

142. Ibid., pp. 34, 64, 68.  
 143. NWPE&O SVN 1900, pp. 220, 348.  
 144. *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, p. 136; *NPS 8th Ann Rpt*, pp. 14–15.  
 145. *NPS 10th Ann Rpt*, pp. 24, 25; *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, pp. 11, 29.  
 146. See the section of this chapter entitled 'The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation'.  
 147. *NPS 11th Ann Rpt*, p. 2; *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 138, 202.  
 148. *A Short History of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha Banaras City. (July 1893 to June 1915)* (Banaras, [1915?]), pp. 42–3; *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, 219–220. Jyotirindra Das Gupta in *Language Conflict and National Development* (Bombay, 1970), p. 113, states that the first Sammelan was held in Allahabad, certainly an error. As the annual *Kārya Vivaraṅs* [Reports of Activities] of the Sammelan show, the first Sammelan was held in Banaras, the second in Allahabad. Kerrin Dittmer in her *Die Indischen Muslims and die Hindi-Urdu Controverse in Den United Provinces* (Wiesbaden, 1972), pp. 148–9, notes that the Sabha's claim to have originated the Sammelan has been disputed by the leaders of the latter.  
 149. *Arddhsatābdī-Itihās*, pp. 220–1; Das Gupta, *Language Conflict*, pp. 112–14, 118–19; Nand Lal Singh, editor, *Mahatma Malaviyaji Birth Centenary Commemoration Volume 25th December 1961* (Varanasi, [1961?]), unnumbered pages immediately following table of contents.  
 150. Faridabadi, *Panja Sāla Tārīkh*, pp. 16, 20–1, 28, 32–6, 41, 44–4, 48–50, 52–3.  
 151. Ibid.  
 152. Ibid. Das, *Merī Ātmakahānī*, pp. 183–8, 209, 253.

## CHAPTER VI

## Conclusion

Urdu: Hey you old witch! In spite of having died, you're still alive?  
 Hindi: Daughter! Why have you tried to kill me for so long? What harm have I ever done to you?'

*Introduction*

The words above come from Radha Krishna Das, official of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras, relative of Bharatendu Harishchandra, and an ardent supporter of Hindi. They appear in the November 1902 issue of *Saraswatī*, one of the leading literary journals of the Hindi world, as an accompaniment to a striking picture. Urdu, personified as a Muslim courtesan, stands on the left, right hand resting on her hip, left hand stretched out towards her rival, while Hindi, personified as a Hindu wife, sits demurely on the right, left hand placed on her thigh, right hand supporting her chin. The postures and the words suggest an arrogant and provocative Urdu taunting a long-suffering and patient Hindi.

They also hint at the intensity of the clash between the partisans of the two branches of Khari Boli in the UP: an intensity displayed in the exaggerated reactions to the 1900 Resolution, in the agitation which vitiated the language statistics for the 1901 census, and in many other ways; an intensity echoed less forcefully in the adjoining provinces of Bihar, the Punjab and the Central Provinces, and hardly at all in other areas. This intensity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century UP increasingly infected the Hindi movement on the national level, evidenced not only in the bitterness of the Hindi-Urdu struggle, but also in the resentment crystallized in the expression 'Hindi imperialism'<sup>2</sup> and widely felt in such diverse linguistic areas as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. The divisiveness engendered and encouraged by the extremists on both sides in this process of linguistic differentiation formed part and parcel of the process of multi-symbol congruence. As Hindi became more and more closely identified with Hindu, and Urdu with Muslim, linguistic antagonism both reflected and affected religious antagonism in a vicious spiral of separatism which eventually led to the partition of British India into two countries and of Khari Boli into two distinct forms.<sup>3</sup>

Let us briefly retrace the steps which brought the situation to this pass, occasionally asking ourselves along the way what might have made things turn out differently. This admittedly speculative approach guarantees no certainty, but can bring us to focus on some key elements with relevance to the contemporary linguistic state of affairs. For while nineteenth century North India may seem very far away, many of the same components of linguistic contention exist today, e.g., generally the same low opinion of vernacular languages—only this time in comparison with English, the same tendencies to identify certain languages and scripts with certain social and religious groups, the same inconsistent and sometimes contradictory government policies adding to the confusion, the same extremist urges to ‘purify’ Hindi of foreign words, the same penchant to talk of the welfare of the masses in terms convenient to one’s own interests, the same proclivity to ignore the language habits of the masses of people in an attempt to communicate in ‘*shuddh*’ Hindi. In short, while history hardly repeats itself, continuities have long life-spans: people transmit attitudes; books perpetuate styles, vocabularies, and scripts; languages in their more basic aspects change slowly. Yesterdays affect today. The ‘Hindi imperialism’ of twentieth century India has descended from the Hindi-Urdu controversy of nineteenth century UP.

I personally encountered this nineteenth century heritage many years ago as a student living in Birla Hostel in Banaras Hindu University. Some of my fellow students introduced me to a young man visiting from Agra who made a point of informing me that he spoke only *shuddh* Hindi. A few moments later he used the Arabic-derived word *tārīkh* meaning ‘date’. When I twitted him on not having used a ‘purer’ equivalent such as *dinānk* or *tīthi* he could only splutter angrily.<sup>7</sup> For me, this experience has come to epitomize the artificiality of all attempts to ‘purify’ languages of words originating from some forbidden source, no matter how thoroughly these words may already be imbedded in the language, or no matter how much they might enrich a literary and linguistic heritage.

I find the closely associated practice of artificially manufacturing unknown and sometimes enormous words—Dr Raghuvira’s infamous *agnirathvirāmsthān* for railroad station or *agnirathchalnāchalannīyan-tranpattikā* for railroad signal, for example—from classical sources to replace widely-used words equally pernicious, whether carried out by either Hindi or Urdu extremists. Part of the reasoning behind such practices seems to be the belief that the vernaculars (Hindi and Urdu)

are imperfect or corrupted versions of the classical languages (Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian), or at least quite inferior vehicles which require to be enriched from superior sources. Some students of the classical languages even go so far as to say that one cannot speak good Hindi without knowing Sanskrit, or good Urdu without knowing Persian and Arabic. This strikes me as akin to saying that one cannot speak good English without knowing Greek and Latin, an attitude formerly prevalent in English-speaking countries but now practically extinct, and an attitude with little or no evidence to support it.

Far more noxious than these attitudes, however, is the fervent, almost fanatic identification of language, script, and religion, and the resulting need to ‘purify’ or ‘cleanse’ a language from any foreign and corrupting taint. There is no reason that good Hindus cannot learn Urdu in the Urdu script or good Muslims Hindi in the Nagari script. Moreover, Hindi can be written in the Urdu script (with minor losses from the viewpoint of spelling and pronunciation)<sup>8</sup> and Urdu can be written in the Nagari script (again with minor losses).<sup>9</sup> Both forms of Khari Boli can also be written in the Roman script<sup>7</sup> just as English can be written in either the Nagari or Urdu script.<sup>8</sup> Behind this sort of ‘vocabulary cleansing’ lie attitudes of intolerance and bigotry which bear a resemblance to those behind the ‘ethnic cleansing’ now occurring in the former Yugoslavia. These attitudes have in common the rejection of cultural and religious differences, while to me the acceptance of differences is the heart of that tolerance which must necessarily underlie the modern secular state, the unity in diversity to which many in India aspire.

As an outsider acquainted with both forms of Khari Boli and appreciative of the beauties of both, I would plead for an approach which cherishes both the differences as well as the similarities in the two traditions. We might call the latter ‘Hindi-Urdu’, ‘Urdu-Hindi’, ‘Hirdu’, ‘Urđi’, ‘Hindustani’, or ‘Hindi’, but whatever the name, what is shared by Hindi and Urdu has become the true national link language, the language best known through ‘Hindi’ films which are popular all over India and in many places abroad.<sup>9</sup>

As we have seen, Amrit Rai documents one off-flow from the mainstream which resulted in a highly Persianized Urdu. I have attempted to document a second off-flow which resulted in a highly Sanskritized Hindi. By the mainstream I mean the national link language, Hindi-Urdu. All three streams—Hindi-Urdu, Persianized Urdu, and Sanskritized Hindi—have their place, but the latter two have no business trying to be the national link language. To me, at least, that

approach seems most desirable which not only avoids any forced assimilation to either form of Khari Boli, but also shuns any forced or artificial differentiation of either form from the other.

I would also plead for the equal treatment of both scripts on the state level—throughout the Hindi area—for both educational and official purposes on a *permissive* basis. No solution which would attempt to eliminate either script, or to substitute some other script (such as the Roman) could ever do justice to the linguistic and cultural heritage of Khari Boli. Whether the political will to do so can be mustered and maintained is quite another question, although the 1989 decision of the government of Uttar Pradesh to recognize Urdu as an additional official language seems a hopeful sign.

#### *Assimilation and Differentiation*

From one angle, we can look at the whole history of the Hindi movement as a deliberate attempt to increase differentiation (to make Hindi more and more different from Urdu) and to reduce assimilation (to discourage Hindus from any attachment to Urdu), while the countervailing Urdu movement strove to accomplish the opposite. Amrit Rai argues compellingly that extensive differentiation took place in the first half of the eighteenth century when Muslim courtiers deliberately introduced extensive vocabulary changes in a hitherto joint Hindu-Muslim language, Hindi/Hindavi, giving rise to a highly Persianized Urdu.<sup>10</sup> His picture, however, emphasizes one side of the divide between Hindi and Urdu, and since he focuses on the pre-nineteenth century situation he understandably gives much less attention to later developments.

I would argue that subsequently many Hindus, especially Kayasths and Kashmiri Brahmans, not only accepted but also mastered Khari Boli's new form, Persianized Urdu, thus partly bridging the divide envisioned by Rai. They assimilated to a more Islamicized version of Khari Boli without feeling they had compromised themselves as Hindus. Let us remember the following: the various authors, Hindu and Muslim, associated with Fort William who wrote in both Hindi and Urdu, and used words from several different linguistic sources; the large number of Hindus who studied in indigenous Persian schools in the 1840s and beyond; the students of Dr Ballantyne in 1847 who saw nothing to regret in the eventual merging of Hindi with Urdu; the Hindu students who opted for Urdu in the Anglo-Vernacular and Vernacular Middle Examinations in the 1880s and 1890s; the sizeable

proportion of Hindus in government service familiar with Urdu; the complaints in vernacular literature against Urdu-loving Hindus; the severe criticism of Kayasths and Kashmiri Brahmans in the autobiography of Shyam Sundar Das; and the most popular Hindi authors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Devki Nandan Khatri and Prem Chand, the first of whom although writing in the Nagari script used a language style close to Urdu, and the second of whom started as an Urdu writer before becoming a Hindi writer.

The other side of the divide came with the beginning of the Hindi movement in the 1860s when some Hindus began to assert that one could no longer be a good Hindu and an advocate of Urdu at the same time. This movement made deliberate changes in Khari Boli which eventually resulted in a highly Sanskritized Hindi. The split in the common trunk of Hindi and Urdu, Khari Boli, which began with the growth of one major branch, Persianized Urdu, now continued with the growth of another major branch, Sanskritized Hindi. The process of multi-symbol congruence now commenced in earnest and culminated in slogans such as 'Hindi, Hindu, Hindustan' whose creators saw no room for non-Hindi speakers and non-Hindus in Hindustan. We might go so far as to call this process the 'Sanskritization of Urdu' or at least the 'Sanskritization of Khari Boli'.

Yet throughout the history of the Hindi movement before independence the equation Hindi = Hindu was never true.<sup>11</sup> In the first place, the rural masses of the population, those less mobilized, remained relatively uninvolved in the struggle between Hindi and Urdu which was a major concern of the more urban vernacular-educated elite. The bulk of the population continued to use the regional standards and in many cases the Kaithi script. Petitions and memorials to government in favour of Hindi or Nagari received tens of thousands of signatures at best from among a population of many millions. Moreover, some evidence indicates that on the popular level during our period Hindu and Muslim saints had long been revered by Hindu and Muslim alike. This suggests the possibility of a religious accommodation or even synthesis hardly favourable to the creation of opposing congruences of language and religion.

In the second place, even among educated Hindus, besides those wedded to Urdu, many preferred Braj Bhasha to Khari Boli as the language of poetry, and others adopted the Kaithi script rather than the Nagari, especially in Bihar. Moreover, the tradition of classical Hindustani music was patronized by educated Hindus and Muslims alike,

suggesting a cultural synthesis on the elite level paralleling that on the mass level. In sum, the Hindi movement in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represented a vernacular elite with a vested interest in government service. This elite, only a fraction of educated Hindus, and a tiny fraction of all Hindus, explicitly rejected the linguistic and religious syntheses possible and attempted with limited success to impose its linguistic-religious vision on all Hindus. With the advent of independence, however, the Hindi movement did make significant gains, though unable to triumph completely, and therefore we must of necessity look at the roots of differentiation from which it grew.

No one can question that all the elements for the diverging of Hindi and Urdu, and their blending into opposing Hindu and Muslim systems of multi-symbol congruence existed at least as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the linguistic level, we have the apparently unbridgeable differences between the Nagari and the Urdu scripts, and Gilchrist's vivid testimony on the tendency of some of his colleagues to deliberately introduce Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian words into their writings. On the communal level we have the all-too-frequently described social, cultural, and religious differences between Hindus and Muslims. In looking back, the process by which language and religion became identified with each other seems inevitable.

Of all the potential elements of linguistic differentiation, the most intractable seems to have been script. One can speak of a grammatical continuum between Hindi and Urdu: they share much and differ little here. One can also speak of a lexical continuum: they have a common core and differ as much or as little beyond this as a particular writer may wish. But no script continuum exists between them; no real blending of the Nagari and Urdu scripts can be achieved. This fact more than any other has led to the no-compromise and either/or attitudes so characteristic of the entire Hindi-Urdu controversy.

The difference between the two scripts seemed so important to some partisans that they confused script and language, as Grierson noted, saying that something written in Nagari had to be Hindi, the language of Hindus, and something in Persian script Urdu, the language of Muslims.<sup>12</sup> Both sides rejected the possible compromise of the Roman script; both rejected another possible solution, suggested by Gandhi, of using both scripts together. Those caught between the extremes, the many Hindus who valued Urdu (and the few Muslims who valued Hindi) found themselves on the defensive.

Earlier we noted the apparent contradictions in the writing style and

language pronouncements of Raja Shiva Prasad. Among his writings one can find not only statements opposing the forcible introduction of Sanskrit words and but also statements opposing the influence of Urdu and Persian. Among his publications one can also find both Persianized Urdu and Sanskritized Hindi, both the Urdu script and the Nagari script. Had Shiva Prasad lived at the time of Fort William College, the 'contradictions' in his writing style would have posed no problem. We may consider the possibility that his contradictory behaviour represented his response to an equally contradictory situation.

The Hindi movement forgave Shiva Prasad for his pro-Urdu tendencies because he also worked hard to promote the Nagari script. Other Hindus who valued Urdu, however, came in for harsher criticism. One common assumption among Hindi advocates seemed to be that such Hindus clung to Urdu for economic motives, i.e., that their knowledge of the Urdu script and language gave them an advantage in the competition for government service which they had no intention of relinquishing, however much their Hindu consciences may have pinched them for their linguistic apostasy. Such an assumption clearly appears in the verses of Sohan Prasad of Gorakhpur quoted earlier which attempt to explain the motives of Urdu-loving Hindus:

He thinks in his heart of hearts: now nothing but lies from me,  
For if I speak against Urdu, out the window my service will be.  
If Hindi enters my office, through begging my living I'll earn,  
For we know nothing of Hindi—at home it's Urdu we learn.<sup>13</sup>

This conventional explanation, however, overlooks the possibility that Kayasths and other Urdu-knowing Hindus represented the continuity of an earlier tradition, epitomized by the writers of Fort William College and the students of Banaras Sanskrit College under Ballantyne, when one's religious background had no necessary relationship to the language one used in writing or speaking, and when a different cultural tradition could be cherished for its own sake without fear of accusations by fellow Hindus or Muslims.

All this suggests that a major reason for the Hindi movement was the existence of Urdu. In Brass's terms, the existence of another different or potentially different group, especially if this other group is perceived to be benefiting more from social change, stimulates the development of group consciousness. The Urdu vernacular elite mobilized earlier than the Hindi elite, and was seen to be prospering beyond its deserts. Eventually the Hindi elite drew even and surpassed its rival, partly through the sheer strength of numbers as more and more of the underlying

Hindu majority was mobilized into the Hindi movement especially through the educational system.

This process of increasing mobilization of the Hindu majority, outstripping the pace of assimilation to Hindu-Muslim synthesis represented by Urdu, appeared in the statistics of publishing. In the realm of publishing, as we have seen, due at least in part to large numbers of educational texts indicating large numbers of Hindus being educated in Hindi, Hindi began to outstrip Urdu around the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup> The remarkable expansion of Sanskrit-Hindi works is of particular interest, suggesting perhaps another form of the Sanskritization of Khari Boli through popularizing religious works and hence further reinforcing the already strong association between script, vocabulary and religion. In the realm of journalism, however, Urdu retained a lead well past the time when its rough equality with Hindi in publishing had disappeared. In short, eventually greater numbers told, but during the period of British rule this was not allowed to happen. The fact that Urdu remained dominant in the courts and offices of the UP, and that many Hindus continued to support Urdu, exacerbated and prolonged the struggle.

One of the most interesting aspects of the long-drawn-out struggle to differentiate Hindi from Urdu appeared in the regional patterns of education, publishing and membership in voluntary language organizations. Government education statistics beginning with those gathered by Fink in 1845 showed consistent patterns in the regional and social distribution of language learning. Strikingly similar patterns appeared in publishing statistics and in the membership statistics of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha. All three sources suggest that the strongholds of Sanskritized Hindi lay in the eastern part of the province, while those of Urdu lay in Oudh and the west. The education and membership statistics further indicate the strong association of certain higher Hindu caste groups with Hindi and others with Urdu, and the virtual exclusion of lower caste groups from education. Finally, the publishing statistics show two things: first, that powerful associations between certain languages and certain cities existed—Arabic, Persian and Urdu with Lucknow, and Hindi and Sanskrit with Banaras and Allahabad; and second, that by the 1920s Hindi not only outstripped Urdu, but also began to dominate regions previously dominated by Urdu. Perhaps we can say that at *this* point the eventual triumph of Hindi began in earnest. In any case, the evidence points to a process by which greater assimilation to Sanskritized Hindi and differentiation from

Urdu began in the eastern part of the province, and eventually spread to the west.

We would do well to accept this picture only tentatively, however, since contemporary sources often do not make clear the exact nature of the language taught or published. For example, the publishing statistics do not tell us on what basis the language of a book is designated Hindi or Urdu. If, as I suspect, the usual basis was the script, then the triumph of Hindi may have been a little less overwhelming. Some contemporary evidence suggests that publications in the Nagari script could be well towards the Urdu end of the lexical continuum. Although the courts of the Central Provinces had used the Nagari script for years, noted one observer in 1900, the language was just as Persianized as it was in the NWP&O where the Urdu script was used. Furthermore, the most popular works of literature in 'Hindi' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were those of Devki Nandan Khatri, who used a Persianized language written in the Nagari script. On the other hand, as the wrangles over the proper language for elementary and secondary school texts in the UP made clear, there is little doubt that many Hindi works in this category—published in very large numbers—used a highly Sanskritized language. In short, the evidence is somewhat ambiguous. Of one thing we can be certain, however: in the UP and elsewhere in north India, the Nagari script overwhelmed the Urdu script in the realm of publishing early in the twentieth century.

At this point it seems useful to ask ourselves why the Nagari Pracharini Sabha (and other organizations and individuals promoting Hindi) did not turn to already existing popular scripts and language styles to promote the cause of Hindi. Why did the Sabha reject the Kaithi script, especially when Nagari writers for the courts proved so difficult to find while Kaithi writers were plentiful?<sup>15</sup> Why did it ignore the works of Devki Nandan Khatri and other popular authors, even when written in the Nagari script?<sup>16</sup> The answer, I think, hinted at earlier, lies in the process of Sanskritization, a process which can be looked at in two different ways.

First, as suggested above, the process of Sanskritization served to differentiate Hindi from Urdu. Here the importance of *shuddhā* or purity implied by Sanskritization is vis-a-vis Urdu. Hindi must become *shuddh* through the elimination of Persian and Arabic words and their replacement with Sanskrit words, and in doing so Hindi becomes different from Urdu. Nagari is more *shuddh* than Kaithi because it has no associations with Hindustani or Urdu as Kaithi does. (There seems

to exist a similar tendency among Urdu speakers as implied by the expression *sāf Urdu*.) This way of looking at the process requires the existence of Urdu as a foil, a counter-example, something from which to differentiate Hindi.

But there is a second and rather different way of looking at the process of Sanskritization. From this angle, Sanskritization is an ancient process which requires no foil or counter-example, which is not necessarily anti-Urdu or anti-Muslim, but rather recognizes the imperfection of other languages vis-a-vis Sanskrit itself, a model whose very name means 'perfected'. In ancient Sanskrit plays the moral and social status of various characters is partly indicated by the sort of language they speak; lower classes speak Prakrit or other more vernacular forms, while the upper classes, the more proper or noble characters, speak Sanskrit. From this angle there is a hierarchy of languages much like the social hierarchy. Just as one lifts one's social status by imitating the higher castes, particularly Brahmins (who know Sanskrit best), so does one lift the status of a language by imitating the Brahman of languages, Sanskrit.

Bengali, which had a powerful influence on Hindi during our period, had become highly Sanskritized. Yet Bengali had no need for a counter-example in the form of a Persianized Bengali written in the Persian script, used in the provincial courts and offices, and cherished by a large class of Hindus. And while Bengalis played an important and neglected role in promoting Hindi in the Nagari script for both economic reasons (since the official adoption of Sanskritized Hindi in the Nagari script would have given Bengalis seeking employment outside their home province an advantage) and cultural reasons (Sanskritization promoted a common Hindu heritage) during our period, this was mostly carried on outside Bengal. Within Bengal the Sanskritization of Bengali proceeded without the anti-Muslim attitudes which accompanied the Sanskritization of Hindi in the UP. Similarly, both Marathi and Gujarati became Sanskritized without any campaign of 'purification' from Arabic or Persian words. In short, the Sanskritization of Hindi would have occurred with or without Urdu; the existence of Urdu simply intensified and lent communal overtones to a process that would have occurred anyway. We can look on the Sanskritization of Hindi as the forging of an acceptable symbol for the process of multi-symbol congruence, or we can see it as an ancient and inevitable tendency among almost all Indian languages and having no necessary connection with communal politics.

### *Virtue and Vice: The Manipulation of Symbols*

The process of Sanskritization was one way in which Hindi supporters attached value to their linguistic symbol. In a similar way, Urdu supporters attached value to their symbol through the parallel processes of Persianization and Arabicization. As suggested above, these processes could occur without a potential rival on the horizon. Another major method of increasing the value of one's chosen symbol, however, required a visible opponent. This method, which occurred over and over again throughout the course of the controversy, involved affixing labels of virtue or vice to one or the other of the two rivals. Tables 14 and 15 below summarize the most frequently-occurring of these labels, many of which we have already encountered.

One of the most striking things implicit in these tables is the close relationship between technical and 'moral' aspects, i.e., technical defects lead to moral or aesthetic failings. From the Hindi viewpoint, because the Urdu script was unscientific, illegible, hard to learn, and capable of rendering several readings for one word, therefore it easily led to fraud and corruption. Because Urdu had a foreign script and a foreign and profane vocabulary therefore it was impure. And because the Nagari script was scientific, legible, easy to learn, and only gave one meaning for one word, therefore it encouraged honesty and truthfulness. And because Nagari was indigenous and had an indigenous and sacred vocabulary, therefore it was pure. Similar, though not identical, statements could be made from the Urdu viewpoint.

Another obvious characteristic is the refusal to admit any weaknesses in one's chosen symbol. One cannot have a blemished symbol—it must be perfect or at least presented as perfect. Weaknesses are only implicitly admitted: thus the Urdu Defence Association claimed that the Urdu script was actually quite easy to learn and that forgery was possible in any script; the NPS more than once demonstrated to British officials the speed with which Nagari could be written, and boasted of the antiquity and volume of Hindi literature.

The flavour of the Hindi-Urdu controversy and of the vernacular literature through which it found partial expression reminds one of medieval European morality plays in which everybody knows who is good and who is bad, and no real debate takes place. We have only foregone conclusions instead of the to-and-fro of arguments, duologues instead of dialogues, positions taken and then 'facts' marshalled to suit them instead of reasoned discourse, and yes/no or right/wrong thinking

TABLE 14  
Labels of Virtue and Vice for Hindi and Urdu:  
Hindi Viewpoint\*

Virtue	Vice
Indigenous	Foreign
Pure	Impure
Legible	Illegible
Fraud difficult	Fraud easy
Easy to learn	Hard to learn
Golden past	Decadent present
One word = one meaning	One word = many meanings
Many speakers	Few speakers
Scientific alphabet	Unscientific

\* Both language and script are included in the list above.

TABLE 15  
Labels of Virtue and Vice for Urdu and Hindi:  
Urdu Viewpoint\*

Virtue	Vice
Refined	Crude
Pure	Impure
Legible	Illegible
Fraud difficult	Fraud easy
Much literature	Little literature
Quick to write	Slow to write
Living language	Dead language
Best people use	Yokels use

\* Both language and script are included in the list above.

instead of relative thinking; in short, all the earmarks of polemical literature.

In all of these processes voluntary organizations played an important role. When we examine the histories of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha and the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu we discover that each organization made major efforts to attach value to its respective symbol. Each sought out old manuscripts to publish, each founded scholarly journals, each produced standard dictionaries, each created scientific terminologies,

and the most important leaders of each had strikingly similar careers in education and scholarship. This uncanny series of parallels between the activities of the two organizations suggests an underlying logic of affixing value to and standardizing a symbol. It also suggests that part of the process of standardization involved an English language model. In the attitudes of many Indians, just as the vernaculars ranked below the classical languages in respect of purity and refinement, so they fell below English in respect of modernity and literary and scientific development; such attitudes are alive and well in India even today.

The chief role of voluntary organizations such as the NPS, the HSS, and the ATU, however, was to *differentiate* their respective symbols from those of their rival. The gradual institutionalizing of this process was an important achievement for the Hindi movement and marked the beginning of a partial transition from 'community' to 'nation' in terms of our theory. The efforts of the NPS embodied what was considered important by those Hindus trying to impress their view of Hindi on other Hindus, and many of the Sabha's activities indicated an implicitly exclusionist view towards Muslim culture. The Sabha and other organizations like it were bent on increasing differentiation. Any assimilation meant assimilation of Muslims to the Hindi tradition, and any suggestion of assimilation to the Urdu tradition was vigorously rejected.

#### *The Ambiguous Role of Government*

As Paul Brass points out, both political organizations and government policy often play decisive roles in shaping inter-group relations and group consciousness. As we have seen, British language policy in the UP and elsewhere showed contradictions, inconsistencies and confusion, which more often than not encouraged the differentiation between Hindi and Urdu. For some, especially Indian, writers it seems *de rigueur* to explain any British policy that recognized differences as an instance of 'divide and rule'. While such explanations have some merit, they overlook the sheer muddleheadedness of a great deal of policy. Are we to explain the confusion of language and script evident in the pronouncements of the Government of India concerning the resolution of 1900 as an example of a sinister conspiracy? Are we to attribute MacDonnell's rapidly changing views of the currency of spoken Hindi to deep-laid scheming? Must we consider the efforts of Shore in the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories for the Nagari script, and the labours of Nesfield in Oudh for the Kaithi script part of a plot to pit Indians against each other? Or can we rather consider all of these as examples

of confused thinking, uncoordinated local initiative and conflicting perceptions, all in response to a vast, complex and often ill-known situation?

In any case, we have seen clear evidence of a fundamental contradiction in British language policy in the UP, namely, the encouragement of Hindi in education along with the preferment of Urdu in administration. To put matters differently, language policy accomplished the following: helped to create a flood of Hindi textbooks in the Nagari script and a class of people with a vested interest in Sanskritizing them; exposed tens of thousands of students to a Hindi-medium education using these textbooks; and then denied these students equal access to the very government positions for which they had gone to school in the first place. This glaring inconsistency found no parallel outside the UP, and did much to increase the differentiation between the two forms of Khari Boli. The resolution of 1900, supposedly rectifying this contradiction, only added to the intensity of the controversy. The confused thinking of the government exacerbated the situation; the 'new' rules excited both sides and stirred up communal feeling, without making any real changes.

The actions of government strike the modern observer (with the benefit of hindsight) as close to ludicrous. By sponsoring Hindi in Nagari at the elementary and secondary school levels, the government helped to create the very differences between Hindi and Urdu that many British officers decried. The government created, or at least fed, the genie in the bottle and then found itself surprised when the genie tried to get out. The clearest evidence of the results of this almost perverse policy appeared in the proceedings of the various educational bodies attempting to find a common language for school readers. The previous policies of government had helped to increase the very tendencies that it now strove to diminish. Previous partiality vitiated later attempts at impartiality.

One can also exaggerate the power of government. Although the Muslim reaction to the 1900 resolution suggested that a momentous shift in policy had occurred, the actual results were paltry and little real change took place in the language of the courts and offices, especially in the western UP, until independence. The success of Hindi supporters, brought about by a temporarily favourable constellation of forces (the Lieutenant-Governorship of MacDonnell, the influence of Grierson and Knox, the exertions of the NPS, the efforts of Malaviya, the failure of Muslims to take yet another Hindi campaign seriously, and the death

of Syed Ahmed Khan in 1898) resulted in a psychologically significant but otherwise meaningless victory. Even in the Central Provinces and Bihar, where the Muslim population was either less numerous or less influential than in the UP, and where the government decreed the exclusive rather than permissive use of the Nagari script, any significant change took decades.

The competition of educated Hindus and Muslims for government service, more acute in the UP than anywhere else, brought a passionate intensity into the struggle between Hindi and Urdu. And it was in just this arena that government policy, by clearly favouring Urdu, did the most to heighten the perception of uneven rates of social change by Hindi-educated Hindus and increase the differentiation of Hindi and Urdu. Whatever the origins of the usual British preference for Urdu,<sup>17</sup> the result was to render vain any efforts to diminish the ever-increasing differentiation between Hindi and Urdu.

Perhaps the most visible symbol of the failure of British language policy in the UP was the appearance in 1927 of the Hindustani Academy of Allahabad, sponsored by the provincial government. If the Sabha embodied the equation Hindi = Hindu, and the Anjuman the equation Urdu = Muslim, then this new organization represented the more ambiguous equation Hindi + Urdu = Hindu + Muslim. Like another British attempt to reduce differentiation—the proposed common language for elementary and secondary school texts—this too had little effect on the widening gulf between Hindi and Urdu.

#### *What If?: Concluding Speculations*

As noted above, in other areas of North India—present-day Maharashtra, Gujarat and Bengal—no Persianized form of the vernacular written in the Persian script took root. That is, no parallels to Urdu existed in Marathi-, Gujarati- or Bengali-speaking areas. Here, unlike the UP, language did not have the same importance as part of the process of multi-symbol congruence in the formation of Hindu and Muslim nationalism. Hence we find little or no evidence of movements to 'purify' Marathi, Gujarati, or Bengali of Persian and Arabic words.

We may speculate that had Persianized Khari Boli written in a modified Persian script never come into existence, Sanskritized Hindi written in the Nagari script would not have been at the heart of the process of multi-symbol congruence in forming Hindu nationalism in much of North India. Many Persian and Arabic words would have been added to Khari Boli Hindi, as in the case of Bengali, Gujarati and



Marathi. Language and religion, however, would not have formed a mutually reinforcing vicious circle, sharply reinforced by separate scripts with all their social and religious connotations. This does not mean that no Hindu or Muslim nationalisms would have arisen, but rather that their forms would have been much different.

Elsewhere in India, the replacement of Persian meant a real change: a return to regional vernaculars and the introduction of English, although there was some initial resistance in Bengal. In much of north India, however, the forces of continuity proved overwhelming for most of the nineteenth century, especially in UP where Urdu in Urdu script was hardly different from Persian in Persian script. Although there were one or two exceptions—Kumaun district in UP, where practically no Muslims lived, and for a while the Saugor and Nerbudda Territories in central India—on the whole Urdu had half a century to become established and thereby make exceptionally difficult any attempt to oust it.

Let us also ask ourselves how things might have turned out if far fewer Muslims had lived in the UP. Since British language policy seemed to bear a direct relation to the numbers and the influence of the Muslim population, the Hindi movement in the UP might have succeeded much more quickly—as in the cases of Bihar and the Central Provinces—and the uncompromising attitudes engendered in the long-drawn-out struggle might never have appeared. The relationship of Hindi to the rest of India might have turned out quite differently, and cries of 'Hindi imperialism' might never have been heard.

Let us further speculate what might have happened if the government of the UP had encouraged only Urdu at the elementary and secondary levels, or if it had supported the Kaithi script instead of the Nagari. Certainly the mobilization and differentiation of the Hindi elite would have taken a very different form. Perhaps the Kaithi would have become a script of equal importance to the Urdu. Perhaps the mobilization brought about through the educational system would have been greatly delayed. Or perhaps, judging by the attitudes of Ballantyne's students in the 1840s towards the prospect of 'Hindi' being absorbed into Urdu, the Hindi movement might never have come about, and Khari Boli Hindi might have become just another literary dialect.

Let us speculate still further on what the consequences might have been had the Hindi movement chosen Braj Bhasha instead of Khari Boli. Since Braj was much less widespread than Khari Boli in its Urdu form, the movement might have been confined to a much smaller area.

Braj was, after all, more refined than Khari Boli, closer to Sanskrit in poetic forms. If the Hindi movement had been interested only in *shuddhī* it should have chosen Braj as a much more suitable candidate than Khari Boli. But the Hindi movement chose instead to 'recapture' Khari Boli from Urdu, as it were; to make a more widespread candidate purer rather than make a purer candidate more widespread.

In essence, the mainstream Hindi movement in the UP and eventually in India could never accommodate a rival. Its whole existence was based on the superiority of Hindi and its inseparable connection with Hinduism, and on the idea that Hindi was irrevocably different from Urdu. No spirit of compromise, of adjustment, of partial assimilation to the benefit of both Hindi and Urdu came to the fore. Rather, the movement was based on a spirit of win or lose, of no compromise, of the complete differentiation of Hindi from Urdu, or of the complete assimilation of Urdu to Hindi. Urdu had no right to exist in India, and was a usurper of Hindi's rightful place, just as Muslims had no right to exist in India, and were usurpers of Hindus' rightful place. A common script *might* have made a big difference; such highly dissimilar scripts as the Urdu and the Nagari stacked the cards towards extreme differentiation. Nevertheless, some sort of synthesis was not impossible: this had already been achieved in the common basis of Hindi and Urdu, and the two scripts did not pose an impossible obstacle, as Gandhiji's two-script solution, or the UP government-sponsored Hindustani Academy indicated. Such voices of moderation or compromise were drowned out, however, and could accomplish little in the face of far more powerful rivals.

What occurred reminds me a good deal of what the American anthropologist Gregory Bateson called schismogenesis, i.e., a pattern of events in which two or more variables mutually amplify their differences in a vicious spiral of increasing intensity until the whole situation explodes, collapses, or falls apart. The very tendency to think in opposites, i.e., Hindi vs. Urdu, Hindu vs. Muslim, Nagari vs. Urdu, tended to influence the outcome by simplifying and polarizing a complex situation. Those who continually strove for differentiation—linguistic, religious and political—helped to create a self-fulfilling prophecy. The very differences they magnified justified the drastic solution of partition which they proposed, and the very proposal of this solution helped to magnify the differences.

\* \* \*

In conclusion, let me turn to the theme of Hindi becoming a world language. Certainly the numbers are there, and certainly the wish is there: I still remember the excitement among the audience at the First World Hindi Convention in Nagpur in early 1975 when the Soviet delegates announced that they supported a resolution for Hindi to become the seventh official language of the United Nations. In my opinion, however, the proper attitudes are not widespread enough, and the heritage of the struggle between Hindi and Urdu is partly responsible.

If Hindi supporters wish their language to become a world language, let them imitate the spirit of English, which became a great language by *inclusion* rather than *exclusion*. Let them cultivate an open and accepting attitude towards borrowing words from other sources, including Arabic and Persian, and let them allow and encourage this process—though likely to happen anyway since language change lies mainly beyond the powers of a few to control. But if Hindi supporters wish to move in this direction, they must give up the narrow inheritance of the nineteenth century provincial struggle and its influence on the subsequent twentieth century national struggle; they must adopt a broader and more open outlook. Let them abandon *shuddhita* and welcome diversity, let them give up parochialism and welcome enrichment from many sources, indigenous and foreign.

Despite the picture of enormous and unbridgeable differences between various divisions of her population so many writers delight in giving us, India has also proved many times over that unity in diversity can be realized, that assimilation and differentiation can coexist, and that a real synthesis can take place.

#### NOTES

1. Shri Radha Krishna Das, 'Hindi-Urdu', *Saraswati* (Allahabad), III, 11 (November 1902), 359.
2. This phrase, I believe, was first coined by the late S. K. Chatterjee.
3. I do not mean to suggest that only language and religion played important roles in the partition of British India, but rather to suggest that these had pre-eminent roles and that they as well as other influences affected each other in such a way as to mutually amplify rather than reduce, to intensify rather than diminish, the destructive downward spiral of mutual hatred and contempt among many Indians.
4. In the same vein, one can note the irony of the fact that the Nagari Pracharini Sabha itself, while trying to establish Nagari writers and to write its own legal

dictionary on a Hindi-Sanskrit basis, still used the Urdu term *muharrir* for the court writers it wanted to recruit.

5. For example, neither the sound nor the symbol of the retroflex nasal can be represented in the Urdu script.
6. For example, the three different spellings for the sibilant 's' cannot be represented in Nagari.
7. For example, R. S. Kaushala, *New Roman Urdu Primer*, 5th edition, (Ambala: 1942); P. J. Griffiths, *Shabron Ka Sudhar: Hindustan Ke Shabron Ke Sudhar Par Ek Nazar* (Allahabad: 194?); R. S. Kaushala, *Azād Hindustan Ke Sūrma* (Ambala: 1949 [?]). The two titles in Roman Urdu are cited just as written; the first title uses no diacriticals, though some diacriticals appear in the main text.
8. Throughout the history of the Hindi movement, supporters of Nagari have often claimed special virtues for their script. One of the greatest of these virtues, we are told, is the scientific nature of the Nagari alphabet. Certainly the order of the letters of the alphabet (though not unique to Nagari or Hindi) justifies this claim: the individual sounds follow a carefully conceived sequence based on an analysis of articulatory phonetics already ancient when Europeans first encountered India. But the particular *shapes* of the letters display no special virtues, and some of the them—*dh* and *gh*, *m* and *bb*—are easily confused on the average Hindi typewriter. Moreover, the necessity for 'dead' keys to add superscripts, subscripts, etc. on the Hindi typewriter makes typing Hindi in Nagari a far more cumbersome process than typing Hindi in the Roman script. To confound the two very different issues of alphabetic order and letter shape in one vague word—'scientific'—is to think badly. The Roman script—with the addition of a few diacriticals—proves much better for rapidly typing Hindi, as anyone who has used both scripts knows very well.

Moreover, though much better than English, the pronunciation of Hindi in the Nagari script is *not* totally consistent with spelling. The order of the Urdu alphabet is certainly less scientific and logical than that of Nagari, and the customary practice of leaving out most vowel marks makes pronunciation more difficult. It is only fair to point out, however, that the illogicalities of the alphabetical order of English and of its spelling and pronunciation outweigh those of either Hindi or Urdu; nevertheless, the smaller number of letters in the Roman script makes it much more easily adaptable to typing and word-processing than either the Urdu or Nagari scripts.

9. Film 'Hindi' has become more and more hybridized over the years with the addition of words and phrases from Marathi, Gujarati, and other languages, including English.
10. Amrit Rai, *A House Divided: The Origin and Development of Hindi/Hindavi* (Delhi, 1984). See especially Chapter 5, 'The Cultural Divide'.
11. On the whole, during our period Muslims were much less interested in any assimilation to Hindi, than Hindus were to Urdu. This lack of symmetry was mirrored in the membership of the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, which never had more than a tiny handful of Muslim members, and in statistics gathered by Sir Antony MacDonnell after the 1900 decision giving equal status to Hindi and Urdu. Yet there were a few Muslims interested in Hindi and willing to support

- it: in 1940 the Sabha published a book in Urdu entitled *Mulk Kī Zabān aur Fāzil Musalmān* [*The Language of the Country and Learned Muslims*] which contained statements by several Muslim scholars in favour of Hindi.
12. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The Hindi-Urdu Controversy of the 1860s and 1870s'.
  13. Sohan Prasad, *Hindī aur Urdū Kī Larāī* (Gorakhpur: 1886), stanzas 280 and 281.
  14. The statistics may suggest more Hindi than was the case because we are not sure about the nature of the *language* of the materials written in the Nagari script. Highly Persianized Khari Boli could be, and was written in the Nagari script, as J. C. Lyall noted in 1900 of the court language in the Central Provinces. (See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The Persianization of Urdu'.)
  15. See the section of Chapter III entitled 'The Kaithi Script', and the sections of Chapter V entitled 'The 1900 Decision: The Machinery of Deliberation', and 'Epilogue'.
  16. See the section of Chapter V entitled 'The Nagari Pracharini Sabha of Banaras'.
  17. See the opening part of the section of Chapter III entitled 'An Analysis of Language Policy' where F. S. Growse explains some of the reasons of the preference of his countrymen for Urdu.

## Appendix

### Sources

The Hindi movement has generated a considerable literature in many different forms: pamphlets, petitions, government administrative reports, newspaper articles, census reports, histories of literature, dictionaries, journal articles, dramas, poems, autobiographies, scholarly monographs, and organizational histories and reports. This mass of information, embodied largely in English, Hindi and Urdu, typically reflects the biases engendered in the long course of the movement, and dispassionate analyses by contemporary observers are the exception. To a large extent the language of the source indicates the bias: Hindi sources usually reflect a pro-Hindi and Urdu sources a pro-Urdu viewpoint, while English sources contain a whole range of outlooks. Even supposedly neutral sources, such as census reports, did not escape the distorting effects of strongly-held attitudes towards language and script.

Therefore, *The Census of India*, prima facie one of the most valuable sources, has limited worth. The history of those sections dealing with language in the United Provinces, the storm centre of the Hindi movement, shows clearly how bias and inexact terminology rendered linguistic data almost useless. The Census of 1881, the first to include a section on language, made some attempt to estimate speakers of various dialects on the very rough basis of the administrative divisions of the province. The enumerators were instructed to use the term 'Hindustani' for the vernacular, however, thus allowing no accurate estimate of the numbers of speakers of either the regional standards or Hindi vis-a-vis Urdu. Moreover, this census did not recognize the separate existence of Khari Boli as a vernacular dialect, but included it under Braj Bhasha. The Census of 1891, like its predecessor, used language figures gathered by enumerators instructed to use the term 'Hindustani'. The term 'Khari Boli' first appears in this census which made a more exact attempt to estimate the numbers of speakers of various dialects. No mention of the Hindi-Urdu controversy occurred in either census, though both clearly recognized Hindi and Urdu as two separate literary standards.

In contrast, both the Census of 1901 and that of 1911 gave considerable attention to the Hindi-Urdu controversy, and both attempted to collect statistics on the numbers of Hindi and Urdu speakers. Although the two censuses drew on the preliminary results of Dr George Grierson's