



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Colonialism and Translation: A Study of Kirmani's *History of Tipu Sultan***

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**ABSTRACT**

This article explores the relationship between colonialism, power, and translation through a study of Mir Hussain Ali Khan Kirmani's *History of Tipu Sultan*, translated by Col. W. Miles in 1844, and Philip Meadows Taylor's novel *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840). Focusing on the paratextual incursions of Miles into his target text, the study interprets colonial translation activities as avenues of conquest. However, despite being in tandem with imperial objectives, translation also betrayed colonial anxieties as imperial power was never absolute. In this instance, despite Miles's efforts, Kirmani's history eschews convenient framing and intended categorisations. Juxtaposing the English translation of Kirmani's history with Taylor's fictional account, the study argues that both instances can be taken as transliterations of Tipu in the language of conquest (English), where the complexities of the translation process overlap with colonial mechanisms of power. In this way, the research aims to uncover the ways in which colonial translation activities and literary adaptations generated knowledge regimes that shaped the understanding of historical events and personalities.

**KEYWORDS** Colonialism, historiography, orientalism, translation, Tipu Sultan

**Introduction**

The relationship between British colonial expansion and the articulation of knowledge regimes in South Asia is an acknowledged area of scholarly inquiry, one that continues to offer avenues for examination and analysis. 'Power' itself is a much discussed and debated term. It is widely held that the conventional understanding of power as coercion and imposition of will does not capture its complexity (Han, 2019, pp. 1-2). In this vein, and germane to the present discussion, power goes beyond destroying resistance and forcing obedience, and operates on multiple avenues, often without always drawing attention to itself.

In 1982, Tzvetan Todorov published his *La Conquête de l'Amérique* (Todorov, 2013 [1982]). Among his guiding assumptions was the notion that literacy served as an important technology aiding the European conquest of the Americas (in Cheyfitz and Harmon, 2018, p. 275). Again, since Foucault (2001), power has been viewed as the creation and dissemination of particular sets of ideas; of particular ways of speaking and writing about things. Language mediates reality and particular discourses tend to assume specific understandings of reality so that those understandings participate in the creation of the reality that they refer to (Said, 2003).

The capacity to speak of or write about is closely related to the agency to translate. Harmon (2020, p. 17-25) suggests that translation can be seen as an instrument of power, where power influences the translation process and its outcomes. Etymologically, 'translate' derives from *transfere*; to transfer, from trans- + latus, past participle of *ferre*, meaning 'to

carry' (Merriam-Webster, n.d., Word History). Taken in this sense, the power to translate is the capacity 'to transfer or turn from one set of symbols into another' (Merriam-Webster, n.d., section 1 b). Simultaneously, it is 'to bear, remove, or change from one place, state, form, or appearance to another', which can be synonymised with 'transfer' and 'transform' (Merriam-Webster, n.d., section 2 a). Translation, which this study conflates with power, is thus the capacity to alter or change the subject of its operations (at least in some respect).

Tipu Sultan (1750 — 1799) was the sultan of the kingdom of Mysore. Tipu and his father, Sultan Hyder Ali Khan Bahadur (1720 — 1782) gained prominence in eighteenth-century India and beyond for their military engagements with the English East India Company (EIC). Hyder/ Tipu fought four wars with the EIC starting from 1767. The Mysoreans fared well in the first two, and the British won the penultimate and final war, killing Tipu Sultan in his bastion of Seringapatam on May 4, 1799. Following the Fall of Seringapatam (1799), the British print machinery in India (and Britain) produced numerous works on Tipu Sultan, often demonising him as a religious fundamentalist and cruel tyrant.

On a broader scale, the intellectual efforts of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century colonial officials, who often doubled as Orientalists, involved the translation and interpretation of existing texts, the documentation of Indian languages, and the collection of historical information. Where oral traditions, intuitive understandings and customs were at work, Orientalists like William Jones (1746 — 1794), Charles Wilkins (1749 — 1836), Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765 — 1837), and James Prinsep (1799 — 1840) took it upon themselves to codify and transcribe what they saw as Gentoo and Mohammedan laws.

As opposed to the Orientalists, the Anglicists believed neither in learning India's ancient languages, nor in immersing themselves in the traditions of their subject population. However, translation was a pivotal tool in the exercise of power for both camps. The various tasks that colonial officials performed can be seen as monumental 'translation' activities that gave definite shape to what was often inchoate, opaque, or ambiguous. In other words, translation repeatedly altered the subject of its operations. Tipu Sultan was one such subject. This study takes up a native historian's account of Tipu Sultan (produced under the auspices of the East India Company), and traces the influence it had on other representations of Tipu, specifically Meadows Taylor's novel *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840). Even though Col. Miles's translation of Kirmani was published in 1844, an earlier translation was available by 1834. Furthermore, Taylor was quite the Orientalist in that he could speak Persian and Hindustani, and was quite comfortable going native in Hyderabad. By juxtaposing these divergent sources, we aim to unravel the intricate dynamics of power, translation, and representation that shaped the portrayal of Tipu Sultan in colonial discourse.

The first work under discussion here is Mir Hussain Ali Khan Kirmani's *History of Tipu Sultan: Being a Continuation of the Neshani Hyduri*. Kirmani was an Iranian immigrant to the Mysore court. The Persian manuscript is believed to have been produced somewhere between 1801 and 1805. However, by this time, Tipu Sultan had been killed by the EIC. Kirmani was now an employee of the British, though he dedicated his work to the surviving members of the Hyder dynasty. The work was first translated into English in 1834 by H. S. Reid for the Oriental Translation Fund (Royal Collection Trust, n.d.), but this earlier translation is not available. In 1840, British writer Philip Meadows Taylor (1808 — 1876) published his novel *Tippoo Sultan: A Tale of the Mysore War* which contains exaggerated episodes that resemble events mentioned in Kirmani. In 1844, Col. W. Miles translated Kirmani's manuscript again with frequent paratextual elements (this study uses the 1864 reprint). This translation of Kirmani is contextualised and compared with Taylor's novel to decipher larger colonial mechanisms at work.

## **Literature Review**

Colonial translations, and at times, caricatures of Tipu, have been taken up variously in postcolonial scholarship. In *Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy* (1997), Kate Brittlebank studies Tipu's denominational politics in the rapidly evolving dynamics of late eighteenth-century Mysore. Simmons (2019) takes up the same theme, emphasizing a devotional component to Tipu's appeal to religion for justifying his regime to the majority Hindus of Mysore.

Kate Teltscher (1995) has interpreted British demonisation of the Mysore sultan in connection with Tipu's success in cloning European tools and tactics which undermined racial constructions of Self and Other. Tipu had to be 'distanced' as he was getting too close for comfort. Relatedly, Soracoe (2013) demonstrates how attention from the East India Company's own excesses and corruption in India (and Britain) was diverted by the creation of the image of the Muslim monster of Mysore. This relates, if tangentially, to Cohen's (1996) approach to colonialism as the power to generate discourses, and to dictate the terms of reference. Power, in Cohen (1996), and in the present study, is the capacity to 'translate', specifically, to translate Tipu Sultan; to engender iterations of Tipu amenable to the designs and purposes of the EIC.

While the discursive activities of Empire have been taken up variously in Teltscher (1995), Cohn (1996), Cheyfitz (1997), Soracoe (2013), Rangarajan (2014), Robinson (2014), this article is concerned with the British translation of Tipu Sultan in a specific work produced by an Indian writer working under colonial auspices. While the English works produced in the era we are interested in were not always translations of Persian manuscripts, they were part of a broader context of circulating texts that sought to chronicle, characterise, illustrate and interpret the colonial conquest of Tipu/ Mysore. Translation, in this sense, is more than a simple change of semantics, but an exercise of discursive power to bring about specific iterations of Tipu Sultan in English print.

## **Material and Methods**

This article provides a close study of the English translation of Kirmani (1864 [1844]). The backdrop to this translation effort is provided through an analysis of the late eighteenth- early nineteenth-century Orientalist approach to writing/ translation in India, where translation was seen as a means of penetrating, uncovering and de-mystifying the culture(s) the British had come to preside over. Bernard Cohn (1996) sees codification, tabulation, and broader areas like archaeology and ethnography in colonial India, as 'investigative modalities' through which the British sought to expand and maintain control. We extend Cohn's argument to translation and paratextual elements within translation in Miles's version of Kirmani's history (1864). With this insight, the study traces incidents in Taylor's novel to colonial constructions of Tipu, simultaneously examining linguistic choices, cultural interpretations, and narratives created by the British author. The object of these endeavours is to identify patterns or trends across different 'translations' of Tipu to explore how they reflect colonial perspectives, policies, agendas and power dynamics.

## **The British approach to translation**

The Indo-European philologist and Orientalist Sir William Jones (1746 — 1794) had advised Thomas Maurice (1754 — 1824) to rely on Persian and Sanskrit sources to write a comprehensive history of India (Majeed, 1992, p. 139). This was in line with Jones's Orientalist approach to (Hindu) India as an ancient civilisation whose mysteries were locked away in an obscure but rich priestly language. As opposed to the Anglicists, Jones and his ilk believed in the study and promotion of Indian languages particularly Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. While Orientalists like Jones held sway in the late eighteenth- and early

nineteenth-centuries, the Anglicist view gained a decisive victory in London and Calcutta, limiting contact between British officials and Indian subjects in later years.

If Jones is the arch Orientalist, one of his main objectives in studying Sanskrit was to desacralise India's ancient texts, to penetrate her dark recesses and expose her secrets to the British by translating ancient texts (Majeed, 1992). After all, despite all his interest in Indian languages, Jones was part of the colonial mission and sought to better understand India in order for the British to be able to control it through establishing a knowledge regime. Intellectual concerns and issues of governance went side by side in his advocacy of the support for Indian languages. For Jones, the apparent monopoly of a form of indigenous knowledge by certain classes could only be broken through translation. This would mean that the British would be as conversant in Indian traditions as the Indians, and that their idioms would be desacralised by the very act of translation. (Majeed, 1992, p. 20)

To achieve this end, the Orientalists hired *pandits* and *maulvis* to codify Hindu and Muslim laws to compose great digests which could then be translated and made accessible to British civil servants in Bengal. In surveys of captured Indian territory (Buchanan, 1807) and histories of the subcontinent (Mill, 1817; Taylor, 1870), India was textualised by British authors – both Orientalists or Anglicists – with the proverbial 'last word' being in English.

Translation was thus a means of discovery (by virtue of identifying Hindu and Muslim codes and laws), of codifying and disambiguating gray areas (where no 'clear' laws could be found), and, by the combination of the above two operations, of interpellating the Indian, whether Hindu or Muslim, in the very process of textualising the subject. Writing in 1882, Nietzsche took note of Roman appropriations of Greek cultural and literary artifacts. There was something peculiar about these translations

what was past and alien was an embarrassment for them, and being Romans, they saw it as incentive for a Roman conquest. Indeed, translation was a form of conquest. Not only did one omit what was historical; one also added allusions to the present and, above all, struck out the name of the poet and replaced it with one's own – not with any sense of theft but with the very best conscience of the *imperium Romanum*. (Nietzsche, 2012, pp. 67-68)

That colonial conquest and translation have been ancient bedfellows has been detailed considerably in postcolonial scholarship. In Eric Cheyfitz's study of the representation of native cultures in colonial writings (1997), imperialism *becomes* an act of translation. Such, we argue, is Miles's translation of Kirmani (1864 [1844]). Translation became a tool in the creation and dissemination of knowledge about India, which, in turn, helped control the vast territory the British came to govern.

### **The translation of Kirmani's Tipu Sultan**

In 1844 Col. W. Miles translated Mir Hussain Ali Khan Kirmani's *History of Tipu Sultan*. This is an important history of Tipu's reign by a 'native' historian. The original work was completed under the supervision of Col. Colin Mackenzie. Mackenzie literalises the connection between knowledge/ translation and power. An officer of the army that stormed Tipu's capital, he was also an Orientalist and surveyor. In Girish Karnad's play *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (2005), Kirmani is at a loss as to why the British require him to complete this book: 'You have your version of history, all worked out. Why do you want my side?' 'I am interested in the other side,' says Mackenzie, '... that's how we Europeans are brought up ... That I suppose is our strength.' Kirmani is not convinced: 'I find a lifetime insufficient to understand my own.' This stems from Kirmani's painful awareness of his divided loyalties: '... I spent my life serving him [Tipu] and his father [Hyder]. And now I work for you, his enemies' (Karnad, 2005, p. 182). Whether the historical Kirmani suffered from such pangs of conscience can only be speculated upon.

In the Kirmani history translated by Miles (1864 [1844]), the latter chooses to distance himself from the content in his preface. The work belongs to Kirmani and not Miles, the translator assures us, while stating his distaste for Tipu and his court. Miles also informs his readers that on rare occasions he has been constrained to take 'liberties' with the Persian expression but has remained faithful to Kirmani's syntax as far as that of the target language would permit (Preface to Kirmani, 1864, p. xi). In his imitation of the style of his author, Miles has preferred a foreignised translation of Kirmani. What Miles is referring to can be seen in the approach taken to translation in the nineteenth-century.

In 1813, Friedrich Schleiermacher had differentiated between a translation strategy that domesticated the source language text so that it would read as though it had been written in the target language in the first place, and a strategy that found ways of expanding the target language by a process of foreignisation (Schleiermacher, 2012, pp. 46-47). In the latter case, the reader would be aware that they were reading a foreign, and not a local text. Miles seems to want to maintain the 'otherness' of Kirmani's ornate Persian in order to lend credence to his effort at transparency.

But translation might be more than mere discursive conquest, for 'the line between possessed and possessing in translation is both rhetorically and ideologically slippery' (Rangarajan, 2014, p. 11). The possibility that the translation eschews complete submission, that it cannot be domesticated to iron out all 'difference' poses a threat to the assumed cultural homogeneity of the translating language (Rangarajan, 2014). Padma Rangarajan's claim that the source text/ culture often resists complete submission/ translation provides a filter with which to view the sprinkling of footnotes in Miles's translation of Kirmani (1864 [1844]). Miles uses these paratextual elements to perform a variety of functions. Footnotes are employed to clarify Kirmani's often-unreferenced claims, to mediate for English readers the source text's inherent cultural difference exemplified in the use of ornate Persian proverbs, but, more importantly perhaps, to dismiss a Mysorean version of events if it contradicts the 'authoritative' British account of Tipu's life and death. That Miles needs a plethora of footnotes demonstrates the disruptive potential of the Persian chronicler's version of events.

But then we have the raw power of Miles as the arbiter of Kirmani's history. By the time Miles's translation of Kirmani was published in 1844, India was well on its way to being Anglicised with Persian having been replaced by English as the court language in 1837. Miles, like Mackenzie, represents the change in the political as well as discursive regime, and by virtue of conquest, has the right to 'translate' Tipu; to interpellate the subject of his intellectual operations in the eyes of the reader of the English version of Kirmani. Kirmani's history of Tipu, thus, did not/ does not simply belong to Kirmani since it has been mediated by Col. Miles. Authorship has been multiplied, disputed, and complicated not only by Miles's rendition of the original content in English, but doubly by his frequent textual interjections in the form of paratextual elements.

In this light we might revisit Miles's paratextual framing of Kirmani. Kirmani's history is placed within the preface and footnotes which calibrate the native's account. The foreignised translation in this instance becomes more than an instance of loyalty to the idiom of the original. Its 'strangeness' serves to distance the reader from the narrative. In conjunction with the foreignised translation, the paratextual interjections dismiss both the ornate expression and the content of that expression. Consider, for example, Miles's footnote to Kirmani's effusions on Tipu: 'It is nearly impossible to make anything of this poetry and the like of it in a prose translation' (Kirmani, 1864, p. 4). Kirmani in this instance is waxing lyrical on Tipu's decision to arrive at the scene of a potential insurrection. Miles makes both the incident and Kirmani's rendition of it appear ridiculous through his comment.

But Miles's dismissal also betrays the insufficiency of translation. This falling short might also be extended to the translator and to the language of translation. Miles's frustration with Kirmani also reflects perhaps what Rangarajan (2014) refers to as the native culture's resistance to translation. The Company may have taken Tipu's court historian in its employ but Kirmani's text will unsettle Western categorisations of 'domesticated' and 'foreignised' translation. Even a foreignised translation is capable of disrupting the linear narrative of British moral superiority and military conquest by presenting a Mysorean version of events. On the other hand, the admission that Kirmani's poetic effusions cannot be suitably translated into English is an admission of the limitations of colonial power. The lofty metaphors of the East just won't give in to any sort of English prose Miles can muster. Either way, Miles cannot completely domesticate Kirmani.

There are more complications. As Susan Bassnett (2005) observes, a related issue in eighteenth-century translation debates was the 'moral responsibility' of the translator to clarify for a contemporary audience the intention of the source text as clearly as possible. In this formulation, the translator was to be an interpreter of potentially lost meaning (Bassnett, 2005, p. 68). Such an approach combined the seemingly opposite impulses of trying to make the original decipherable in contemporary language, while also recognising the debt to the conditions of the source text's production by preserving as much of it as possible (Bassnett, 2005, p. 68). Miles makes clear his intention of approximating Kirmani's Persian as far as possible in his translation at the outset; all failures he ascribes to Oriental excess. But the 'moral responsibility' to Kirmani's *intention* provides a locus for contending loyalties. If Kirmani was unequivocally loyal to his old master in his *history*, it would ultimately fall on Miles to vindicate Tipu Sultan for an English readership, giving the lie to the British construction of the Tipu legend. Kirmani's *history* however, does not openly exonerate Tipu. Tipu is shown as a brave soldier but feeble and covetous administrator whose fall seems inevitable. This, we believe, brings into sharp relief the interaction between Mackenzie and Kirmani in Girish Karnad's play.

The historical Mackenzie was a military man, having participated in the downfall of Tipu. He was a surveyor of captured territory and a scholar of the liberal bent representing the Company's interest in a Mysorean account of Tipu Sultan: 'I am interested in the other side .... that's how we Europeans are brought up ... That I suppose is our strength' (Karnad, 2005, p. 182). But how far could this *history* have been allowed to diverge from the official account of the Anglo-Mysore Wars? How far was Kirmani free to write his mind? And what was Kirmani's mind now that he was an EIC employee, or at least receiving a pension from the British? '... I spent my life serving him [Tipu] and his father [Hyder]. And now I work for you, his enemies' (Karnad, 2005, p. 182). In a sense, the historical Kirmani was acting as a translator himself, translating the living Tipu of the past into the Tipu of a soon-to-be-translated book. Schleiermacher, quoted earlier, saw translation in operation between people representing social hierarchies and even in the solitary individual reminiscing her own past thoughts. In composing his history after the Fall of Seringapatam (1799), Kirmani is doing both.

To whom did Kirmani owe his allegiance? To Tipu Sultan or the East India Company? The historical Kirmani may not have known the answer himself. His work is both a vindication and an indictment of Tipu. Unlike his contemporaries who had freely used the Urdu/ Arabic *Shaheed* (martyr) for Tipu, Kirmani does not once refer to his old master as a fallen Muslim icon, *Shaheed*. In his history, Tipu Sultan appears to be ill-tempered, mercurial, superstitious and unstable. It seems as if Kirmani had ambivalent feelings towards his old master, even if he insists on his loyalty to him. Whether Kirmani actually felt Tipu was an incapable ruler or not, the Tipu Sultan of his (and Miles's) history sits well with other iterations of Tipu in the English language. Overall, Kirmani's history is ambivalent, at best, towards Tipu Sultan.

### **Kirmani/ Miles and Taylor's *Tippoo Sultaun***

Philip Meadows Taylor occupies a unique position as a colonial administrator in, and (untrained) historian of India. Taylor devotes considerably more space to the character of Tipu than Walter Scott did in *The Surgeon's Daughter* (2012 [1827]), and G. A. Henty does in *The Tiger of Mysore* (2002 [1895]). In *Tippoo Sultaun* (1840), sparse instances in the plot are inspired by real events from the Anglo-Mysore Wars (1767 — 1799, intermittently), yet each episode has been improvised to suit the exigencies of a plot with twin heroes from divergent cultures sharing a common Indian enemy.

Herbert Compton, a young British soldier with a love interest back in England, is taken prisoner by Tipu and alternately coaxed and tortured to switch sides, which he steadfastly refuses. Kasim Ali is the Indian hero who is smitten by the young third wife of one of Tipu's veritable commanders, Abdool Rhyman Khan. Saving her life in a fearful storm, Kasim is rewarded by the Khan with service in Mysore where he soon becomes a member of Tipu's elite guard. Compelled to defend a tyrant and helplessly attracted to the wife of his benefactor, Kasim finds himself in an unenviable position. Punctuating the romance are gut-wrenching illustrations of Tipu's savagery and his ridiculous attempts at waging war in pursuit of expansionist ideals. Nearly all major characters – Herbert, Dalton, Gen. Mathews, Gen. Baird and Kasim – have a score to settle with the tyrant as the heroes inch closer to eventual freedom through many trials and tribulations in Mysore.

In Kirmani (1864 [1844]), an individual named Kasim Ali – Taylor's Indian hero – is mentioned as being in Tipu's employment. In Kirmani, Kasim Ali is the governor of the fort of Nuggur, which the deserter Iyaz Khan had delivered up to the English shortly after Tipu's accession to the throne of Mysore in 1781-82. This Iyaz Khan was of noble Hindu birth, purportedly converted to Islam by Hyder and then adopted as a son. On Hyder's death, Iyaz offered his services, with the fort, to the English, but Tipu regained the stronghold after a protracted siege. The terms of capitulation were negotiated between Tipu and Brig. Gen. Matthews through Kasim Ali, who was retained as lieutenant governor of the fortress by the British.

If Tipu had thought Kasim was complicit in the surrender of the bastion, his appointment by the British as negotiator apparently cast him in the light of an out-and-out traitor. When Kasim saw that an English defeat was imminent, he sought the protection of Tipu's Commandant, the famed general Muhammad Ali (Kirmani, 1864, p. 20). Tipu ordered Kasim's execution as soon as he was in his power, but the Commandant staged a dramatic rescue. In a paratextual incursion, Miles adds that this protection was in accordance with the terms of capitulation agreed to with the English (Kirmani, 1864, p. 19). The execution was ordered again and General Ali repeated his theatrics. Tipu-enthusiast Bhagwan Gidwani (1976) glosses over this episode hinting at a homoerotic relationship between the general and Kasim. In Kirmani, Gen. Ali takes Kasim on his elephant beckoning his troops to follow him to Seringapatam in order, the author thinks, to put the case before the Queen Mother. Jealous courtiers present this to Tipu as Ali's defection to the English. The Sultan orders a pursuit; Kasim is hanged and Ali imprisoned (Kirmani, 1864, pp. 25-6). The general soon committed suicide (Kirmani, 1864, p. 26). In a search following the incident, letters from the English urging Ali to defect were discovered from the Commandant's quarters. Kirmani insists Ali rejected them 'scornfully', but forgot to dispose of them (Kirmani, 1864, p. 26).

Taylor's Kasim might resemble Commandant Muhammad Ali more than his historical namesake because *A Tale of the Mysore War* involves Kasim being chased up by Tipu's assassins soon after he resigns his commission with the Royal Guard. Tipu's insecure conniving mind is poisoned by a jealous courtier Jaffur who reports Kasim's recent purchase of a house in Hyderabad, and conjectures on his possible defection to the Nizam who was allied with the British. Kasim is able to overpower his assailants and extract a confession

from them. He takes this stab in the back from Tipu as sufficient justification to join the English, and lead the assault on Seringapatam with Baird. However, Kasim's eventual turn is not grounded entirely in one incident. Despite the fact that it is the Sultan's betrayal that outrages Kasim, there are many instances in his trajectory at Mysore sufficient to awaken him to a realisation of the Sultan's true character before his fall.

Taylor gives Kasim a noble birth and a respectable station in life by virtue of his father's military service against the Mahrattas – a choice that appears to be more than coincidental. The Mahrattas were relentlessly pursued as the remnant of recalcitrant native power after the fall of Seringapatam, and had been presaged as the Company's next target by Tipu himself. 'Base sons of dogs!' Abdool Rhyman Khan, calls them, 'cowards and sons of impure mothers!' who attack defenceless people (Taylor, 1840, pp. 44-45). India's ethnic and religious complexities spread over semi-independent principalities, along with its geographical expanse, allow Taylor to portray Kasim and the English as having common enemies.

However, for the better part of his life, Kasim has been led into believing that the English are foreign conquerors, who have determined to hold all Indian princes in thrall, particularly the surviving Muslim aristocracy of the waning Mughal court. His attraction to Tipu's service is because of his faith. The novel's English hero Herbert Compton, like many other 'brave [English] fellows', is ready to offer his blood for the country's cause (Taylor, 1840, p. 85). There is no elaboration of this cause – whether trade, Empire, or philanthropy – and neither the English nor the Indian characters question the British presence in India. Kasim only seems to object to their expansion at the cost of indigenous Muslim power, and that too because he has been trained to think they are cunning and deceitful. Yet, he is quick to admire the 'gentle dispositions' and 'genius' of the English race even before he has come into contact with them (Taylor, 1840, p. 97). His first conversation with an Englishman is a chance encounter with Herbert Compton, made prisoner in Mysore. Kasim's first act towards him is one of kindness in relieving the captive of a mischievous boy's pelting. During the ensuing conversation, Compton beseeches Kasim not to join the Sultaun, 'one who is a tiger in nature, one whose glory it is to be savage and merciless as his namesake' (Taylor, 1840, p. 118).

Taylor depicts Tipu's military exploits as occurring due to sheer chance or the superiority of numbers, when the English are hemmed in and face disaster due to the obstinacy of generals like Matthews (Taylor 1840, p. 158). However, when the English are in their true element, Tipu's men take the first opportunity to flee. Whenever such an occasion occurs in *Tippoo Sultaun*, Tipu is left cursing his men and abusing the English for having caused his debacle. Furthering his mockery of the Sultan, Meadows has Tipu inside an enemy fortress with a small contingent. Tipu announces a foolish plan of attack in the fashion of an oracle: 'Yes,' he continued, after holding his forefinger between his teeth in an attitude of deliberation some time, – 'yes, it is a good thought ...' (Taylor, 1840, p. 275). The Sultan concocts harebrained schemes of conquest and cannot take defeat with dignity, '... he tore his hair, threw his turban on the ground, raved, swore, implored the assistance of the Prophet and all the saints in one breath, and in the next wildly invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon his coward army' (Taylor, 1840, p. 278).

With this Sultan as the enemy, the aggression against Tipu is premised on British morality as defined in contrastive terms to Tipu's. The proto-colonial conquest of Mysore is presented as a heroic enterprise all the protagonists of which converge in avenging their honour from the tyrant. The tomb of a young British soldier Charles Balfour, killed in combat with Tipu, becomes a shrine for natives frequented by 'a love-struck maiden, or a mother beseeching health for her child' (Taylor, 1840, p. 154). A stark reminder of Cohn (1996), colonial presence is conveniently monumentalised here.



Gen. Matthews is shown to have been poisoned on Tipu's express command. Tipu, like Shakespeare's Richard III, suffers from a guilty conscience as his end draws near, 'Mathews! away, old man! I did not kill thee .... the poison was not for thee' (Taylor, 1840, p. 365). For his part, the erring and myopically shortsighted Matthews is ultimately endeared to the reader as he posthumously avenges the defeat at Pollilor through Gen. Baird's Greek god-like storming of the fort. What disheartens Tipu is the sight of Kasim Ali, once a member of his personal guard and companion of many battles, in the English camp. Tipu's last stand with a handful of Mysoreans against the storming British is divested of dignity. His servant advises him to reveal himself to the English so that they might spare him, "Spare me!" he cried, rousing himself at the last words. "No! they burn for revenge, and I should be hung like a dog; no! I will die here" (Taylor 1840, p. 442).

The comparison between Kirmani/ Miles's history and Taylor's novel shows the intricate relationship between translation, creative interpretation and knowledge creation. Kirmani's historical account, based on primary sources and firsthand experiences, provides a valuable glimpse into the life and times of Tipu Sultan, however Miles's paratextual elements frame Kirmani's work as an unreliable narrative of a Tipu-sympathiser. This is complicated further by Kirmani's divided loyalties to his former master Tipu Sultan, and the EIC from whom Kirmani drew his pension. On the other hand, Taylor's novel weaves a narrative that combines historical events seemingly taken from Kirmani (we might surmise Taylor had read the original Persian manuscript, or Reid's version of Kirmani published in 1834) with imaginative storytelling, showcasing the power of fiction to participate in the colonial project, thus 'translating' the historical Tipu into the maniacal Tyrant of Mysore. Both sources contribute uniquely to our understanding of the role of writing/ translation in creating knowledge regimes in colonial India, and how British translations of Tipu Sultan were used to construct narratives about his character and intentions.

## **Conclusion**

The Anglicist-Orientalist debate took place on two moot points: what language should be used to approach and govern India, and what language should be used to instruct Indians. Yet translation was essential to both camps. The Orientalists sought to acquire Indian languages to better understand the people, to discover, and sometimes, even create an Indian past, and disseminate the fruits of their labours in translation. The Anglicist camp advocated the use of English as the medium of the business of governance (at the level of higher administration) and for higher education. In both cases, India would effectively be translated into a foreign idiom. Translation not only brought India to Britain, it produced a certain India/ Tipu in accordance with the imperial mission. Colonial translation was an avenue of conquest and formed a discursive link with the production and dissemination of knowledge. But despite being in tandem with imperial objectives, translation also betrayed colonial anxieties. The harder the translator tried to suppress them, the more obvious they sometimes became, as reflected inadvertently in Miles's paratextual incursions.

In consonance with the above-mentioned framework, this study has argued that Col. Miles's paratextual incursions into Kirmani's history represent a penetration of indigenous/ Persian texts so as to clarify, modify and subsume them in a colonial knowledge regime. On a wider scale, British writings on Tipu Sultan in English, and English translations of Persian/ Arabic documents served as tools for cultural appropriation and the imposition of British colonial ideologies on Tipu Sultan's kingdom following the 1799 victory.

Translation, in this venture, was always more than a means of communication; it was also a means of administration and control, but more importantly, of interpellation. In other words, the English 'translation' of Tipu Sultan — by which is meant his textual iteration in the English language — did not merely transliterate the figure of Tipu Sultan for a European audience, but created the subject of its operations. The whimsical tyrant of Kirmani's work was rendered into historical fiction by Philip Meadows Taylor. Both works,

as this writing has shown, can be seen as 'translation' activities, in that they 'transformed' the subject of their operations. In this way, translation was an exercise of power which justified and perpetuated colonial power structures, although it was also influenced by the dynamics of domination and resistance inherent in such relationships.

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