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rather longer for Urdu to gather its modern name. Until well into the nineteenth century, the old Persian labels of *hindī*, etc., were supplemented by a vogue for the Persian designation *restā* 'Mixed language'. Eventually, however, it was apparently the splendidly mixed title of the cantonment area of Mughal Delhi, known as *Urdū-e mu'allā* 'The Exalted Camp' — combining the Turkish loan *urdū* (meaning 'camp' and cognate with English 'horde'), the Persian izafat-construction *-e*, and the Arabic adjective *mu'allā* — which by abbreviation gave the language the name by which it has come to be known.

2. The British Raj

In the narrow terms which used to be set by colonial historians, the British supremacy over South Asia was established as the successful result of a long process of infighting, largely at sea, between the expansionist countries of western Europe. From the early sixteenth century, the Portuguese had been the most successful of these, and their historic role as the first militant missionaries of Christianity lives on in such entrenched Hindi-Urdu loans as *padre* > *pādrī* 'priest' and *egreja* > *girjā* 'church'.

As a result of the military victories won by Clive at Plassey in 1757 and by Munro at Buxar in 1764, it was, however, the British who were to dominate the political evolution of South Asia until Independence in 1947. Although the British rulers were at first unwilling and later unable to establish their local cultural presence in terms of large-scale conversions matching those achieved for Islam by their Muslim predecessors, their impact upon the linguistic evolution of Hindi-Urdu was to prove even greater. In this process, the immediate input from the superior military technology and the confidence which it engendered in the early colonialists was soon to be overshadowed in a complex fashion by the *mission civilatrice* of Victorian England and the subsequent emergence of English as the premier world language, first from Britain and later from America. Although English is identified as the language of colonialism in India and Pakistan, the powerfully imposed heritage has become quite as difficult to escape for both Hindi and Urdu protagonists as the separate inheritances of Sanskrit and Persian with which each are so much more at home. In their differential preferences, the shadows of imperial 'divide and rule' of course continue to flicker: and it is therefore worth tracing in some detail the triple process of increasingly polarized reactions between the dominant imperial power, Muslim protagonists of Urdu and Hindu protagonists of Hindi.

21. *The Impact of British Rule*

The Muslims were only the last in a succession of invaders of South Asia through the passes allowing access on its north-western frontier. The long-mounted process of European naval assaults on the coasts of the subcontinent brought substantial territorial reward only when the British were able, as a result of internal dissension, to capture the soft underbelly of Bengal, where they established their capital until 1912 at Calcutta. Historically, this was quite the wrong position from which to conquer the

subcontinent's heartland in the Doab between the Yamuna and the Ganga from which South Asia has always been dominated. But the westwards move, through Plassey rather than through Panipat, which was thus enforced upon the expansion of British sovereignty, did much to determine the ways in which Hindi and Urdu would evolve.

The realms opened to the East India Company by Clive's initial victory, which included most of modern Bihar and Orissa as well as Bengal, were both conveniently masked by the Company's assumption of the role of *dīvānī* to the notional authority of the Mughal emperor, and practically by the use of Persian to administer its new territories. The progressive extension of British control over North India until the nineteenth century continued to exist under this convenient fiction, through which Company servants would administer their Indian subjects under Mughal rules in Persian. The handover of cultural supremacy from Persian to English was therefore extraordinarily long drawn-out.

While the process has, with some justification, come to be seen by Hindu nationalists as a rather cosy deal between the British and their Muslim predecessors (whose total subjugation by the Hindu majority of North India was in the interests of neither party), the truth of the matter is somewhat more complex. The British began by drafting their new laws in English, while continuing to require the Company's servants to administer them to its Bengali-speaking subjects in Persian. The implicit awkwardness of this situation eventually led to the establishment of Fort William College in Calcutta in 1800 as an academy designed to impart some knowledge of Indian languages to young British officials, and several of the simple adaptations and translations devised as textbooks for the new College achieved a certain fame, particularly in the already half-developed medium of Urdu prose (1).

The internal switch from Persian to Urdu within the Muslim community, now increasingly subjugated to the direct impact of British rule, was somewhat lurchingly realized in prose, as opposed to poetry. The eccentric litterateur Insha (d. 1818) played with KhB sans its Persian loans to produce one of the first pieces of sustained Hindi prose (2). But this is something of a sport, and the real evolution first of Urdu, then of Hindi as the major literary languages of the old heartlands of North India was determined by the less whimsical factors of the deliberate cultural self-determination of its Muslim and Hindu inhabitants and the uncertainly applied patronage of their English-speaking rulers.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the triple operation of these very divergent forces was to lead first towards the encouragement of Urdu as a sophisticated medium for all types of prose writing, and more gradually towards the evolution of a KhB-based Sanskritized Hindi written in the Nagari script. The new style of Hindi captured the sympathies of the then under-privileged Hindu majority and came to challenge the supremacy of the medieval Braj tradition in the literary field; its relationship to Urdu became increasingly one of rivalry, and eventually the naked opposition between the causes of Hindi and Urdu was to become an important factor in the communal conflict which led to the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.

22. *The Heyday of Urdu*

Urdu seemed for a variety of reasons to have everything going for it from the early nineteenth century to the early twentieth century: because it was becoming increasingly congenial to the Muslims, for whom its debt to the classical past compensated for their own increasing remoteness from the Persian heritage; because the British, who called it 'Hindustani', seized upon it as a convenient medium for the administration of the territories which fell under their control during their westwards progress from Bihar through present U.P. until their eventual conquest of the Panjab in 1849; and because the specialist Hindu castes who had acted as record-keepers for their erstwhile Muslim political masters were ready to cooperate in the shift from Persian to English and to Urdu at the higher and lower levels respectively of the administration demanded by their new political masters.

Within the North Indian Urdu-speaking Muslim community itself, long dominant in the towns and cities of their historic heartlands in U.P. and Bihar, there was never any question as to natural linguistic allegiance. Further reinforced by the cautious British allowance of at least notional rule by the Kings of Avadh in Lucknow until 1856 and the nominal survival of the Mughal emperors in Delhi until the suppression of the Mutiny in 1858, the Muslim elite turned with enthusiasm to the cultivation of Urdu as a worthy classical successor to Persian poetry. Standards of correct usage were elaborately defined, with a nice sense of the difference between Delhi and Lucknow norms; and these were gradually transferred to prose usage also, as Urdu finally came to replace Persian during the early nineteenth century as the natural medium of expression for Indian Muslims. Stylistically, this internal process achieves its apogee in the letters written by Ghalib (d. 1869), the greatest of classical Urdu poets and one of the last who was equally at home in Persian (3).

At a sub-literary level, the great debate among Indian Muslims induced by their palpable loss to the British of political control of their destinies and by their increasingly-feared domination by the numerically superior Hindus who had once been their subjects equally came to be conducted in a more down-to-earth variety of Urdu. One of the bluntest pamphleteers was Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d. 1898), scion of a family with long traditions of service to the Mughals, whose enthusiasm for his co-religionists' espousing of the British cause came to be matched only by his suspicion of the claims for increased imperial recognition of Hindi being voiced by some of his Hindu fellow-countrymen (4).

While Sir Sayyid lived, however, Urdu continued to enjoy the security of British patronage across North India as the official language of Bihar, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and the Panjab, not to speak of the more traditional patronage it continued to receive in the Deccan from the Nizams of Hyderabad, the premier native princes of British India allowed theoretically absolute responsibility for the rule of a state about the size of France. Nevertheless, from the late nineteenth century, the linguistic rivalry between Urdu and its increasingly promoted rival Hindi within the terms set by English-speaking rulers became increasingly intense.

Although increasingly hampered by their historically privileged status as an urban minority in North India, the Urdu-speaking Muslims were still

able to field many competent champions. Not the least of these were disciples of Sir Sayyid's such as the poet Hali (d. 1914), whose own prescriptions for the development of Urdu attempted to steer his co-religionists away from the ever more sterile debate between the differential niceties of Delhi and Lucknow usage in favour of a more generous appreciation of the common-or-garden 'Hindi' element in their language (6).

Even though the demands of an increasingly articulate Hindu middle class induced the British gradually to abrogate Urdu's privileged status first in Bihar (1881) and then partially in the U.P. (1900), they too continued to favour 'Hindustani' (i.e. simplified Urdu) as the language into which government recruits fresh from England were immediately pitched. The great dictionary of Platts (1884) is an early reflection of this preference, which continues to be illustrated in the bias of many later text-books, produced under highly-skilled British patronage with an ensured sale to hopeful candidates from the Indian Services until 1947 (9).

This odd kind of British Army Urdu, though so useful for issuing orders to recruits (*rangrūt*) at the level of 'shoulder arms *karo!*', and so bewitching to Kipling and his imitators, bears little relation to the typical output of Urdu prose writers. The evident threat posed by the official recognition of Hindi as a provincial language of equal status with Urdu in the U.P. is reflected in the obsessions of much early twentieth century writing. By yet another of those famous paradoxes, some self-statements by Urdu writers date from the time when their language was soon to succumb in the face of the inexorable advance of Hindi.

Perhaps the best advised were those who looked to the codification of Urdu, such as the long-lived grammarian and lexicographer Abdul Haq (10). But it is hard not to feel a greater sympathy with those who recorded their admiration of the former previous culture of Lucknow, as did Sharar (11); and if his rebarbatively Persianized style is sufficient to repel, adequate recompense may be found in the reminiscences of Old Delhi conjured up by Farhatullah Beg (13), whose wizard style illustrates how the KhB dialect adapts equally well to Urdu as it does to Hindi norms.

It is, however, significant that all these writers were at some stage impelled to move south to seek the safe patronage of the Nizams of Hyderabad. Sharar's stay there was admittedly short and stormy: but Abdul Haq's reputation as the *Bābā-e urdū* owed much to his appointment as Professor of Urdu in the Nizam's Osmania University, while Farhatullah Beg's elegant evocations of old Delhi might hardly have been produced were it not for his advancement through the state's judicial hierarchy.

In its casually unjust fashion, British India allowed for all sorts of such processes of cultural advancement. But the demographic realities of relative communal numbers were eventually to ensure that the crucial heartlands of North India would pass from cultural domination by their historic Muslim elite into the hands of a middle-class majority made ever more aware of their Hindu heritage.

23. *The Rise of Modern Hindi*

As the last decades of the nineteenth century passed by, the position of Hindi stood in stark contrast to that of Urdu, and increasingly the two languages began to perceive each other as rivals in an arena in which political and communal issues were growing inexorably in importance. Various impediments stood in the way of Hindi; one of the most insuperable was the disjunction between the new KhB style — increasingly being promoted as the basis for literature as well as practical usage — and the Braj Bhāṣā tradition which had served for so long as the literary language of the Hindi area. Whereas Urdu had enjoyed an unbroken sequence of literary development with KhB as its foundation, and was well equipped to exploit as literary copy the sweetly sorrowful nostalgia which accompanied the social changes of the times (11), Hindi was having to undergo the painful process of a switch from one dialect to another. The incipient development of a journalistic prose style was achieved without great difficulty on English models (5), but the delayed birth of a new basis for Hindi poetry was an altogether more fraught experience, calling for the expert attentions of literary midwives such as Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi (d. 1938) (12).

In the area of education and administration Hindi endured a number of setbacks in the nineteenth century. In 1835 the Government had committed itself to the propagation of Western culture through English-medium education at the expense of Indian vernaculars, and to the use of English in the higher courts; then two years later it was Urdu, not Hindi, which succeeded Persian as the administrative language of the North-Western Provinces. While such changes were often academic insofar as they did little to make official procedures more comprehensible to the lay populace (7), they underline the fact that despite the slow but steady progress being made in the rarefied world of Hindi litterateurs there was still no widely accepted modern style of Hindi which could be promoted to perform the essential administrative functions of government.

Backing for Hindi came from unofficial quarters, broadly to be categorized as literary and reformist. The writers and educationalists comprising the first category propagated Hindi in a spirit which gloried in the Sanskritic Hindu tradition; but at the same time they often had a catholic and non-communal approach underpinned by the educational norms of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in which literacy in Persian was still an accepted part of schooling for middle-class Hindu boys (19). In the second category came the parallel but opposite forces of Christian proselytism and reformist Hinduism, notably the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda. The example of Bengali, which had been in contact with British influences for much longer because of the British presence in Calcutta, did much to encourage the proponents of Hindi both in terms of the potential for the development of a viable communal vernacular and in terms of suggesting directions for the fledgling literature. But perhaps inevitably the Hindi movement's own fulcrum came to be located in Benares and Allahabad, the twin bases of Hindu power in Northern India, from where the majority of future Hindi writers were to emerge: a geographical dimension was thus given to the rift dividing Hindi

from Urdu, which had its traditional bases in Delhi and Lucknow.

The rivalry between Hindi and Urdu hinged on its most obvious and graphic manifestation, that of script. This had been much less of an issue in earlier periods of the development of Hindi, since the old genres of literature had largely been transmitted orally — as was appropriate in a population whose cultural life was not based solely or even primarily upon literacy. The new Hindi was uncompromisingly that of the literate classes, a tiny minority in the Hindi-speaking area but one in whose hands lay all the potential for employment in the middle-class professions. As the beginnings of a national consciousness spread across India from Bengal in the last decades of the nineteenth century, the growing middle-class readership of Hindi responded with enthusiasm to the increased availability of a widening variety of Hindi publications. The All-India National Congress had been founded in 1885, and its more extremist leading edge began to inculcate the 'swadeshi' ideal which emphasized the importance to national unity of promoting home-grown products and boycotting imports. India's discovery of its own glorious past, emboldened by the enthusiastic researches of Western Indologists (24), aided the recovery of national self-confidence and the development of this consciousness of national unity. Language was a natural subject for the swadeshi principle, and there was a growing awareness of the inappropriateness of the dependence on English as the medium of administration and high culture. At the same time, exposure to English literature and writing offered an alluring demonstration of the potential lying untapped in the new style of Hindi prose. Against this background the first experiments in creative writing were made, faltering steps in imitation of English or Bengali models but real Hindi literature nonetheless. By the end of the century the ground-rules for a Sanskritized style of Hindi prose were well established, and while literacy in Urdu had once been the norm amongst educated Hindi-speakers, a continuing tradition of education in Urdu alongside Hindi (21) and Sanskrit (20) held off the day when literacy in Urdu was to be equated more and more narrowly with membership of the Muslim community.

Pride in the ancient glories of India yielded to more politically-orientated expressions of nationalistic thought in the output of poets and prose-writers alike, and an expanding circle of Hindi writers took up these themes, encouraged by the new demand for literature reflecting the aspirations of nationhood. Real power, of course, continued to lie in the hands of the English-speaking administrators, both English and Indian; and the swadeshi insistence on the use of Indian vernaculars and its concomitant rejection of English was at least partly a symbolic gesture, like the burning of Lancashire-milled cotton in favour of the domestic product dubbed by Nehru 'the livery of our freedom'.