

Focusing the Backdrop: Understanding the Constituents of Aristocratic Portraiture in Mysore Princely State (19th and 20th century)

Chandan Kashyap S K

Assistant Professor, BMS School of Architecture, Yelahanka, Bengaluru

Email: chandansmg@gmail.com

Abstract

Being one of the great treasure houses of the invaluable art heritage, Mysore Princely State, similar to other places of India, produced aristocratic portraits. Most of them maintained the image of courtly people as a backdrop. The courtiers, soldiers and citizens were among these people, who are the prime focus of this study (of aristocratic portraits during 19th and 20th C.E.). Were the(se) aristocratic pictorial compositions employed as a means of heralding as well as maintaining the hierarchical system? In this direction, the visual language, the styles, compositional aspects, themes and (religious/ cultural traits) symbolisms are explored, by employing the critical lenses (Pierre Bourdieu's "Field theory") to read how the hierarchy-based system was visually represented; moreover, to highlight how these images reinforced and celebrated that system.

Keywords: Hierarchy, European academic realism, colonial aristocratic portraits, Mysore Princely State, modern Mysore paintings.

Introduction

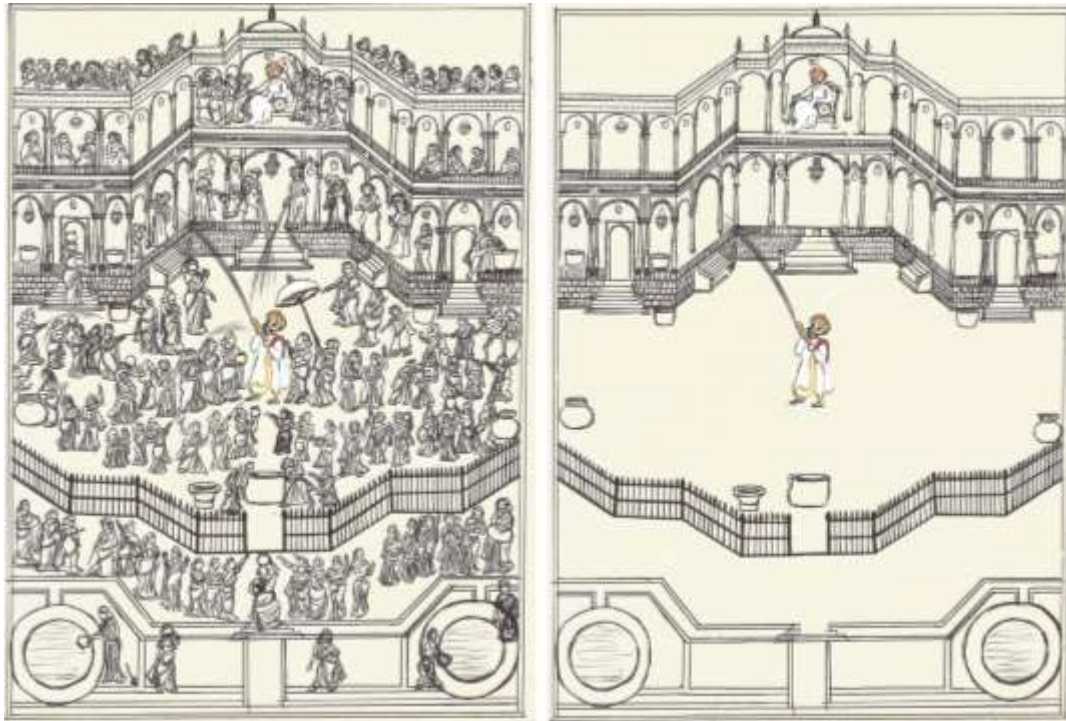
Portraiture as a genre has its own history. As an independent genre, it evolved in Europe and influenced the Mughals. Parallely, Deccanni schools of paintings also had received the colonial influence and had evolved. However, in the pre-colonial Mysore State, the examples of this genre in the Mysore style painting tradition are very scarce. It was only from the Hyder-Tippu era one can witness portraiture with some individualistic physiognomic traits due to the interactions with the French as well as Portuguese (Shekar, 2010). Mysore traditional painting (like Tanjore traditional painting, the contemporaneous counterpart), historically evolved as an offshoot of the Vijayanagara painting tradition after its downfall, due to the mass migration of "*Citrakāra*" families who were painters by inheritance. This artistic style was predominantly flat in treatment and employed conventional water-based colours. It eventually developed an ornate scheme of narration as well as the depiction of forms, even also the intricate decorative designs enriched with the embossed guild work using gold foils. Even though, Mysore painting tradition had heavily borrowed stylistically from the Mughal, Rajasthani and Deccani schools of painting; in terms of composition and narration, it was only after the death of Tippu Sultan, under the

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patronisation of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, with the direct English influence the independent genre of portraiture in Mysore Princely Stateⁱ immensely flourished with a considerable circulation. However, this genre imbibed several indigenous aspects also. Following the trajectory, similar to that of every other province of India, the images of courtly people were often maintained as a backdrop, couriers, soldiers and other citizens constituted this backdrop, which is the prime focus of this study. Even though the representation of these people constituted a major chunk of these compositions, they remained scholarly unnoticed. It is apt to connect the absence of scholarship in this area to the "Invisible Gorilla experiment"ⁱⁱ. However, in this direction, there are some remarkable studies. B. N. Goswamy (Goswamy, 2016) in his "Common Man Uncommon Portraits" has studied a bunch of "portrait studies" that belonged to a private collection at Patiala (Punjab, India). Wherein, he had identified the contrast between the portraiture of royal, noble or aristocrat and the portrait of "common" man. However, finally, he concluded that the portraits were part of the artistic practice of sharpening the painter's skill to stay equipped for the aristocratic commissions; thereby, he attributed a secondary role to them.

The visual representation of the people, who were treated as the backdrop, and who constituted one major chunk out of two in the composition is the prime focus of the study; wherein, another major component is the image of the king, who had always been the focal point of the previous scholarships (example- Gopal, 2010). In Figure 1 the comparison between 1a (line drawing based on the mural painting at Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery in Mysuru; here onwards JAG) and 1b (a computer manipulation of 1a) elucidates the 'object' and 'background/ ambience' constitutions and their mutual significance in most of the courtly compositions, for instance, Figure 2 also follows the same trajectory. Were the(se) aristocratic pictorial compositions (in the case of Mysore Princely State) employed as a means of heralding as well as maintaining the hierarchical system? This question is dealt with by examining the constituents of aristocratic portraiture through some significant examples of visual representations. Firstly, the representation of the courtly people as a backdrop in some compositions (19th century) namely– "Krishnaraja Wodeyar III Seated on a Swing Listening to Music", "Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's Private Durbar" series (all of them are in the collection of JAG) and "Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in Zenānā Durbār" (Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru; here onwards KCKP); is studied with the aid of Pierre Bourdieuian critical tools of "field-theory"; in addition, some pairs of binary oppositions are traced to understand the contrast between the King and his subject in the visual representations. Secondly, "realism" as the tool of emphasis in the aristocratic compositions is understood in the light of Homi K. Bhabha. In this regard, the nature of this "realism" is studied and examined that how the individual aristocrat was emphasised in the compositions. Thirdly, a portrait series of the individual courtiers (including lower rank servants) commissioned by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III is scrutinized and its significance for the Royal Court is mapped out as the context of its production, wherein, the agency of the colonial viewership is traced. Finally, the articulation of photography with academic realism is examined to understand the changes in the visual depiction of the people celebrating *Vijayadaśami* (*Dasara*)ⁱⁱⁱ festival in the paintings, those displayed on the walls of Kalyana-Mantapa in Ambavilas Palace in Mysuru, (here onwards KM AVP). However, by locating the focus of these paintings, it is explained how the image of viewers was maintained as a backdrop.

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(Left to Right) Figure 1a: “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III Celebrating Holi” (with ladies), drawing by Radhika G based on the ca. 19th century mural at Vasanta Mahal/ Rangamaharal Palace of JAG, Mysuru
Figure 1b: “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III Celebrating Holi” (without anyone) (digital manipulation of 1a)

Courtly People as the Ambience (Backdrop)

Courtly people constituted the ambience in several compositions produced during the colonial era; in fact, they constituted the major chunk of these compositions. This constitution is found even in the titles of the compositions; “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III Seated on a Swing Listening to Music” (JAG) where music—in mid-19th century Mysore—was played manually by the people for the King. This implies the presence of people (other than the king). Similar presence is witnessed in numerous compositions titled “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III’s Private Durbar” (JAG and KCKP) and “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in Zenānā Durbār” (KCKP) (see Figure 2), wherein, the words zenānā (harem) and durbār elucidate the presence of courtly people, soldiers, and servants. In these visual representations, the constitution is characterized by the pairs of binary opposites, which are listed below.

List of pairs of binary opposites visible in the visual representations^{iv} showing the distinction between the King/ aristocrat and the courtly people/ soldiers/ other civilians:

	Visual representation of the King, aristocrat, or noble in the compositions:	Visual representation of the courtly people and soldiers:
Signification of the physical aspects of the represented character.	Often represented with the individual's personal traits (idealised) and projected as a distinguished individual .	Always represented as generalised figures . For instance, the generic form of a soldier is almost identical with other soldiers (form) in the group with no individual traits. In other words, similar figures are repeated in numbers to form the mass group of people in the composition.
Signification of the cultural aspects of the represented character.	Often marked with the sense of uniqueness in terms of the visual appearance in a composition, characterised by the visual attributes. For example ornaments, attire and objects in possession can be witnessed.	Always represented as the stereotyped forms and the visual appearance is characterised by the visual attributes, which are more or less similar with all the figures of the same cluster. For example, their ornaments, attire and objects in possession can be witnessed.
Signification of the power relations.	Often emphasised in the composition in terms of the placement of the figure. Several times centralised (with iconic status); even associated with the objects of power such as a throne or a chair.	Always represented as the constituent of the ambience and associated with the objects and positions that complements the power-apex represented in person as King otherwise aristocrat. Therefore, placed at the peripheral, supportive and subordinate positions , and no emphasis or focus was given to the figure as an individual.
	Often depicted as a large figure (hierarchical scale) to signify the power associated with the individual.	Always represented as comparatively small figures to show them as relatively powerless .

In some compositions such as the painting "Krishnaraja Wodeyar III Celebrating Holi" (see Figure 1a) women folk creates the ambience (as the background) for the projection of the King's divine image. As Chandan Kashyap S. K. (S. K. C. K., 2015) observes, the absence of any other male figure in the composition confirms the equivalence in the representation of the King and Lord *Kṛṣṇā*, intertextually, refers to another similar composition of "Krishna Celebrating *Holi* with *Gopis*" (displayed in Residential Museum of AVP).

Similarly, in another composition “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in Zenānā Durbār” (see Figure 2), one can witness a certain order, wherein, the King was emphasized by centralizing him and was glorified with hierarchical scale. He was shown on a raised platform beneath the canopy (*mantapa*). He is seated in majesty on the chair with a royal umbrella (*chatra*) attached to it and he is adorned with royal robes, jewellery, and the royal turban. In the entire composition, he alone has a prominent big moustache symbolizing ultimate masculinity (alpha male). By careful observation, one can notice that the King’s eyes and eyes of all the men are treated with a tinge of red. On contrary, none of the woman’s eyes is treated with that tinge (see Figure 2a). This visible presence and absence of redness signify some obscure references to the gender identity-related hexis and reciprocally it defines the gender.

This composition represents the “field” (Bourdieuian) that was activated by the chunks of figures by taking meaningful positions as “agents/ incumbents” (Bourdieu, 1996). The women folk forms the immediate circle around the King with proximity under the same royal canopy and the next circle is comprised of the courtly members and the emblem bearers (men). The transmission of cultural and traditional values is represented through the figures of (courters) both women and men who are displaying (depicted) their “body-hexis” (Bourdieu, 1996). A lady next to the King is holding a ritualistic tray stretched forward with her both hands and the King has stretched his right hand and reaches it as a part of the ritual. Two more ladies are holding *śauries*, each one in their right hand. Meanwhile, two ladies from both sides are spraying fragrance water on the King and his immediate surroundings, whereas, all the remaining ladies stand with their hands folded in modesty.



Figure 2: “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in Zenānā Durbār”, ca. 19th century, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat in Bengaluru.

Turning to the physiognomic aspects, all the courtly men are shown in their courtly conventional attire (*Jubba* and *Pyjāma*) and a scarf tied to the waist. All of them wear turban; they have clean-shaved-cheeks, pointed moustache and sacred vermillion (*kunkuma*) in between the eyebrows. Some of the men are standing and holding royal standards (standard-bearers) and other men are standing with folded hands. In the whole composition, all women and menfolk are shown standing in bare feet except the King with his royal foot-wears, which at one hand signifies the supremacy of the king, at another hand, encapsulates all others in the composition at the subordinate status.

Even though, all of these figures are considered as stereotypes they were carefully and strategically designated for their respective positions in constituting the backdrop, which visually demonstrates the glorified hierarchical structure of the “field”.



Figure 2a: Absence and Presence of Redness in Eyes (detail of Figure 2)

Realism as Emphasis and Conventional Style as Backdrop (for the image of the King/ aristocrat)

In some aristocratic compositions, a kind of realism was employed as a tool of emphasis contrasted against the conventional Mysore style. Painting titled “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in (the) English school Establishment Ceremony” (see Figure 3) (Rao B. R., 1922) and “The Coronation of Chamarajendra Wodeyar X” (JAG collection) are among the prominent examples. This can be examined under the light of Homi K. Bhabha and notice how (Bhabha, 1984) the colonialized natives tend to adopt (“mimic”) the aspects of the colonial master. Since academic realism was associated with the colonials, a sense of superiority was attached to it and thus the tendency to achieve that in the portrayal of aristocrats and nobles is visible; in this course a hybridized form of realism surfaced. Even though this realism was not exactly the “authentic” realism found in Western Academic Art, up to a considerable extent, it was a move towards that. Realism used in these paintings ranged from almost academic realism to a slightly embossed effect that evokes

a basic sense of roundness and sensuousness so that the form is distinguished from the background (See Figure 3 and its detail). Usage of this realism for the portrayal of aristocrats or nobles had a reciprocal relationship. The realism pictorially distinguished the special subject as special, reciprocally, realism—by this function of demarcating—acquired the special status juxtaposed against the conventional style. This realism had a strong rhetorical impact and gained significance in Mysore Princely State due to the contrast between the visual experience of Western Academic Realism (largely predicated on the three-dimensional form following function) and the visual experience of Mysore traditional style of painting that was essentially flat (pre-colonial). Exploring this significance—in the context of aristocratic portraits—realism was economically employed in conjunction with the conventional Mysore style. Wherein, overall composition was of Mysore traditional style, however, the portrait and some aspects were treated with realism. This is considerably similar to the native people’s (in Karnataka also) tendency of using a couple of English words, selectively along with the flow of the regional language, that adds a special rhetorical value to the meaning generation. Likewise, a coat worn with a traditional *dothi* denoted a sort of calculated and filtered modernism through the articulation of one signifier (of modernism) with the set of signifiers (of the convention). This trend produced a different sort of aesthetics distinct from the inherited indigenous tradition as well as the European tradition.



Figure 3: “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III in (the) English school establishment ceremony”. In *Srimanmaharajaravara vamshavali. Vol. II.*

These aristocratic compositions (similar to Figure 3^{vi}), if viewed by the aristocrat (who was emphasized) s/he would have aligned her/ his self with her/ his image in the composition and felt privileged and considered the generalized figures of courtiers as others. On the contrary, if

viewed by the courtier/ servant (depicted as a backdrop), firstly, s/he had to identify the self with the bunch of courtly people with similar rank. Next s/he had to recognize that bunch in the visual representation and finally, s/he had to align her/ his self with any one of the generalized figures. Consequently, there generated two possible ambivalent feelings, on one hand, to feel happy about the accompaniment with the distinguished aristocrat. At another hand, to feel subordinated and to consider the emphasized figure as other with privileged status. Thus, the same composition had the potential to produce two different experiences for two different positions. Moreover, these compositions whenever confronted they reiterated the sense of hierarchy (Hoare & Smith, 1999) maintained through visual means based on the articulated relationship exploring the contrast between the realism and the conventional style (Mysore Traditional Style).



Details of Figure 3: shows the range of realism employed in the portrayal of aristocrats and nobles.

Courtiers' Portraits: A Royal Commissioned Project

In 19th century Mysore State (as everywhere in India), a painted (realistic) portrait of a person was indexical of the person's immense economic, social and/ or cultural status. In other words, only the influential people had the privilege of having their realistic portraiture. In such a situation Krishnaraja Wodeyar III had commissioned the portrait series of his courtiers who rendered service at the Royal Court and other civilians including the lower rank servants. How did this commission serve the royal interest? Before getting into this inquiry it is crucial to understand the corpus itself and the style in which it is executed under his patronisation. This corpus^{vii} embodies a wide range of individualised portraits of various courtly people and other civilians. Kamat research database (Kamat, 2019) lists some of them as follows: the portrait of Musician *Vine Venkaṭasubbayya*, *Vine Sāmbayya* and the portrait of *Mangāpatayya*, the portrait of Scholar *Laxmi Paṇḍit* and *Lakṣhaṇa Sāstrada Bangi Virumbhappa*, the portrait of Security Chief

Daffedār Venkaṭarāmayya, the portrait of a Chess Champion *Cadurangadāṭada Baḍgācāri*, the portrait of a *Cunncanagiri Jōgi* (hermit) and *Nātha Sampradāyada Bhairāgi*, all of them shows their significance in the society, and the portrait of Painter *Cannakriṣṇa* and *Lakshmaiah* is noteworthy. Similar portraits of courtiers were painted on the walls of Rangamahāhal of JAG that was intended for the Royal Guests (Bhatta, 2012). Moreover, in KCKP collection portraits of servants (*Ūḷigadavaru*) (see Figure 4) especially the personal staffs (*khāsa-sibbandi*) lady attendants (*avve*) are remarkable (see Figure 5a & 5b). All these portraits of individual servants display the individualistic characteristic traits with a considerable degree of physiognomic details referring to the person portrayed. They were people of similar category, who in several other compositions were depicted as generalized figures, without specific individualistic features. The juxtaposition of these portraits with the depiction of courtiers in the aristocratic compositions reveals the striking difference in the portrayal of these people (see Figure 6a & 6b).



Figure 4: “*Uligadava*” from the series “*Krishnaraja Wodeyar III’s Courtiers and Servants*”, ca. 19th century, water colour on paper, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru



(Left to Right) Figure 5a & 5b: Lady Attendant (*avve: khāsa-sibbandi*) from the series “*Krishnaraja Wodeyar III’s Courtiers and Servants*”, ca. 19th century, watercolour on paper, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru



(Left to Right) Figure 6a: A detail of Figure 2 shows the generalised figures of courtiers

Figure 6b: Portrait from the series “Krishnaraja Wodeyar III’s Courtiers and Servants” shows the portrayal of individualistic characteristic traits of the person, ca. 19th century, watercolour on paper, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru

In the execution of these portraits impact of the Company Paintings^{viii} is explicitly visible; specifically, the approach to the academic realism is similar to the Company Paintings characterized by the blend of European Academic Realism with the local style (Archer, 1992) (Murphy, Archer, & Parlett, 1992) (Dalrymple, 2019) (Harris, 2019) (Herein, it is with Mysore Traditional Painting). This realism was economically employed in these portraits, reserved for the treatment of the head as a priority (emphasis); particularly, the face was the artist’s major concern than the abdomen or body (see Figure 4, 5, 6 and 7). This can be formulated hierarchically as follows: **(Face > head > body)**. There is a considerable reason for this sense of hierarchy, first of all, the human face has more obvious features than any other limbs of the body. Furthermore, colonial intercession—to the Mysore artists—had introduced the “scientific” approach in the art of portraiture through the “head-study” separately. Painter’s sensibility of the academic approach is pronouncedly visible (which was wedded with the traditional miniaturist temperament). The painter observes and records the details of skin colour, tonality, even the controlled usage of colour (reminiscent to British Masters) vouch to the English taste. In these portraits, the face was rendered in three dimensions, and the painter was capable of following the facial features and achieved the likeness that conveys the personality traits.

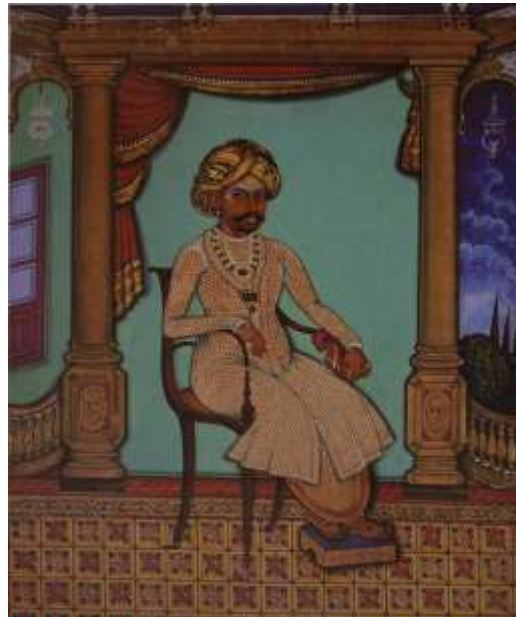


Figure 7: Portrait of an Aristocrat, ca. 19th century, water colour on paper, Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, Bengaluru.

Turning to the inquiry of the reason and the context of their production, these are very rare, greatly valuable independent portraits of individuals. One can feel happy about these rarely depicted (in 19th century Mysore) highly individualized portraits of the courtiers. They belong to the portrait series "Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's Courtiers and Servants". Even though these portraits are very similar to the "company paintings" these were commissioned by the Maharaja, which sets the context. One can reckon several reasons for why the King had commissioned this series, and what its significance was. Firstly, colonials maintained a "documentation" culture that had a profound impact on the local sovereigns; Krishnaraja Wodeyar III too had this influence and commissioned this project that was inclusive of low ranked servants. Secondly, one can read from Janaki Nair's observations (Nair, 2012) that the Modern Mysore Culture was produced as a designed culture that was oriented towards the colonial watching eye^{ix}. As a part of the same trend, one can notice the portrait of the Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's contemporaries and his courtiers painted on Rangamahal walls, mainly addressing the royal guests. In a similar way, this series of the courtiers' portraits were also produced. Furthermore, historical facts point out that, (Rice, 1897) after Nagara Rebellion, with the proper maintenance of his citizens across Mysore Princely State and through the public welfare works, Krishnaraja Wodeyar III had to show his credence. Based on which he re-asserted his right over the (then withheld) throne and (then cancelled) the political power. This was reflected by the Illustrated London News (The Illustrated London News, 1867) as follows:

The debate in the House of Commons, on the 24th ult., upon the claims of the Maharaja of Mysore, or of his adopted son and heir, to be restored to the government of the State, which is now administered in his name by a British Commissione(r). (...) The State of Mysore, which had been ably and prudently governed, during his minority. (...) In consequence of a (Nagara) rebellion of his subjects, provoked by the gross misrule, in

1832, the British Government was obliged to take charge of the (Mysore) country. (...) (35 years later) The Maharaja, however, is a very respectable old gentleman, and rendered valuable assistance to the British Government during the Sepoy mutiny and war of 1857.

By these accounts, one can understand the situation in which the King (even under such a pressurised situation) had performed public-oriented works and how he was sympathetic towards his immediate courtiers. In this context, this series of his courtiers' portraits had the symbolic potential to back up the King's reclaim for the Mysore Royal throne with the inherited power.

Treatment of the Backdrop in the Age of Photography

The camera made a considerable difference in the visual representation, it was employed^x by the Palace to capture images of the *Vijayadaśami* (*Dasara*) festival and those became source images for the paintings that adorned the KM AVP (Mysuru). Reference to photographic image induced descriptive fidelity in the visualization of the situation; depicted people had prominent, unrepeated and unique physiognomic features. Depiction of the people's spontaneous activity retained naturalism in their behaviour, which was in contrast with the previous tradition of Mysore painting style, where the movements and the postures were considerably limited and repeated as per convention.

About the confluence of the three domains—that is, Painting + Photography + Printing—the Tasveer Art Gallery located in Bengaluru (*'Painted Photographs'*) and The Alkazi Collection of Photography have done excellent research. Rahaab Allana identifies (Allana, 2008) the articulation of photography with academic realism as a prominent trend across Colonial India. Chandan Kashyap S. K. (S. K. C., 2018) identifies^{xi} that even the "Photo-Based Painting"^{xi} technique was immensely used in Mysore Princely State, where the photographic image was printed on the canvas on which painterly activities were carried on. In these paintings (KM AVP), there were layers painted, cancelled, and repainted to enhance the overall ambience. In West, this technique of "Photo-Based Painting" was in vogue (Wall, 1861) (Tresidder, 1984). In the painting series depicting Vijayadashami/ Dasara procession in KM AVP, artists improvised these compositions through the creative process, by subtracting the figures as well as adding the figures, carefully chosen from other similar photographs and also with the academic lessons of sketching. Regarding the photographic space and by following the linear perspective, details fade from the foreground to the background (even painterly perspective^{xii} also). Amidst these, by recognizing suitable space here and there, some portraits of the "near and dear ones" were executed, by referring to other photographs.

In the paintings, people as spectators filled a horizontal stretch in the background; Christians, Muslims, and Hindus are visible, Europeans' presence as spectators near the Church is notable (in the "Saint Philomena's Church" Painting, KM AVP). People from different social strata are visible ranging from an elite class possessing a car to the small scale business people with their stall. Street vendors are seen busy moving among people selling local eatables (*Caḷi* and *Koḍubaḷe*) (in the "Police Musical Band Set with Army" Painting, KM AVP), some people appear

smoking (in the "Bullock Nagari Gunset Baja Benares Dunika" Painting, KM AVP) and some were depicted as climbing the tree to watch the procession. The representation of a Policeman controlling the crowd is noteworthy (in the "Gun Cannons with Carriages" Painting, KM AVP). At another composition (in the "State Carriage, Bullock Cart" Painting, KM AVP) a Palace Photographer among the spectators holding a camera (camera resembles Kodak Brownie) looking at the procession is a self-reflexive aspect. It redirects this whole series of paintings towards the photographs that are the major reference point. The Photographer stands among the crowd and the focal point was the *Dasara* procession, which was enriched by the participation of the people/ spectators. One of these compositions ("Durbaries" Painting, KM AVP), as part of the procession, shows the image of musicians, scholars, and other courtly people; world-renowned Scholar Dr. Shamashastry who identified Kautilya's (*Cānukya's*) *Artha-Śāstra* scripture in the Oriental Research Institute collection (Mysore) and translated it to English is remarkable and at another similar composition ("Durbaries" Painting, KM AVP) senior Palace Painter K. Keshavayya^{xiii} is visible among these *Durbāries*^{xiv} (Mysore Palace Board, 2007). All the items and the people who were part of the procession were the representatives of the Palace; who transformed the road as the Royal Path and considered the people at both sides of the road as the spectators/ audience in a real-time situation, and the same spectators/ audience is treated as the backdrop in the visual representations in terms of painting and photography. In other words, the Royal Procession with its spectators on both sides of the road jointly produced the spectacle, which was the object of the B&W photographs and then further glorified in this painting series, wherein, the image of the people as spectators constituted the backdrop.

Conclusion

To summarise, by following the pan Indian historical tendency Mysore Princely State also treated the image of courtiers as a backdrop for the projection of the divine idealized image of the king. In this direction, several aspects are observed. Firstly, the contrast between the main object (the image of the King or aristocrat) and the backdrop (courtiers), which is visible, is studied. This contrast is defined by locating the noticeable pairs of binary oppositions. Turning to these depictions of the courtiers, even though, they are regarded as stereotypes they signify their belongingness to the particular gender, age, religion, profession, and social status. This transmission of cultural legacy is evident through the "bodily hexis" (Bourdieu) of the courtiers depicted in these paintings; their images constituted the ambience and occupied their respective position (as "agents/ incumbents") in the "field" (visual yet symbolic) structured by hierarchy. Secondly, in some aristocratic compositions, for the portrayal of an individual aristocrat, realism was employed to emphasize the special person and reciprocally realism achieved the special status. With this, the sense of superiority attributed to this rhetorical usage of realism over conventional style was gauged. This articulation of realism with the conventional style (Mysore traditional painting) marked a kind of filtered modernism that was selectively involved in the execution, in which the contrast between the realism and the conventional Mysore style is thus associated with the sense of hierarchy maintained in the aristocratic portraits. Thirdly, a series of individualised portraits of courtiers (including servants of low rank)

that was commissioned by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III, even though, they were invaluable independent portraits of the individuals (King's servants), all of them were produced and got appended as one single corpus that represented the courtiers of Krishnaraja Wodeyar III. This series had the potential to portray the King as a populist as per the need of the time. Finally, the photographic reference in the paintings (KM AVP) that had added naturalism in the depiction of *Vijayadaśami* (*Dasara*) festivities are examined. Wherein, even though, the spontaneous activities of the people with variety and vividness are pronouncedly visible, the people located at both sides of the road played a dual role; at one hand, as the spectators in the real-time situation constituted the spectacle, and at another hand, constituted the backdrop/ ambience in the visual representations (in the painting). With the overall assessment of these aristocratic images produced in Mysore Princely State, one can witness how the visual representations of the courtiers and spectators embodied the representation of the hierarchy-based system that existed in Mysore Princely State. On top of it, one can also witness that how these images played a significant role in the celebration of the royal power across the changing times.

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Notes:

ⁱ Mysore Princely State was formed immediately after the death of Tippu Sultan (in 1799). British redefined the territory and "restored the throne" back with Mysore royal family.

ⁱⁱ "Invisible Gorilla" or "Black Gorilla" was a psychological experiment conducted at Harvard University in 1999. A video was screened, in which a bunch of six people were passing the basketball among themselves. Audiences were asked to count how many times people in white dress pass the ball (three in white dress and three in black dress out of six people in total). Meanwhile, in the video, a "black gorilla" enters the screen stays for nine seconds and exits the screen. But most of the audiences fail to perceive the gorilla.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ten days festival celebration in October.

^{iv} Krishnaraja Wodeyar III's era, that is, 19th century Mysore aristocratic compositions.

^v This trend was synchronic not diachronic.

^{vi} Wherein, each composition embodies more individualised aristocratic figures treated with considerable degree of realism and individual characteristic traits.

^{vii} At present this corpus is dispersed and some of them are safely preserved in several collections. KCKP, Government Museum in Bengaluru are among those collections. Kamat research database constitutes a considerable secondary source.

^{viii} The (synchronic) impact of the 'Company' paintings is considered, which is apparent, rather than the diachronic links with the Mughal and the Deccani legacy (in terms of academic realism only).

^{ix} For this reason, one can consider this series of portraits indirectly as 'Company' paintings.

^x In first half of the twentieth century.

^{xi} "Photo-Based Painting" was a trend that used the photographic image as a base image. This base was produced by enlarging and exposing the photographic image onto the sensitized canvas surface. Later, on this image, the final image out of oil paint layers was constructed (painterly).

^{xii} Paint/ colour treatment generates the tactile feeling of the object's surface in the foreground; whereas, moving towards the background, forms were simplified treated with visible brush strokes and paint was applied as-it-is from the palette, which dully suggests the object.

^{xiii} He was a senior among the Palace band of painters and he had painted several compositions for the *Vijayadaśami- Dasara* Procession wall panel series at the Ambavilas Palace.

^{xiv} Privileged scholarly/ talented people, who were listed in Palace, were allowed to attend the Royal *Dasara Durbār*.

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