languages, there is rarely a hierarchical structure. Instead, the liberal exercise of creativity in indigenous translations draw attention to the fact of a symbiotic relationship between culture and language. This understanding is essential to comprehend the role of translations in indigenous literary contexts and a perception of realism depicted in translated texts. A similar kinship is established even when translations are done from vernacular languages to English. This kind of ‘disrespect’ to a foreign language does help to facilitate an intimacy with the language—here English, and allows for a creative re-presentation of realism in the source text.

Secondly, the Western cultural norms are different from indigenous situations. Hemang Desai rightly observes this in his article *Indian Turn in Translations*,

... The Western obsession with the question of authenticity and untranslatability can be traced to the monolingual and monocultural conditions from which its literary traditions
have largely evolved, a fact which made it scared of the intrusion of ‘other’ through translation. Western metaphysics denied a status and recognition to translation by forwarding a logic that a sign and its significance are inextricably intertwined and its severance and re-encoding in a different sign-system suffers a heavy loss of meaning. (Desai 2013: 2)

Given the plurality and multilingualism in India, translations are part of everyday reality. So, indigenous translations do not necessarily act as an agency to negotiate indigenous identities. Of course, in the Post colonial situations, such a possible perception is not denied; but it may not be entirely correct given the indigenous attitude to language. Thus, in the context of this research, indigenous literatures in translation are not envisaged as an agency to negotiate identities. Any attempt at such an interpretation of translations has to be undertaken with caution. That is something that Graham Huggan warns in his *Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the margins*. Describing the book’s vision, he says “... The book’s own critical analysis takes in two distinct but interrelated exoticist discourses: first, those that traverse Postcolonial texts and are implicated in them—exoticism in its anthropological, touristic and multicultural forms—and, second, those that pertain to the academic field of Postcolonial studies—the exoticisms implicit in post colonialism as an oppositional discursive field.” (Huggan 2003: ix, *Preface*)

Also, another aspect to indigenous translations is the influence of orality on language and depiction of realism. T S Satyanath in his *Processes and models of translation: cases from medieval Kannada literature* Translations notes
the influence of orality on translation from one written text to another: “The lack of a distinction between scripto-centric and phono-centric texts on the one hand and the crucial role of body-centric performative traditions in shaping and determining the nature of performing texts on the other has played an important role, both at the conceptual and performative levels.” (Satyanath T S 2013:14) This means to say that the written texts were never cut-off from the roots of cultural reality of the society. Thus, while translating, an immense creative freedom was exercised by the narrator-author, conscious of the possible subversions in translations. The creative liberty was both in terms of translation and in contextualizing it. (‘Contextualizing’ refers to the cultural traditions of India where a literature always has a frame of reference. This frame of reference could be a ritual, a festival or a performance in the King’s court on a certain occasion.) Since there is no established hierarchical structure amongst the vernacular languages, translations from one vernacular to another were both smooth as well as creative, adapted to the context of the region. Thus a consciousness- ‘translation consciousness’ as G N Devy calls it (Indian Turn in Translation Studies, Hemang Desai) is pervasive in the literary scenario strengthens a complex perception of realisms in indigenous translations. As noted above, this is visible in the early translations of the plays of William Shakespeare into Kannada. They were suitably changed to make it more accessible to the Kannada theatre.

These discussions regarding translations are predominantly in the context of written literatures. However, folklore, dominantly oral, adopt language/s of the place not only for survivance but also for depicting realism according to their
experiences. Folklore, as it travels, it incorporates the vocabulary of the place with ease, evolves its realisms according to the place and its cultural connotations. At the same time, the core or the central concern of the folklore is preserved by the narrator. So, any change in vocabulary indicates to the changed realities. For example, in the primary texts itself, one finds that words like ‘sepahi’ is replaced by ‘sepoy’ in the folktales. (Naithani 2006) The connotations of the two words vary—the former a word to denote that he is a soldier; the latter refers an army man in the regiment of the British army. Visibly, the concept of translations, as it were, undergoes a transformation. Many conversations in the translation studies discipline either become non-applicable or it is irrelevant in the context of folktales. For example, in play *Fire and Rain*, a play written in Kannada and translated to English by Girish Karnad, ‘Indra deva’ is translated as ‘Lord Indra’ and a word like ‘brahma raksha’ is retained as it is in English version as well. This is an interesting subversion in translations. The retention of ‘brahma rakshasa’ in Kannada as well as English and the translation of ‘deva’ as ‘Lord’ though it is quite clear that ‘deva’ and ‘Lord’ do not mean the same. Of course, ‘foreignization’ and ‘domestication’ of translation refers to the cultural politics of translations. (According to Venuti, the former refers to—an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home; while the latter is—an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad.” (Venuti1995:20)) It is, however, relevant to not only to comprehend the effect of these techniques of translations on the reader; it is vital also to interpret the realisms that underline these techniques.
Thus, even when the concepts in translations emerge from the works of translations, it is rooted in the cultural space of the indigenous literature as well as the author’s awareness of the global audience.

In the background of these discussions, it is crucial to note the fact that the complex co-existence of oral-written presents a unique opportunity to position indigenous literatures, especially in translation with respect to its global conversations. Indigenous literatures with their cultural and region specificities communicate and contribute to an understanding of realisms represented in literary texts, not in contrast but as a complement to literatures of the world. The endeavor is to place the primary texts in this spatiality that has arisen from an interrogation of translations and their implications in the indigenous literary scenario.

In *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* Anna tells her tales to Mary Frere in English that is unique. Richly imaginative as folktales she narrates it is a part of her cultural memories rooted in the Deccan region. *In Search Of Indian Folktales* shows Chaube’s careful selection of stories and his choice of vocabulary in translating the mammoth collection of tales into English. *Sirigannada* an anthology of contemporary writing in Kannada translated to English presents the reader with an entire decade of literary conversation-its anxieties, concerns, responses to Western literary philosophies and an indigenous comprehension and analysis of it. The primary texts are studied to understand the indigenous responses to colonial/global interferences and influences while they are in translations. The texts also present a trajectory of colonial-post colonial- indigenous realisms
captured in translations. It is in this direction that a conversation about translations is taken up with respect to the primary texts.

From Anna’s narrative it is evident that by 1884 religious conversion and English language learning was an established fact in India. Mary Frere notes this as she writes about the collection of tales and its publication in various languages: “. . . Professor Max Muller told me not long ago that he had come upon the Sanskrit original (which he had not previously seen) of one of these stories, and that after a lapse of the many intervening centuries, the version of it, as recorded from Anna’s narration, read like a direct translation from the native Sanskrit.” (Frere 1887: xi) This observation establishes the fact of creative interactive mode between the vernacular written-spoken languages of India and translation as an act of preserving the tradition as well as an enriching porosity visible in translations amongst Indian languages. At the same time, Anna’s narration of the tale in English to Mary Frere and the subsequent publication of it is an interesting journey of tales. It is this journey that facilitates a re-engagement with indigenous realisms as it travels in different languages to different landscapes.

In Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends Anna tells the tales to Mary Frere in what she calls ‘our Calicut language’; but, Mary refines some of Anna’s native expressions in English for her English readers. When it was published in England, it was sent to illustrious readers. This list included not only her family and friends; it began with the Queen herself (to which she graciously answered “Her majesty will have much pleasure in looking over it, not only from the interest that she takes in everything connected with her Indian empire but from
the manner in which it has been put together and illustrated.” Frere 1887.ix) and to men of letters like Max Muller and Alexander Grant, and literary figures like Charles Kingsley, Henry Longfellow and Alfred Tennyson who appreciated her work. And not only was this ‘translated into’ English, it was translated into “into the German, Hungarian, and portions of it into the Danish language, and has been re-translated, I am told, into Mahratti, Hindoostani, and Guzerati. It is strange that, owing to accident, though two excellent French translations have been suggested, neither has yet been published.” (Frere 1887:xi, Preface to the Third English Edition) Mary’s proud announcement of translation of the tales into many languages of the world and India indicates the significance of the collection of tales in print and the important choice Mary makes in recording Annie Ayah’s native expressions. In this context, there are two aspects regarding translation that draw attention to the repercussions of collection of folktales: one, translation of folktales and its transnational influences in shaping discourses of language and culture; secondly, the trajectory of collaborative discourses of diverse languages in the context of the collection of folktales. These two aspects together present a complex set of problems that needs to be understood in their spatiality. Also, these discussions move towards a recognition of cultural differences as cultural markers rather than the incomplete binary conversations, without underestimating the significance of these conversations.

For example, as Narayan observes rightly, Mary Frere gets the benefit of the publication of Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends –monetary and a place for herself as a first folklorist who collected her data on field. Whether
even a part of these benefits reached her Annie Ayah is still a haunting question. Of course, Mary Frere was brave and radical enough to include ‘Narrator’s Narrative’; but, paradoxically, within the context of this book, Anna remains an exotic recorded voice, not an ‘originator’ of the book. This, in spite of the fact that her *Narrator’s Narrative* speaks of realities at various levels—changes in personal relationships, changing socio-political scenario and its effects, anxiety about the hegemonic position that writing and written literature etc. It is only with Narayan’s introduction that Anna’s presence gets situated as an individual with a distinct history. And it is here that postcolonial anxiety of betrayal is also to be traced and most significantly, the role of visibility of the translator is to be interrogated.

By the time one comes to the collection of tales by Chaube and Crooke *In Quest of Indian Folktales*, the scenario is changed in many respects. Chaube, an assistant to Crooke is no ordinary ‘munshi’; he is well equipped with English language for him to translate the tales he has collected from his people. Crooke does edit the tales with respect to the title and notes; but language is that of Chaube’s. Also, there is a noticeable change in the vocabulary while translating from vernacular into English. ‘Wuzeer’, ‘Prudhan’ and ‘vizier’ of *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* is now fixed to ‘vizier’; ‘Rajah’ is replaced either by ‘Raja’ or the generic ‘King’; ‘ranee’ to ‘rani’ or ‘queen’, and interestingly ‘servant’ is translated as ‘babu’ or ‘assistant’, ‘sepahi’ as ‘sepoy’. Though these may appear as cosmetic changes/additions to vocabulary, they are indicative of the subtle changes in self-perception of the Indian and the changing relationship of the colonizer and the colonized. Yet, it must be seen that in many tales, in important
places, the original is retained and the translation of the same is given in English. What is very significant is that there is a conscious willingness in Chaube both about the fact that the tales are cultural signifiers and that these collected tales are going to be used to study culture. ("... They are not only translated into a foreign language, but are also determined by the overall situation of their writer and collector. Pandit Ram Gharib Chaube was aware that through Crooke he was narrating to an international audience and that too influenced his selection." Naithani 2009: 26) And it is this consciousness that encourages him to write the biographies of the British. Sadly, it does not happen; but his endeavor in such a collection of biographies was he proposing Occidentalism. (Naithani: 2009)

Even as these forward looking dialogues are visible in the context of the academics of the colonial time, socio-political realities have their own stories to tell in the colonial structure. The colonial academic structure benefited the colonial-academician-be it Mary Frere or William Crooke. On their own, these collections would not have been possible. Tales may be considered as ‘data’; but they could not have been collected-amassed- without the people’s willing support and interest. (Naithani 2006) Thus, Anna’s versatility helps Mary in her collection; Chaube’s scholarly interest and contemporaneity feeds Crookes folkloristic endeavors. Anna built her own English language though she was only an ayah to her young mistress and passed on a legacy of traditional folktales. Of course, as Naithani rightly, ironically, observes of Anna’s life: “... De Souza’s parents’ family had passed through not only vast territories but also major historical transformations, and de Souza, the backbone of her own nuclear family, was an old woman of thirty five
who had borne every kind of personal tragedy, and yet was hard at work.” (Naithani 2006:41) Chaube was a scholar who collaborated with William Crooke on many aspects of folktale collection. On many occasions, he spoke to Crooke more like a student than a colonial master or as a folkloristic-scholar. Finally, like one of the characters in the tale, he too goes soft in the mind and meets his tragic end.

If it is to this end that the native scholarship was credited during the colonial academic project, twentieth century holds almost a similar implication. Complicity, appropriation of colonial power structures that continues to benefit hegemony and decolonization are central concerns of twentieth century. For example, D R Nagaraj draws attention to such a partially benefiting system held out by English education and confusions/divisions it leads to people in his essay *The Kannada-English Combat*. It is the upper class Hindus that still wield power in this system by English education. He says: “The Hindu upper class, which identified itself with the colonial powers and the language they spoke, climbed the bureaucratic ladder with ease and alacrity, the upper classes and castes in India have historically been the first to learn the language of power and use it for their upward mobility. This was true of Sanskrit, Persian and many other languages.” (Shanbhag 2010: 254) A counter view of refusal to learn English that has landed communities in trouble is also discussed. He gives the example of the Muslims whose refusal to learn the language of power-English is still fighting with the colonial forces in different forms. And it is “. . . this experience that guides Shudra and Dalit sections’ arguments in favor of English to this day.” (Shanbhag 2010:256)

The rural-urban divide that has arisen now distances equality of
opportunity and envisioned social mobility further than before. “More importantly, the English-centric education is working against rural society, which even includes their upper class. A majority of schools in villages do not have a system in place to teach English. Most teachers there are helpless because they do not know English themselves. Only prestigious schools in cities have infrastructure to teach and learn English. An ordinary child has no access to these schools. The ultimate beneficiaries in the present power structure are the upper class people.” (Shanbhag 2010:258)

Along with concern of such continued denial of opportunities, there is another reality—of the relationship of vernacular language with people. And it is this symbiotic relationship with the vernacular that supports deconstruct such colonial power structures, that does not miss global realities yet retain the indigenous roots—not only in terms of survivance of language but language consciousness that hold cultural experiences and memories. “But there is no point in arguing today that Kannada alone should be the medium of instruction. We need a new policy that blends the natural benefits of learning in Kannada and the social mobility that English brings to us. We need a system that teaches good English alongside Kannada.” (Shanbhag 2010:259)

The essay portrays not only region-specific anxiety about the politics of academics that is transference of colonial legacy; it also addresses the emergence of socio-political realism that is yet to bloom. The fight for independence was inclusive of many concerns of people and changes to social systems. The independence came with a dream, a desire of freedom from social constrictions.
Education was one door to that freedom. And the writer’s concern is about this as well as a region specific concern about the survivance of the vernacular that gives identity to people and place. This comprehension of realism—socio-political and linguistic, pervades the essay and from this perspective, reality is understood in its complexity. It is the understanding of both pan Indian and region-specific concerns that reveal different dimensions to nationalism that is encapsulated in region-specificities. It is this indigenous comprehension of realities that calls for the formulation of Folk realisms.

K V Subbanna’s essay *Excellence, an obsession* included in *Sirigannada* calls for identifying the global socio-political and economic forces that interferes with indigenous worldviews and the need to sustain the indigenous worldview. This perspective not only contextualizes but situates and makes it an important feature of life itself in the contemporary scenario. *Excellence, an obsession* (*Sirigannada* 2010:103) draws attention to critique the contemporary obsession with ‘excellence’ for this is creating disharmony in people. He observes:

> It is one thing to see excellence evolving as a natural pursuit. But knowing that excellence is desirable and something that is endowed with enormous dignity and therefore striving to attain it is another. The first is quality, the second obsession. When excellence becomes an obsession and you realize the difficulties in achieving it, many even succumb to the temptation of masquerading in order to gain respect. Sloganeering leads to stubbornness,
defiance and pretense. Often in literary circles, I may in
whom there is a celebratory acceptance of excellence, churn
out very mediocre writings. They even publish them
enthusiastically and discuss them shamelessly. I see them
right before me. (Shanbhag 2010:103-4)

The essay brings together a number of ‘stories’ that counter such an
obsession with *excellence*. He recalls an interesting story told by his teacher
*Parameshwar Bhattaru*-an old man repeatedly would talk about his son’s academic
achievements of how, from his school days to his graduation, he was excellent. The
listener, astounded by such a record, wanted to know what this scholar was doing.
His father’s reply is equally astounding: “He is an old man now.” (Shanbhag
2010:105) The focus of this humorous story is both artificiality of the *excellence*
that is the result of obsession, that doesn’t bring harmony to the individual nor does
it benefit the community. The critique of the contemporary strife for *excellence*
surely is in the background of this wisdom. (In fact, the writer has another, a
frightening one too, long story to narrate to depict the fate of striving for
excellence.) And, even in the contemporary, the ethic of *excellence* is not very
different for K V Subbanna. He notes:

... its okay if the *excellence* of the French Academy reaches high
heavens. France is an oppressor of its African settlers, it also sells
arms to innocent, foolish nations and with all the profit it makes out
of such criminal businesses, it stacks away a huge sum to extend
patronage to scholars, artists and litterateurs. An academy of such a
nation doesn’t to me appear like the Eiffel Tower of humanity; it shows up as an abyss of sin. (Shanbhag 2010: 110)

Just as it is important to discern the question of ethics in understanding excellence, it is also with caution one needs to tread this path in understanding indigenous literatures. The superfluous seeking of excellence in literatures and their danger to vernacular representations are detrimental. And this kind of seeking excellence is not just a Western influence. Most literary scholars believe that Sanskrit literature is to be imitated and the vernacular suffered in comparison is well understood. And during Navodaya -Navya period, the vernacular texts were measured against the Western literary analysis. Subbanna cites the example of Hoovayya in Kuvempu’s Kanooru Heggadati, which considered him to be ‘very unrealistic’. And such a response is the result of many ideas of excellence emanating from both Western and Sanskrit poetics. The danger of this, as the author observes, is that “We accept stereotypes. . . . We deem our literary works to be objects hung up for display and get ready to fix their price. . . . Ananthamurthy’s works are a three-part daring attempt that seeks to capture the complex history—in its various realms—of this century as it exists amidst us. If it occurs to us as a trilogy, then we would examine it differently.” (Shanbhag 2010:114) Here too, the author draws attention to a symbiotic relationship of language and people as well as literatures as cultural metaphors. It is contextualization of the text that facilitates a literary history of our own. He says:

Rama Aithala of Marali Mannige becomes Jagannatha of Bharathipura, he resurfaces as Jayarama of Chidambara
Rahasya or Hoovayaa of Kanooru Heggadati and is subject to the scrutiny up to Krishnappa of Avasthe. We have failed to see this unbroken line in Kannada literature. As we ridiculed the ideal and anger of the Navodaya –Pragatisheela movements and the obdurate introspection of the Navya, we assimilated Lankesh’s short stories and novels. We don’t recognize that Lankesh’s works weave a continuity of the literature of six to seven decades.” (Shanbhag 2010: 115)

Just as contextualizing the literary texts move the reader and the literary text toward a comprehension of a realism that is expansive and inclusive, Folk realisms encompasses realisms that have emerged and at the same time formulated realities. And this is an inclusive consciousness of local and global realities.

This timely caution about retaining indigeneity, in the context of the primary texts, leads us to understand the necessity of retaining stories. At times, like the folktales, the stories are meant as warning, as tales of caution. At one level, the tragic end of benefactors of colonial folkloristic endeavors draws the attention of readers to such a story. Of course, the tragic end of both Anna and Chaube is to be traced to the unequal access to power and also power structures that was established to benefit the colonizer. As Naithani rightly observes, the tales are not mere data; by extension, neither is the folklorist a mere source of data. It is here that reading approaches to ‘stories’ and an interpretation of the stories play a significant move toward re-interpreting the folk and their lore. And re-membering is a central method
in this endeavor. It is the stories that record the silent voices of oppression and of expression of freedom as well. So the stories are interrogated to comprehend the depiction of the complex indigenous realism in the context of the contemporary literary scenario.

A quick interrogation of the stories is taken up here to fathom the resourcefulness of the stories. The folktales incorporate the contemporary in their tales—be it the language, the re-defining of roles or gender configurations. The ‘old’ tales hold a mirror to the present configurations. Anna shares the ‘fairy legends’ she has heard from her grandmother, which, in turn, she narrates to her children. The tales highlight sensitive perceptions of gender, freedom, relationships and configurations of power in the Deccan plateau in ‘our Calicut language’. Anna tells the tales in her unique English—a combination of English and Hindustani words and expressions. The fact that Anna’s speaks ‘Indianized English’ links it to the establishment of Imperialism and the necessity of learning to communicate in English. It is interesting that “Mary Frere’s written versions involve creative reworking, smoothing Anna’s English and adding flourishes in the flowery language of Victorian fairy tales.” (Narayan 2005: xii) Even in the first reading of the tales, the tales carry unmistakable signs of every day expressions of Anna’s amusement in re-telling these tales and Hindustani words of referring to people, their designation and/or profession. For example, Rajah, Ranee, Prudhan, Vizier, bangle-wallah make their way into the written text. And Narayn notes the transliteration of colloquial expressions: “mara baparee” becomes “Mere Bap Reh” (Oh my Father!) and so on.” (pg no xii)
These simple changes make tales more accessible to the target audience. By choosing to focus on these changes made to the language, Narayan directs the attention of the readers to some of the ways in which folk language made its entrance into a ‘foreign language’ like English. This survivance of the language, indigenizing the foreign language, points to many socio-political changes that were taking place during colonization. One, the obvious fact that it was inevitable to learn English as it was the language of the colonizer. This seeped into the everyday life of the people, influencing the perception of reality and re-presenting it in their lore. Second, Anna the narrator is a now a Christian and English literate. She narrates the folktales in English that she has heard for her grandmother, who spoke ‘our Calicut’ language. And the tales themselves are in Mary Frere’s smoothened English. In terms of linguistic realities in the context of the folktales, depict survivance of folk and reinforce the recent discussions of indigenous translations.

Another aspect that is reconsidered from an indigenous perspective is with reference to imagination and reality. Each tale in *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* is fascinating as it is infused by a unique combination of imagination and reality. The stories are probed for a better understanding of this unique combination is an opportunity to re-configure region specificities in the context of the contemporary. For instance, Narayan’s introduction to *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* pins the value of folktales to its fine imagination. Throughout her introduction, at varied instances, she refers to the fact that the tales appeal to the reader because of its imagination. “For anyone who delights in the imaginative spaces opened up by fairy tales, this reviewer’s comments hold true
into the twenty-first century.” (Narayan 2005: vii) “These are marvelous imaginative tales.” (Narayan 2005: x); and again, “The wonderful, wonder-filled stories would alone make Old Deccan Days a classic.” (Narayan 2005: xiv) Later on, “Looking at the brisk, bold handwriting in manuscripts for Old Deccan Days, one senses the excitement with which Mary recorded imaginative worlds opened up for her through her “Annie Ayah.” (Narayan 2005: xxiii); and as a conclusion, “I wish readers the pleasure of learning which stories come to occupy their own imagination after the book has been sent.” (Narayan 2005: xxviii) Thus contextualized, Narayan’s persistent attention to imagination of the tales has two imperatives. Firstly, the complexities of the tales arise from the fact that there is unique dynamism between realism and imagination. It presents a complex situation as both historic context and contemporaneity of tales, discourse surrounding it and people involved are all a part of situating the tales. Thus the emergent Folk realisms is polyphonic and is multi-centred. This enables comprehension of the connection of imagination and realism in the tales. That is, instead of problematising imagination and realism that leads to a binary vision, as supposedly opposed faculties, if imagination is scrutinized for its ability to incorporate and re-present realism, the tales are a representative of the complexity of reality as the common man experiences realities in the contemporary scenario.

There is another facet to the discussion of imagination in the context of Folkloristics. Just as the imagination is the main ingredient of folktales, it pervades collection of folktales as well. This is true of both Anna and Chaube. Anna narrates tales that she knows will appeal to Mary not only for the purposes of
collection of tales; they are chosen by Anna to be told to Mary. Simple as *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* looks, it is this aspect of imagination that encouraged Mary to record the tales. But, the intention of collection of folktales by Chaube and Crooke is understood in two ways. One, there is a desire and an effort to add to already existing ethnographic knowledge bank in Europe; two, the global academic interests and their influences shall change the academic scenario of folkloristic endeavor. Also, there is a shift in the discussion of imagination itself. The mammoth collection of folktales is inspired by an imagination- of relating the local to global knowledge collection. In a time of rapid colonization, that Chaube thought of re-presenting indigeneity is indeed a mark of genius. But, the intention of collection, like in Mary Frere’s collection of tales, is ethnology. It is interesting to understand the role of imagination in bringing about this Folkloristic endeavor. For Crooke, the collection and documentation of folktales as was the practice of Western Folkloristics was important, a part of ethnographic endeavor. But, for Chaube it goes beyond this structured thinking. It is an act of communication rather than documentation. And this is precisely why he could think of writing the biographies some eminent British men of his time. (Naithani 2006)

Also, the story tellers weave their contemporary reality into the stories is undisputable. The represented realities and the emergent realisms embedded in the stories, along with a sense of humour that pervades the tales, gives the tale not only a balanced worldview but breaks the nexus of realist-pessimist. The humourous is presented in varied way. It could be in the form of incredible plot, superhuman feats of the heroine/hero of the tale, supernatural help provided by
Nature and/or the animal world; yet, there is no finality to either the tales or the journey taken by the heroine/hero of the tale. It is an important revision that the study of folktales enables. This is evident in many tales in *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends*—*Brave Sevantee Bai, Truth’s Triumph, The Little Surya Bai, The Blind Man, The Deaf Man and The Donkey, Muchie Lal, The Alligator and The Jackal.*

In *Brave Sevantee Bai, Sevantee Bai* has to face a tough situation. She finds that her husband-a king, has deserted his two wives and herself. She, the braver of the two co-wives has to support them too. She disguises herself as a man, protects the co-wives and marries another princess only to find her husband and return to their kingdom. *Truth’s Triumph* depicts a king who is sad because he does not have a son- an heir to the throne. This is solved when he visits a village and there in a garden he sees a brinjal plant with no leaves but hundred and one fruits. He marries *Gurza Bai,* the daughter of the *malee* of this garden. But her hundred and children do not have as comfortable a life as princes as they are the target of the jealousy of the king’s other wives. *Draupadi,* the princess takes care of herself and her brothers who have been turned into crows by a *Rakshas.* She manages this, makes her father-in-law see that he is unaware of the reality and causes reconciliation of her parents and succeeds in punishing the jealous queens. *The Little Surya Bai* narrates the life of a girl who is separated from her parents as baby as eagles carry her away only to take care of ever so gently. Discovered from her nest-home of eagles, she marries a king. Subject to the jealousy of his first *ranee,* she suffers various transmutations viz becomes a sunflower, then a mango tree and
a mango fruit and back to her human form, only to be re-united with her husband who loves her and then, first ranee cast into the prison. *The Blind Man, The Deaf Man and The Donkey* relates the manner in which a deaf man and a blind man deal with their challenged status and poverty. At the end of their adventures—which is fantastical as well as humorous and witty—they acquire not only wealth but gain hearing and sight as well!! (and this in a nation that was supposed to lack a sense of humour!!) *Muchie Lal* the story of a childless queen’s adopting a fish as her son and how the little hapless Brahman girl marries her as a result of her step mother’s planning to get rid of her. She is helped by a seven hooded cobra whose suggestions help transform the huge fish to a handsome prince. The same seven hooded cobra saves her life as she is pushed into the river by her step-sister who is greedy to take her place. Looked after by the family of the cobra, she gives birth to a son who she names-*Muchie Lal. Muchie rajah* looks for his wife and finds her abode with the cobra family through a bangle-seller who sells bangles everyday to ranee. He guides the king to his wife; with the permission of the cobra who now is her ‘father’, she joins her husband. *The Alligator and The Jackal* presents the tale of survival between a determined alligator who wants to eat the jackal and the jackal’s determination to outwit the alligator in order to survive.

If one were to look for the moral of the story, a definite pattern emerges. Philosophically, the epics portray that the evil in an individual is destroyed; however, the individual is not condemned. Here also the pattern of defeating evil intentions is the same i.e. ultimately it is a win-win situation. The negative emotions disturb the wo/man in the tales with immediacy to the concerned
individual and her/his relationships. And the individual is helped not only by the animal world and the demi-gods; the individual is endowed with an ability to metamorphose. The metamorphosis is empowering the individual to protect oneself, to save oneself at most trying times, to defeat attempts of destruction. At the same time, there are interesting manners of dealing with socio-political power structures. It is here that imagination harmonizes with reality that facilitates Folk realisms that is reflected in the stories of people and their way of life.

Narrated by a woman, these tales centre on the experiences of a woman-as an individual in her familial life and in the power rungs of the patriarchal structure of society. The tales depict women as individuals who are empowered to deal with such conflicts that arise either from jealousy of people around or by a problem that arises out of marital relationships with the help of supernatural powers or demi-gods. However, it must be accepted that the protagonist is no puppet in the hands of supernatural/ demi-gods. Instead, the reader gets a glimpse of a worldview that is distinctly inclusive. It is an expansive vision that envisions survivance and so, a counter discourse to the power structure the protagonist is situated in-be it the gendered realities or power structures of patriarchy. The gendered realities that are depicted—in the folktales as well as with reference to narrators—are encapsulated in this realism. Of course, narrators in this context is not only Anna; it is Mary who takes back a story to tell her people-a story of her experiences in India; Bartle Frere who adds a familiar dimension of Imperialism to this story of folk narration and Narayan who edits and writes the introduction has another interesting story to tell as she recounts the journey of the folktales that are buried under the
stories the colonial masters narrate. That is, like the cycle of folktales, in the contemporary, these layered stories that are presented to the reader in *Old Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends* are an attempt to sketch the consciousness of an era that was turbulent socio-politically and for the common man who was a part of this time. It is in this effort to understand the consciousness that pervades this criss-cross journey of ‘folk’ that Folk realisms emerges as the consciousness of people as well as that of a period where imagination plays a vital role in presenting, re-preserving and preserving the dialogues of the community.

It is this consciousness that Naithani too presents. But, here, the situation is complex and complicated. The complication is that there are many situations that are unexplained and some for which no definite answer is available within reach. Like the adventurous tale that unravels more mysteries, Naithani’s quest for the ‘Indian folktales’ unravels mysteries leading to many more questions and very few answers. But, the interest is also because there are so many unanswered questions that are relevant to the contemporary scenario. The challenge is in this direction of asking questions that seem to have no answers and in fact, throughout her introduction Naithani’s asks as well as refers to possible answers. In the context of the research taken up, the interest is not in answering the questions but to probe the story for indigeneity as an answer to the questions are beyond the framework of the research work viz. some of her questions are pointedly Postcolonial in nature.

The folktales collected by Chaube and Crooke *In Quest of Indian Folktales* are grouped as *Colors of Life, So Wise Some Women Are, Magic Mind*
and Corrective Measures. A perusal of the 158 tales collected clarifies the intention of the collection of tales. The academic orientation is evident from the structured documentation of the tales. The structured documentation of tales facilitates Naithani to re-construct the dynamics of the consciousness that enabled the mammoth collection of folktales and through this re-construction, direct the attention to the significance of understanding of history and realism. Naithani’s introduction draws attention to the politics of colonial power structures and significance of re-membering the tales to its people. And also, to reiterate, it was during the colonial regime that realism in literature occupied the centre of focus.

However, neither realism nor the consciousness that pervades the collection of tales is done in vacuum or in abstraction. Both realism and consciousness are understood with reference to people who are involved in this project of collection of tales. From this perspective, Sirigannada too does trace the consciousness that pervades the twentieth century Kannada literature where conscious attempts were made to remain rooted to the indigeneity. This insistence on indigeneity paves way for understanding and identifying indigenous epistemologies. Thus, though the three primary texts belong to different time zones and genres, placed in this context of indigeneity, they form a unit. A study of this unit contributes to an understanding of the demand of the contemporary literary scenario that obviously and pertinently insists on unique identities of the culture and the region.

But, to resume the discussion of the stories of collection of tales, it is important to trace the significant challenges and changes in the collection of
folktales. For example, Mary Frere gives an account of the occasion and the reason for collection of tales in her preface to *OLD Deccan Days or Hindoo Fairy Legends*:

I have been often asked under what circumstances these stories were collected? The circumstances were as follows. In the cold weather of 1865-6, my father whom I accompanied made a three month’s tour through the Southern Mahratta Country, in the Bombay Presidency, of which he was then Governor. . . . as there was no lady in the camp, and I sometimes had no lady visitors for some days together, I was necessarily much alone. One day, being tired of reading, writing and sketching, I asked Anna, my constant attendant, whose caste (the lingaet) belonged to the part of the country that we were traversing, is she could not tell me a story? This she declared to be impossible. I said, you have children and grandchildren, and which had been told her by her own grandmother when she was a child; and she told me the story of Punchkin, which was subsequently followed by others that are her recorded. (Narayan 2005: Preface xvi)

Writing about the collection of folktales by Chaube and Crooke, Naithani says “. . . And William Crooke writes in *Folklore*, “My experience in the collection of folklore is almost entirely confined to India” (Crooke 1902, 302). He goes on to describe the ways in which a civil servant could gather information and
tales: in other words, the way his own research and collection of “folktales, popular belief and customs” had been carried out. (Naithani 2006: 6-7) Naithani yet again notes Crookes’ observation of his understanding of his position and situation. “It is noteworthy that Crooke mentions difficulties which are missing from the writings of most colonial folklorists (Naithani 1997, 13-14) i.e., the relationship between the collector’s official and scholarly positions:

Inquiries of this kind can seldom be carried on side by side with official work. If the “Sahib” comes into a village to inquire into the assessment of the income tax, for instance, or to fix the revenue on a piece of alluvial land thrown up by the river, the sight of his note book puts a sudden check on conversation, and he will observe that any questions he asks are met with coldness or distrust, or will suddenly find himself unable to make himself intelligible in the local dialect. (Crooke 1902, 303-304) (Naithani 2006:7)

It is evident that the socio-political realities of India have changed and with this, the desire for a collection of folktales is also to be understood. However, Crooke is aware of his space and position for the purpose of collection of folktales. He is conscious of his standing with the natives-in terms of his position (Civil Servant) and that of untrustworthy ‘other’ (British). In this academic structure, Chaube is the most important link without whom the project is impossible. Interestingly, in the process of collection they do transcend this ‘other’ place of each other is a complexity that provides for an
interesting interrogation. And it is this relationship that provides a framework of differences rather than a binary opposition.

The changed scenario in the collection of folktales is visible also in the people involved in collecting the tales. A collection of 158 tales involves so many people— to narrate and to document them. So, an entire human resource is energized for this collection of tales. And the tales, thus, echo not only the voice of a community, it is a record—a document of the socio-cultural history of a people. The people who narrate that tales are chosen from different strata of society— there is a consciousness and a design with which the project is unleashed. The narrators’ of the tales include Pandit, Brahman, Gujarati Brahman, teacher, student, Principal teacher, weaver, Jat (cultivators), Banya. Though an exclusive section of tales that are about women is included, the tales are not told by women; one, possibly because the project would be too vast to be managed by the two men. Also, as Naithani observes, the early colonial folkloristic endeavor was divided between women and clergy. And Crooke may have been aware of this and looked for an opportunity to study folktales. However, the result of this exclusion presents a unique picture of realism portrayed through folktales. The folktales differently re-present the realities of the community as perceived by the people.

The 158 folktales presented address various issues of everyday life. Naithani notes the vision of the folktales of *Colors of Life*: 
“Narratives of everyday lives, social practices and structures, questions and dilemmas, and matters of life and death are the subjects of tales in this section. They are the tales of the rich, the poor, the ordinary, the special, the thieves, the spies, the wise, the cunning, the learned, the pretentious, the kings, the thugs, the saints, the traders, and of many others.” (Naithani 2006: 64)

_Sirigannada_ too is a unique anthology. It is the vision of tracing the changes in literary scenario that pervades the choice of writings and the range of writings as well. Without this range, the anthology is not only monotonous but so uni-dimensional that many nuanced responses to the age are lost. And the guiding spirit is to trace the responses to the changes in the twentieth century. Shanbhag says: “The responses to these changes can be found throughout this anthology. With all its limitations, the book attempts to capture key concerns of creative minds in Kannada as well as endeavours to include important writings in each genre.” (Shanbhag 2010:6)

Thus, the primary texts, each in their unique manner of vision, present the contemporary and in fact, shape the contemporary literary discussions. Much as the editors are central to the shaping of the contemporary, it is the tales and writings that help to comprehend the concerns of the age and so enables a better comprehension of the present. In this direction, the shaping of the contemporary literary scenario is in the responses to the issues, anxieties and concerns of the age and place that play an important role.
Anna spreads a magic carpet of imagination that is embedded with reality, the tales of In Quest of Indian Folktales spreads the vision of society that looks for a solution to these everyday life realities. They are not the adventurous tales that Anna tells Mary viz. of Brave Sevantee Bai, Vicram Rajah or the animal tales. The tales present problems of a man’s everyday life, where reality rules and the solutions are in practical wisdom. For example, the collection of folktale opens with this tale (the sole tale told and recorded by Chaube) of a ‘wise vizier’ of a king. One morning he suddenly quits from the service of the king. Surprised not to see him in the morning, the king sends for his vizier. Enquires as to why ‘he resigned the service and taken the service of God’. The vizier’s reply is this:

1. When I am in thy service thou art sitting and I am standing. But in the service of God I allowed to sit.

2. Thou takest meal and I have to only to look at it. But God gives us food & he never takes food himself.

3. Thou sleepest and I have to guard then as a sentinel. But in the service of God I sleep and God keeps an eye on me.

4. If thou diest I shall be troubled by my enemies. But God never dies & so I have no fear of being troubled by my enemies if I am a servant of God.

5. I am always in the fear that if I commit a wrong against thee thou shalt punish me. But if I commit wrong against
God I am sure he will pardon me if I sincerely implore forgiveness from him.

Though Crooke’s title is ‘God’s Easy Yoke’, told by Chaube to Crooke, the tale acquires new connotations. The tale is about the freedom of mind in the service of God. And Chaube does exercise it well in the context by choosing the tales and translation of it. In fact, the beginning provided by this folktale sets the tone for the rest of 157 tales. The tales have immense variety thematically and in the issues that are addressed; but each tale carries this inimical dignity about them—be it the tale of the foolish woman who asked her husband to wish for two head and four hands (Naithani 2006) or the tale of a thief who surrendered looking at the plight of a man who has two wives (Tale 21 Colors of Life); the gory tale of a loyal dog who meets his death keeping his loyalty to his master (Tale 106, told by a 4th class student So Wise Some Women Are) or the tale of how the worldly riches are gained according to one’s devotion to God (Tale 133 Corrective Measure). Of course, one does find folktales that are modifications of stories from the epics Viz. the story of the birth of Ganapathi-122, story of Narada Muni-132 in Corrective Measures. Thus, a study of the collected tales is not only about a choice of tales—a politics of representation and/or translation, it is about presenting the realisms of people as they see and interpret it. What emerges from a perusal of the tales is a presentation of realisms of people. And it is the collected tales that supports may queries about Post-colonialisms, loss of indigenous epistemologies and their re-membering. Naithani notes the relevance of such a study:
Writing on the history of Indian folklore research has been predominantly chronological. Works on Indian folklore have contained this chronology in prefaces, describing, in varying degrees of detail, the sequence of folklore publications. Theoretical commentary has also been derived from the writings and claims of the British collectors. Theoretical analyses by Dorson (1968), Ramanujan (1993) and Jason (1983) are in the context of nineteenth century European folkloristics. The difference between the two streams—chronological and theoretical—has been the following: while the former has shown that the collection and publication of Indian folklore became hectic and widespread soon after the first collection appeared. The latter has shown how these materials attracted the attention of major European folklorists, anthropologists and Orientalists, especially indologists, and also publishers. (Naithani 2006:38)

Thus understood and positioned, Naithani’s introduction emerges as a part of the discussion of the collection of folktales, highlighting the significance of the theoretical framework in the context of collection of folktales. This inference is true for all the three introductions of the primary texts.

In the context of these discussions that emerges from the primary texts, a hypothetical statement of Folk realisms is attempted here. The research defines “Folk realisms as an indigenous epistemology that maps region and cultural
specificities, narrates realities encapsulated in contemporary everyday life as experienced by the folk.” Folk realisms narrates realities encapsulated in contemporary everyday life as experienced by the folk. This narration is imbued with imaginations that depict region and culture specificities to reveal facets of realisms. So, it also re-presents, interprets and critiques contemporary realities envisaged by the folk. Thus, Folk realisms is a space in which the presence of the past establishes a confluence of realities. Since ‘Folk’ is recognized as ‘us’—people, it holds multicultural and polyphonic realities that pervades everyday life. Folk realisms is an enabling concept that recognizes the folk as part of the complex contemporary reality and in this understanding, it also a critical insider’s narration of realisms. So, Folk realisms is also a concept that maps indigenous epistemology, connecting disparate realisms re-presented in literatures.

So Folk realisms provide the framework under which both folktales and the written literatures could be studied. An analysis of this research statement shall be taken up in the next chapter.
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