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Text and Event in Early Modern Europe (TEEME)
An Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate

Ph.D. dissertation

**The Forked Tongue of Language Reform:
Cross-reading the dynamics of the making of early modern English and
nineteenth-century Hindustani**

Diviya

Supervisors: Professor Donna Landry (University of Kent)
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Manfred Pfister (Freie Universität Berlin)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis cross-reads the dynamics of language standardisation in early modern England and colonial India by interrogating the rhetoric of reform in the two periods within a comparative framework. Specifically, it maps the presence of English early modernity in the works of British reformers of Hindustani/Hindi in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, and revisits congruent themes in the language of reform in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, to foreground the ways in which the rhetoric of standardisation stages and manages anxieties of national/imperial self-fashioning at two distinct yet connected moments.

To frame the comparative idiom of the British Empire, I track multivalent engagements with 'Rome' in early modern England and British India, which seek to fashion imperial character in negotiation with salutary or cautionary imperial models: Britain's Roman past; early English colonial reconnaissance; ideals of political conduct; and British political behaviour in the colony and the metropole. I then map the affinities projected between English and Hindustani in John Gilchrist's first Hindustani grammars in late eighteenth-century India, and annotate them with the contexts for William Bullokar's first grammar of English in late sixteenth-century England. Reading them as promotional works, I note the way they valorise the vernaculars hitherto neglected by traditional paradigms and involve them in fledgling visions of a progressive British Empire and a cosmopolitan English nation. Comparing the dilemmas shared by lexicographers in the two periods as they aim to make new words available to their respective target readerships and to moderate the lexical influx from inter-cultural traffic, I then trace the attitude of selective cosmopolitanism that assuages anxieties of infiltration by 'others' of foreign origin, class, or gender. Finally, I attend to the invention of literary tradition by exploring the analogies with early modern English literary culture that contour George Grierson's literary history for modern Hindi. Comparing the shapes of the tussle between literary prescriptions and practice in colonial India and early modern England, I read Hariaudh's modern Hindi epic *Priyaprasava* and

Samuel Daniel's *Defense of Ryme* as symmetrical assertions of poetic as well as nationalist autonomy.

My thesis approaches early modern language standardisation as a cultural problematic, and treats its discourse as an occasion for self-fashioning with respect to significant others as well as a repository of effects beyond its own moment. Motivated by a reflection on the divisive aspects of contemporary public discourse that recruit history selectively to assert insular identities for languages and its communities, it underscores that the modern standard identities of Hindi and English took inaugural shape in a comparative, chaotic, and contingent nexus of texts and events. Examining the rhetoric from early modern England and colonial India in the mirror of one another throws into relief that (a) the past had variable uses and involuntary echoes in the invention narratives of linguistic modernity; and (b) stories of standard and national modernity themselves had a transnational provenance as they were articulated through calibrated comparisons that served practical as well as political functions.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In der vorliegenden Arbeit werden die Dynamiken sprachlicher Standardisierung im frühneuzeitlichen England sowie im kolonialen Indien durch einen Vergleich ihrer jeweiligen Rhetorik der Reform zueinander in Beziehung gesetzt. Insbesondere durch die Analyse der Präsenz der englischen Frühmoderne in den Werken britischer Reformen zu Hindustani/Hindi im Indien des achtzehnten und neunzehnten Jahrhunderts wie auch die Erörterung entsprechender Themen in den Debatten über die Reform im England des sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhunderts kann gezeigt werden, wie eine Rhetorik der Standardisierung die Ängste nationaler und imperialer Selbstdarstellung in zwei unterschiedlichen, jedoch miteinander verbundenen Epochen inszeniert und bewältigt.

In einem ersten Schritt betrachte ich die vielschichtigen Bezugnahmen auf ‘Rom’ im frühmodernen England und im kolonialen Indien, die ein imperiales Modell zu konstruieren suchen -- in Auseinandersetzung mit positiven und negativen Beispielen imperialer Herrschaft, der römischen Vergangenheit Britanniens, den ersten kolonialen Projekten Englands, politischen Idealen und der tatsächlichen britischen Politik in den Kolonien und der Metropole. Im Anschluss daran verfolge ich die Affinitäten zwischen Englisch und Hindustani, wie sie in John Gilchris ersten Hindustani-Grammatiken im Indien des späten achtzehnten Jahrhundert herausgestellt werden, und kommentiere sie im Kontext von William Bullokars erster Grammatik des Englischen aus dem späten sechzehnten Jahrhundert. Liest man sie als Propagandatekte, erkennt man, wie sie die in traditionellen Paradigmen vernachlässigten Vernakulärsprachen aufwerten und sie in frühe Visionen eines sich ausbreitenden Britischen Weltreichs und einer kosmopolitischen englischen Nation einbetten. Ausgehend von einem Vergleich der Dilemmata der Lexikografen in beiden Epochen -- ihrem Bestreben, ihrem jeweiligen Zielpublikum einerseits neue Wörter zugänglich zu machen und andererseits den lexikalischen Zufluss des interkulturellen Austausch zu kontrollieren -- untersuche ich Strategien eines selektiven

Kosmopolitismus, der die Angst vor der Infiltration durch ‚Andere‘, die aufgrund ihrer Herkunft, ihrer Klasse oder ihres Geschlechts als fremd markiert sind, reguliert.

Abschließend widme ich mich der Begründung literarischer Tradition, indem ich Analogien zwischen der frühneuzeitlichen englischen Literatur und George Griersons Literaturgeschichte des modernen Hindi erörtere. Vor dem Hintergrund der Auseinandersetzung zwischen literarischen Idealen und Praktiken im kolonialen Indien und frühneuzeitlichen England lese ich Hariaudhs modernes Hindi-Epos *Priyaprasava* und Samuel Daniels *Defense of Ryme* als vergleichbare Apologien poetischer und nationaler Autonomie.

Meine Arbeit beschreibt die frühneuzeitliche linguistische Standardisierung als eine kulturelle Problematik und betrachtet diesen Diskurs sowohl als Form des self-fashioning gegenüber kulturell Fremdem wie auch als Repositorium von über den historischen Moment hinausreichenden Effekten. Angeregt durch die Reflexion der polarisierenden Aspekte eines zeitgenössischen öffentlichen Diskurses, welcher Geschichte selektiv aufarbeitet, um insulare Identitäten von Sprachen und Sprachgemeinschaften zu behaupten, unterstreicht meine Arbeit, dass die modernen standardisierten Formen des Englischen wie des Hindi in einem vergleichsweise chaotischen und arbiträren Zusammenspiel aus Texten und Ereignissen entstanden sind. Liest man die Rhetorik des frühneuzeitlichen Englands und die des kolonialen Indiens im Spiegel der jeweils anderen, lässt sich herausarbeiten, dass (a) die Vergangenheit unterschiedliche Funktionen und überraschende Nachklänge in den Gründungsnarrativen der sprachlichen Moderne erfahren hat und (b) dass Geschichten über eine standardisierte nationale Moderne einen transnationalen Ursprung haben, da sie in spezifischen Vergleichen, die praktischen wie auch politischen Zwecken dienen, artikuliert wurden.

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The responsibility for the deficiencies and errors in the following pages remains mine.

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INTRODUCTION

‘Reason thus from analogy’: Locating comparisons in the making of early modern English and colonial Hindustani

Why, a Gods name, may not we, as else the Greekes, have the kingdom of oure owne Language...?

— Edmund Spenser to Gabriel Harvey, 1580¹

It hath been ever the use of the conqueror to despise the language of the conquered, and to force him by all means to learn his...so did the Romans always use, insomuch that there is almost no nation in the world but is sprinkled with their language

— Edmund Spenser, ‘A View of the Present State of Ireland’, 1596²

...May not we then reason thus from analogy, that the Hindoostanee will ascend as high on the Indian scale....as the English has done in a similar predicament in our own country?

— John Borthwick Gilchrist, *Proceedings of the College of Fort William*, 1803³

Edmund Spenser’s exclamation in the first epigraph featured in a discussion about Gabriel Harvey’s hexametric English poetry and the frustrations of making English words fit classical quantitative metres. Reflecting a key anxiety among sixteenth-century English men of letters, Spenser gave expression to the worry that for all its attempts to mimic classical styles, the English tongue might ultimately be incapable of sophistication. The Greeks invoked here were an object of desire, envy, as well as rivalry. As classical forebears, they represented the cultural accomplishment to which English poetry aspired. Spenser’s expression also viewed them as being in enviable possession of the agency to legislate their own language.

¹ Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey, *Three proper, and wittie, familiar letters: lately passed betweene two vniuersitie men: touching the earthquake in Aprill last, and our English reformed versifying With the preface of a wellwiller to them both* (London: H. Bynneman, 1580), p. 6.

² Edmund Spenser, ‘A View of the Present State of Ireland’ (1596), repr. in *Elizabethan Ireland: A Selection of Writings by Elizabethan Writers on Ireland*, ed. by James P. Myers Jr. (Hamden: Archon Books, 1983), pp. 60–125 (p. 96).

³ British Library, India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Series, IOR/H: 1600-1918, Vol. DLIX, June 27, 1803, p. 256.

After registering his impatience at inconsistent English accents -- the ‘onely, and chieftest hardnesse’ -- which made it difficult to fit rhythms of speech to rules of versification, Spenser writes: ‘But it is to be wonne with Custome, and rough words must be subdued with Use’.⁴ He wants English poetry to be expressed in self-authorised ways, but not before the tongue’s limitations are mitigated. In wanting to ‘have’ the kingdom of his own language, he has in mind an idea of linguistic control. Spenser, as Richard Helgerson notes, ‘wants to exercise sovereignty over English, wants to make it do what he wants it to do’.⁵ In the desire to have the kingdom of one’s own language, to subdue rough words with use, and to win with custom, then, can be read the tacit injunction to ‘govern the very linguistic system, and perhaps more generally the whole cultural system, by which our own identity and our own consciousness is constituted. To remake it, and presumably ourselves as well, according to some ideal pattern’.⁶

Spenser’s rhetoric in 1580 captured the predicament of English at a time when it did not have standard rules and was far from mounting a national challenge to its international rivals. Over the next two hundred odd years, the empire of English would gain national validation and a purchase in territories far beyond its shores. The mercantile, and subsequently imperial, contact with other cultures would beg the question of how best to understand and govern other linguistic and cultural systems. Besides addressing the need to master the foreign tongue of those it sought to master, the British linguistic management of a colonial language would also become a matter of fashioning the other, its linguistic culture and language consciousness. It is only fitting then that linguist and pedagogue John Gilchrist, while making a case in 1803 for ‘Hindustani’ to be the standard lingua franca in the Indian subcontinent, should seek to fashion the colonial language by invoking a story

⁴ Spenser and Harvey, p. 6.

⁵ Richard Helgerson, ‘Barbarous Tongues: The Ideology of Poetic Form in Renaissance England’, in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture*, ed. by Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 273–92 (p. 274).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

of the hard-won confidence of English cultural identity and by presenting an admirable model of the coloniser's own self-fashioning.

In the third epigraph, Gilchrist proposes that 'Hindoostanee' can aspire to the triumph of English despite its 'predicament', which, he implies, consists in its institutional neglect and the lack of a linguistic apparatus. The statement featured in an address to British imperial agents being trained in Indian languages, who were the main consumers of the grammars, dictionaries, and primers in which the notion of 'Hindustani' as a nation-wide lingua franca would first take systematic shape. Imputing aspiration to a language of the subcontinent, and exercising linguistic control over it, was evidently an imperial prerogative.

Linguistic control was also an imperial prerogative in Spenser's sixteenth-century imagination. His desire for an autonomous kingdom of English did not transfer to those over whom England sought control. In 1596, Spenser produced a scathing polemic in favour of the 'reform' of Ireland, in which he called for a control of language using an altogether more oppressive language of control. The Romans invoked in Spenser's statement from the second epigraph were not mild legislators of metrical convention. They conquered and claimed territories for their empire; the sprinkling of language evoked the sprinkling of blood in a violent, and inviolable, covenant.

Read together, the statements of Spenser and Gilchrist capture languages in a range of relationships. The English of Spenser's 1580 letter is in an aspirational tangle with Greek and yearns to match its self-contained elegance; English courts equivalence with the extensive language of the Roman imperial order when Spenser constructs Irish as an object of conquest in 1596; the 'Hindoostanee' being recommended by Gilchrist in 1803 is kindred with an imperial English in an analogy that refers to an arc of progress from neglect to might. Context-specific distinctions aside, the rhetoric of these utterances is similarly disposed in significant ways. They are concerned with the matter of linguistic

inferiority of one language assessed in relation with a more powerful tongue. Both propose aspirational horizons and see possibilities of advancement linked to the exercise of an appropriate linguistic discipline. Their appeals are total in scope: Spenser speaks not just to a specific poet but to English people as a whole just as Gilchrist addresses British imperial agents collectively and urges them to recall a historical topos for their own national language. Since they each suppose identities for languages that did not have neatly self-evident identities in their respective moments, they encapsulate an ideal state of affairs. As such, these statements also present an expression of the desires, frustrations, and prerogatives that tie the exercise of fashioning a language to self-fashioning through language. Their proclamations reflect not just the ambition to rule the kingdom of one's own or another's language, but also the historical anxieties that inflected any straightforward manoeuvre of linguistic fashioning in early modern England and colonial India.

This thesis offers an argument about the salience of identifying and tracing the resonances of shared ideological repertoires for imagining language standardisation in early modern England and colonial India. It is a study of shared strategies in linguistic and literary theory and practice that invite comparison. While one historical moment or context did impinge upon the other, more importantly, each sheds light upon the other when studied within a comparative, yet connected frame.

The statements of both Spenser and Gilchrist assumed a stability for English and Hindustani that did not reflect the state of the two languages in their respective worlds. Spenser's desire for an autonomous English language would have been considered a tall order at the turn of the sixteenth century when its advocates faced the perception that it was a marginal tongue in Europe capable at best of inconsistent eloquence at home. Though it had come to be used more frequently in domains of law and administration from the fourteenth century onwards, an all-encompassing vernacular triumph was elusive for

the English language in the sixteenth century.⁷ In this, it was of a piece with trends in the linguistic world of sixteenth-century Europe across which Latin continued to remain the pan-European lingua franca of a linguistically plural world where boundaries between languages, like those between States, were less clear cut than they would become in later centuries.⁸ The triumph of vernaculars was more stridently achieved in figure than fact, given the popularity of the Renaissance genre of epideictic rhetoric in praise of one ‘rich’ language (often a vernacular after Dante’s seminal *De vulgari eloquentia* was published in 1529) over another ‘poor’ one.⁹ The ‘truth value’ of these statements was moot; as exercises in rhetoric, they were essentially displays of the writers’ argumentative potential. Thus, expressions of pride or confidence on behalf of a vernacular could as easily be read for signs of an inferiority complex relative to Latin or other vernaculars.¹⁰ ‘Official’ arguments in support of one vernacular over others were heavily motivated by political expediency, decreed attitudes were often reversed, and lags were common between policy and practice.¹¹ Heteroglossia of ‘other’ vernaculars within English shores was an accepted reality, and contributed to ambivalent attitudes as well as to dialogic literary richness.¹²

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, ‘English’ was an object under construction by scholars, pedagogues, and writers in various orthographies, pronunciation-schemes, word-coinages, and treatises on rhetoric. Competing definitions of an ideal English had to manage a repertoire of several local ‘englishes’ and foreign imports, influences, or models.

⁷ Peter Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 62.

⁸ See *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 60-63, 71.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-70.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹¹ This was true, for instance, about the aftermath of the 1536 Act of Union between England and Wales. Though the act decreed that the courts exclusively use the English tongue, Welsh continued to be used in courts (Burke, *Languages and Communities*, p. 74). If Henry VIII’s 1537 Act for the English order, habite, and language promised to ‘use various instruments, including education and religion, to propagate the English language’, Elizabeth had encouraged the use of Irish as a means of disseminating Church doctrines and funded press to print an Irish Bible, and had in 1563, granted leave for the Bible and prayer book to be published in the Welsh language. See Paula Blank, *Broken English: Dialects and the Politics of Language in Renaissance Writings*, *The Politics of Language* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 133.

¹² See Blank (as above); essays in *Multilingualism in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries*, ed. by Dirk Delabastita and Ton Hoenselaars, special issue of *English Text Construction* 6.1 (2013); Manfred Pfister, ‘Globalisation in the Globe: Shakespeare’s Theatre as an Agency of Linguistic and Cultural Traffic’, in *Weltbühne Wien: World-stage Vienna*, ed. by Ludwig Schnauder, Rudolf Weiss and Ewald Mengel (Trier: WVT, 2010), II, pp. 128-34.

Early English grammar was imbricated with that of Latin, its prosody measured against Greek or Gothic models, and its relative lexical range showcased in multilingual language primers for commercial use before the first monolingual dictionaries arrived on the scene in the first quarter of the seventeenth century with an intent to anglicise ‘strange’ words. Definitions of a ‘standard’ English fluctuated between courtly and non-courtly parameters through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³ Unlike Italy and France, England had no academy to adjudicate standards. Though English was thought to have been rendered reasonably standard in the eighteenth century in works such as Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) and Robert Lowth’s *A Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), this was by no means a widely accepted belief.¹⁴ A range of opinions remained alive until the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on what ‘standard English’ was, whether it existed, where it was to be found, and when it emerged historically.¹⁵

At the turn of the nineteenth century in India, Gilchrist’s preferred term ‘Hindustani’ too would strain to contain a multifarious language-complex and culture within a singular category that could be mastered by British administrators, judicial and military officers.

¹³ The term the ‘King’s Standard’, first recorded in 1533 by Thomas Wilson’s *The Arte of Rhetorique* referred to an ideal rather than universal usage, one that was in danger of being ‘counterfeited’ by new coinages. In 1619, Alexander Gil’s Latin-language treatise *Logonomia Anglica* identified a common dialect -- a ‘communis dialectus’ -- as the extant standard among a corpus of other regional dialects current in England. Broadly, the language of London had been seen as a standard variety following the Chancery Standard formed in the fifteenth century by the royal clerks at the Signet Office and Chancery at Westminster. The language of the court and of London was endorsed as the most ‘usual’ by influential treatises such as John Hart’s *Orthographie* (1569) and George Puttenham’s *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589). The post-Restoration sense of a ‘standard’ still centred on London English, but, as Norman Blake has pointed out, came to imply the polite language of cultured gentlemen rather than that of the court itself; Norman Blake, *A History of the English Language* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 237-38. Chapter 2 of this thesis locates the emergence of the first grammar for English in the context of an account of the changing political and pedagogical fate of the English language in England.

¹⁴ See Alok Yadav, *Before the Empire of English: Literature, Provinciality, and Nationalism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (New York, Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 1-19. Yadav challenges the popular presumption that the English language and literary culture had come to occupy a metropolitan, European, and imperial centrality in the eighteenth century. He argues that British writers of the eighteenth century carried forward from the early modern period a persistent anxiety of being provincial with respect to Spanish, Italian, and French literary cultures.

¹⁵ See Tony Crowley, *Standard English and the Politics of Language*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 84-90. Crowley shows that the term ‘standard’ English had achieved two clear uses by the mid-nineteenth century. If one indicated the ‘uniform and commonly accepted national literary language upon which linguistic historians and lexicographers worked’, another referred to ‘a single form of speech that would replace diversity and variation’ (pp. 106-7). If some historians of English held that a standard had been in place at different times between the fourteenth and eighteenth century, many late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century commentators rued the fact that there was no standard current in their time.

Fluctuations of ideology and function, indexed to the changing nature of Britain's imperial role in India as it moved from being a Company-State to being ruled by the Crown after 1858, came to inflect British self-perception of their cultural mission in the empire. These fluctuations found their way into the ventures of language standardisation-through-pedagogy fostered by the empire in India. In Gilchrist's design, the vernacular 'Hindustani', once rendered stable, could also serve as a universal colloquial medium for Indians and marker of cultural identity across swathes of regions.

Yet a terminological stability would remain elusive as the term would be defined in different, often contradictory ways through the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, eventually succumbing to a divergence along religious lines between 'Hindi' and 'Urdu'.¹⁶ Though Gilchrist was widely credited with having 'invented' Hindustani as a composite vernacular by rendering it systematic in its first grammar, what Hindustani actually was, remained, as Alison Safadi points out, 'a matter of confusion and contradiction during the entire colonial period'.¹⁷ Despite the fact that British scholars and linguists kept putting forth definitions throughout the nineteenth century, there was no 'concerted attempt' either by scholars or officials to reach a standard definition.¹⁸ The instability was exacerbated by the confusion between the terms Hindustani, Hindi, and Urdu, and whether vernacular heteroglossia could be linked to religion or class. Contentions within and beyond the discourse of British linguists extended to whether the language was an exclusive domain of Muslims, used by educated elites irrespective of religious affiliations, the register spoken around Delhi, a vernacular dialect of Northwestern Hindi, the popular tongue of the masses across the country, or the language of vernacular literary culture. The sheer variety contained within the term 'Hindustani' was summarised in a volume of George Abraham Grierson's monumental *Linguistic Survey of India* (1898-1928), whose own slippery

¹⁶ See Chapter 2, pp. 89-96 for an account of the tangled signifying relationships between 'Hindustani', 'Hindi', and 'Urdu'

¹⁷ Alison Safadi, 'The Colonial Construction of Hindustani: 1800-1947' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths University of London, 2012), p. 53. Chapter 2 of this thesis contains a discussion of 89colonial 'Hindustani' on pp. 89-96.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

definitions were hedged by qualifications that testified to the polyvalent state of affairs in 1914.¹⁹

Despite several industrious efforts, the discourses set to define and delimit each of the two languages in their respective contexts lacked consensus or consistent programmes. As products of these discourses, English and Hindustani were only provisional objects, though they were rhetorically constructed as stable composites immutably attached to neat regional or political units.

Tensions between categorical constructs and recalcitrant realities, between certainty and ambivalence, between ambition and insecurity animate the writing of the grammars, dictionaries, and literary evaluations to which this thesis attends. These texts, selected from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and nineteenth-century India, were part of a fledgling enterprise of language reform which promoted stable renditions of language-objects in distinct milieus to meet distinct expectations. In them, early modern Englishmen and British imperial officers in nineteenth-century India were the self-purported agents of reform for two languages radically different from one another. The following chapters explore select texts from the early modern period such as William Bullokar's grammar for English (1586), bilingual and 'hard-word' dictionaries produced for English between 1582 and 1623, and miscellaneous opinions about English poetic character held through the late-sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Among nineteenth-century British linguistic works, I read John Gilchrist's first grammars of 'Hindustani' (1796-1810), bilingual dictionaries of English-Hindustani and those of Anglo-Indian words compiled between 1772 and 1886, and George Grierson's *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (1889).

At first glance, the works listed above seem like a motley group with little in common. Each set is embedded in different times, typologies, and linguistic contexts. The early

¹⁹ See pp. 93-95 of this thesis for the Linguistic Survey's summary definitions of Hindustani.

modern texts dealing with English have different things to say about the technical dimensions and ostensible motivations of standardisation than those works of colonial linguistics dealing with Hindustani. Even within their own chronological categories, they show variation of function, genre, descriptive adequacy, or sophistication. Their prefaces, however, share concerns and propositions that offer a glimpse into the rhetorical and ideological frameworks within which these languages were standardised. Even as they focused on functional language-use, these works expressed a desire to define the languages in question and advance their wide-ranging worth. The reformers in each period worked with vernacular language-complexes that had not been described consistently in terms of script, pronunciation, register, or spelling. Their works began as fruits of dilettante enterprise rather than state- or academy-sponsored ventures. A promotional intent shaped the prefatory persuasions of these works as they sought to advance their own linguistic descriptions of and prescriptions for their respective language-object. We find them engaging with dominant paradigms of language pedagogy, arguing in favour of undervalued vernaculars, and negotiating contests between local dialects. Standardisation in both cases also became an occasion for cultural control via selection of regional dialects, class-linked heteroglossia, foreign elements, and literary lineages all of which vied for inclusion under the sign of the 'modern' and the 'national'. Besides being programmes of linguistic selection, description, or elaboration, they were also projects of invention: of a singular 'modern' standard for use within a territory, of its truly traditional templates and history, and its translocal potential. As captured in the promotional rhetoric, these language-complexes at the two junctures also negotiated memories of conquest and control, and sought narratives of triumph.

Despite elemental differences between the two languages, cultures, and historical moments, it is my contention that resemblances such as those mentioned above unite the selected texts as sites in which anxieties of self-definition were negotiated. In the English and British reformers' persuasions across these distinct periods can be traced the following

question: What kind of a nation and empire did the English want to be by having the kingdom of their own language, and by legislating the kingdom of another's? Tracking the manifestations of this anxiety of self-definition in the prefaces of linguistic works for English and Hindustani, this thesis is concerned with the following questions: How did the prefaces stage the tensions of standardising a language in their respective historical moments? What were the calibrations of rhetoric through which they were allayed? And, more broadly, in what ways did the making of standard language reflect anxieties of national and imperial self-fashioning at two distinct moments?

The following sections discuss my approach to standardisation and define the basis on which I examine early modern England and colonial India in the light of one another.

Texts, prefaces, and language standardisation as ideology

As a historically-specific phenomenon, the making of standard languages has entailed processes of dialect selection, elaboration, codification, memorialisation and diffusion of a chosen language.²⁰ Motivations for standardisation vary across and within time, language families, and cultures.²¹ Some are in thrall to societal power structures (for instance, the selection of prestige dialects as a matter of contest between elites and counter-elites as was arguably the case during the *questione della lingua* in fifteenth-century Italy, and the Hindi and Urdu movements among the Hindu and Muslim elite sphere of letters in nineteenth-century North India). Some are driven by religious imperatives (the European Reformation or missionary-led linguistic work in the colonies), or political ideologies (such as the rise of nationalism, or stances of imperial rule that legislated cultural roles of vernacular tongues).

²⁰ Emphasising the historical specificity of standardisation, John Earl Joseph has argued that though language standards exist everywhere, 'standard languages' emerged as a specifically European concept with certain defining criteria based on European languages and cultural values such as the presence of non-standard dialects, codification in written forms such as dictionaries and grammars, and the use of standard language in prestige functions. See John Earl Joseph, *Eloquence and Power: The Rise of Language Standards and Standard Languages* (London: Frances Pinter, 1987), pp. 58-60.

²¹ Ana Deumert and Wim Vandenbussche, 'Standard Languages: Taxonomies and Histories', in *Germanic Standardisations: Past to Present*, ed by Deumert and Vandenbussche (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003), pp. 1-14 (p. 9).

Some follow widely-diffused technological triggers (the spread of print capitalism), a rise in language consciousness due to multicultural contact (for instance, through humanistic education, Orientalist philological fascination, or travel and trade networks), or social and economic prospects of reformers seeking patronage from courts or markets. Some gatherers of linguistic knowledge may prioritise literary prestige, as we can impute to the evidence of the vast number of treatises on ‘eloquence’ produced in early sixteenth-century England well before the publication of any English grammars or dictionaries.²² For others, especially those operating in mercantile, colonial or missionary contexts, functional needs have been the ostensible motive force, and standardisation an ancillary consequence. Standardisation may proceed through direct imposition by government decree, or by diffusion brought about through institutional promotion, naturalised official use, or a rise in public acceptance of a standard form. The story of standardisation can be told as one of cyclical progression,²³ a movement between one ideologically-distinct phase and another,²⁴ a play of power and control,²⁵ a collaborative consolidation of extant knowledge networks,²⁶ or as a dynamic of reflexes which see languages and language-communities coming into or falling from prominence.²⁷ The technical aspects of language standardisation are inexorably implicated with such larger ideologically-motivated reflexes.

²² Richard Foster Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language: A Survey of Opinions Concerning the Vernacular from the Introduction of Printing to the Restoration* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1953), p. 9.

²³ As typified in the narrative in which the early modern rise of European vernaculars in the wake of Latin’s decline inaugurated a chain of events that saw regional standards vying for dominance over other vernaculars before themselves becoming ‘nationalised’ over time. See Burke, *Languages and Communities*, p. 3.

²⁴ John Earl Joseph has characterised as a back and forth movement between a phase of elaboration in which a language is expanded to fit newer needs, and a restrictive phase in which rules are promoted to modulate wanton variation. See Joseph, *Eloquence and Power*, pp. 58-60.

²⁵ For an account of the rise of standard English described as one of regional dialect-suppression see Blank, pp. 1-6. For assessments of colonial linguistics through its primary commitment to the exercise and maintenance of colonial power see Joseph Errington, *Linguistics in a Colonial World: A Story of Language, Meaning, and Power* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008); more specifically for India, see Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*, Princeton studies in culture/power/history (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 16-56.

²⁶ As represented by the work of C. A. Bayly, which foregrounds the collaborative role of Indians in colonial knowledge-production about India and posits the existence of a thriving (and often subversive) Indian ‘ecumene’ as the equivalent of a Habermasian public sphere. On the public sphere in Europe, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989). On public spheres in colonial South Asia, see essays in *The Indian Public Sphere: Readings in Media History*, ed. by Arvind Rajgopal and C. A. Bayly (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁷ Peter Burke has emphasised that many languages in early modern Europe merely disappeared from official domains like courts and schools and retired into ‘private life’, rather than being entirely obliterated by the triumphant march of newly powerful vernaculars; Burke, *Languages and Communities*, p. 71.

Speaking of standardisation-as-ideology, James and Lesley Milroy define it as:

[...] a historical process which — to a greater or lesser degree — is always in progress in those languages that undergo it. Standardisation is motivated in the first place by various social, political and commercial needs and is promoted in various ways, including the use of a writing system, which is relatively easily standardised; but absolute standardisation of a spoken language is never achieved (the only fully standardised language is a dead language). Therefore it seems appropriate to speak more abstractly of standardisation as an *ideology*, and a standard language as an idea in the mind rather than a reality — a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent.²⁸

The Milroys encourage viewing standardisation as a process that imagines norms, supposes identities, and engenders mythologies. Their definition also supports a view that standardisation is an ever-dynamic process with many movable parts, which are seldom monolithic. The ideology of standardisation, then, demands a conformity which is rarely achieved uniformly. Further, as Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal suggest, participants and observers involved in the processes of making/identifying languages frame their understanding of linguistic varieties and map those understandings onto people, events, and activities that are significant to them.²⁹ These ‘conceptual schemes’ are ideological because ‘they are suffused with the political and moral issues pervading the particular sociolinguistic field and are subject to the interests of their bearers’ social position’.³⁰ Taking this view of standardisation, we can imagine that standard languages take shape through overdetermined interactions between ‘ideas in the mind’ and conditions of ‘actual usage’. My enquiry limits its scope to the prefaces of linguistic texts as they present a fertile articulation of these very interactions. It is in the prefaces that the standardisers delineate

²⁸ James and Lesley Milroy, *Authority in Language: Investigating Standard English*, 3rd edn (London, New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 19.

²⁹ Judith T. Irvine and Susan Gal, ‘Language Ideology and Linguistic Differentiation’, in *Regimes of Language: Ideologies, Politics, and Identities*, ed. by P. V. Kroskrity (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2000), pp. 35-84 (p. 35).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

and defend their proposals for languages, leave traces of their imaginative repertoire, offer insights into the dynamics that spurred the writing of these texts and the programmes within which they sought belonging.

Communicative Praxis and Comparison

The ensemble selected for comparative close-reading in the chapters includes texts that could be deemed inadequate, erroneous, or less-than-ideal types of their technical genre. While William Bullokar's 1586 grammar was remarkable for being the first grammar of English written in the English vernacular, it was widely considered an awkward imitation of William Lily's 1540 English language grammar for Latin. Despite making occasional comments about differences between Latin and English, it did not register the divergence between them sufficiently enough to work as a competent vernacular grammar.³¹ John Gilchrist's technical achievement was measured in the way he was largely successful in assimilating the data of the Hindustani language into a European framework of grammar.³² At the same time, his inconsistent account of the language perpetuated longstanding misconceptions about its origins, definitions, and variants.³³ The dictionaries selected from the early modern period and colonial India were not designed to present an exhaustive catalogue of their respective language-object. They were derivative works, and, in their separate milieus, went beyond the genre-specific remit of setting out vocabulary in an alphabetical sequence.³⁴ George Grierson's account of modern vernacular literature of Hindustan presented a prescriptive literary history for Hindi even as it claimed to be just a compendious survey of a region's literary output. Given such imprecisions and blurring of

³¹ Hedwig Gwosdek, ed., *Lily's Grammar of Latin in English: An Introduction of the Eyyght Partes of Speche, and the Construction of the Same* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 133-39.

³² Richard Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation: John Gilchrist and the Analysis of the Hindustani Language in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), p. 92.

³³ As Alison Safadi points out, these inconsistencies related to Gilchrist's initial premise of including under one umbrella construction every variation in the continuum of the *Khari Boli* dialect of North India, a stance that led to many contradictory definitions of Hindi, Urdu, Hindustani and their relationships to one another; Safadi, pp. 53-56, 70.

³⁴ Chapter 3 in this thesis discuss how my case studies fit into a typology of lexicographic texts. See pp. 153-159.

genre-boundaries, some of these texts may be valued less for their own technical achievements and more for being pioneering specimens of genres within their respective languages groups.³⁵ However, and more importantly for this thesis, they are valuable as ‘indicators of a communicative praxis’, to borrow Johannes Fabian’s phrase. Defending his decision to give weight to amateur language manuals of Swahili as evidence for a study of language and colonial power, Fabian writes:

To begin with, it might seem problematic to give much weight to vocabularies which were mostly compiled by linguistic amateurs. I believe, however, that these documents can be read with great profit if we manage to turn their vices into methodological virtues. Almost all of these language manuals are of doubtful linguistic value. They are destined for users who have limited and very specific interests in learning Swahili. All in all, what we get are truncated descriptions of reduced variants of a variety of forms of vehicular Swahili. However, the same characteristics as make these manuals almost worthless as technical descriptions of a language provide valuable indicators of a communicative praxis. If properly interpreted they can be made to reveal what they hide and to release what they control, at least up to a point.³⁶

Fabian uses the term ‘communicative praxis’ to tell the story of an emerging praxis of colonial control in the sphere of African languages, in which attempts at ‘descriptive appropriation’ gradually gave way to ‘prescriptive imposition and control’.³⁷ As he points out, colonial linguistic scholars (including missionaries) did not approach the languages of the colony merely as foreign objects, to be studied because ‘they were there’; rather, an internal dynamics -- driven by the anxieties, needs, and paradigms of the linguists’ own

³⁵ As has been the fate of several early modern English texts in technically-minded studies such as Ute Dons’ *Descriptive Adequacy of Early Modern Grammars*, which says that Bullokar’s 1586 grammar is characterised by a ‘number of unclear or inadequate statements and is to be valued as a ‘pioneering work’. Sidney Landau’s study of lexicography sees Robert Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* 1603 as similarly pioneering, but otherwise the ‘least inspiring of all seminal works’ and, like other dictionaries of the seventeenth-century, a ‘successful act of piracy’. See Ute Dons, *Descriptive Adequacy of Early Modern English Grammars* (New York and Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2004), p. 7; Sidney I. Landau, *Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography* (New York: The Scribner Press, 1984), p. 35.

³⁶ Johannes Fabian, *Language and Colonial Power: The Appropriation of Swahili in the Former Belgian Congo (1880-1938)* (Berkeley and Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), p. 11.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

cultural situation -- vitally determined the ways in which they delimited their objects of study.³⁸ Here is an obvious resonance with the story of British encounters with the classificatory diversity of Indian languages and with their colonial construction of Hindustani. It can also usefully be applied as a conceptual lens to examine the making of early modern English in the network of its own communicative praxis in which anxieties, needs, and paradigms intersected. Prefaces to linguistic works can then be interpreted to reveal dynamics of self-determination for the linguists, their projects and patrons, and the cultural identity they sought to define.

For instance, Bullokar's rendition of English in 1586 was the first vernacular grammar for English at a time when only Latin-language grammars were extant. It applied a Latin model to English, and sought to present the worth of the latter on the basis of its grammatical compatibility with the former. In promoting English as a conduit for learning Latin, it registered that English was coming into prominence as a significant vernacular in England after previous periods of neglect with respect to the politically more dominant Anglo-Norman and French. Imitating William Lily's English language grammar for Latin, it courted the spirit of its royal endorsement by Henry VIII in 1542 that presented the English monarch as the key arbiter of quality classical education across his realm and in his own tongue. Advertising his works in London and circulating them among a coterie of learned friends, Bullokar sought commercial recognition and scholarly validation. Addressing foreign learners of English and of other vernaculars, he situated English in the growing market for language learning among merchants and cosmopolitan travellers. This project for English used extant models, engaged with rules of traditional classroom pedagogy, reflected political currents and attitudes to vernaculars, and sought widespread commercial use alongside patronage and recognition.

³⁸ Ibid.

John Gilchrist's identity as a dilettante linguist, politically-minded academic, and a stockholder in the East India Company informed his project for Hindustani, which represented a confluence of elements in the emerging praxis of British engagement with Indian vernaculars. His grammar, dictionary, and language-learning primers were designed to help British administrators and military officers to learn the tongue they would most commonly encounter in their communication with the natives. By fixing the nomenclature of Hindustani, he sought to stabilise it as a recognisably universal colloquial medium among its own community of users. Displaying its sophistication, he extended the fascinated spirit and rigour of William Jones-led philological orientalism into the domain of functional language-learning. Distancing the Hindustani of his rendition from its description as a crude jargon in popular language primers of its time, he set his own work as separate from other 'incompetent' foreign linguists of Indian vernaculars. Seeking to minimise dependence on unreliable local informants and translators, Gilchrist promised an effective pedagogical programme for 'practical' orientalism. Presenting it as a language potentially on a par with English, he reflected the conciliatory ideological stance of his patrons' orientalist inclinations. He gave Hindustani a hypothetical international role by suggesting that it could participate in English and Latin linguistic debates. His arguments about its lineage and horizon showed channels of influence from eighteenth-century British Anglophone linguistics as well as comparative philology.

Like Bullokar's and Gilchrist's grammars, the prefaces of dictionaries and literary evaluations open a window into elements of the 'communicative praxis' -- the needs, anxieties, paradigms, and their strategic emendations -- of the first works seeking to construct modern English and Hindustani.

Further, I read the two sets of texts together by associating them strategically with respect to the patterns of resemblance between them. This association does not aim to show chains of influence between antecedent and subsequent events or to project a

developmental arc from early modern England to colonial India, from English to modern standard Hindustani. It is a mutual exploration of rhetoric that follows the tracks of one ubiquitous mode: comparison. This enquiry is twofold. I attend to the heuristic uses of comparison within a set of texts, and assess the two compared moments in the light of each other.

This association between early modern England and colonial India is not entirely arbitrary. It takes its lead from a discernible type of cross-cultural comparison made by nineteenth-century colonial linguists, in which the early modern past of England helped mount arguments about the history, horizon, sociolinguistic composition, and the character of the reformist apparatus for ‘Hindustani’ and its cognates. Documenting comparisons aims to interpret the purposes served by English early modernity in the colonial construction of Hindustani. Taking a comparative view of early modern England through the lens of its later reception aims to re-describe elements of the discourses of standardisation in the former. Before explaining the construction and potential value of my own cross-reading, I present the key forms, uses, and contexts of comparison with respect to which I assess the rhetorical repertoire of my selected texts.

It is possible to see the comparative reflexes of the texts featured in the chapters drawing from a host of modalities with differentiated or connected lineages in the early modern period and the nineteenth century. As per the *Oxford English Dictionary*, to compare is ‘to mark or point out the similarities and differences of (two or more things)’; ‘to bring or place together (actually or mentally) for the purpose of noting the similarities and differences;’ and ‘to vie with, rival’.³⁹ These definitions foreground that acts of comparison entail purposeful association in terms of resemblance or difference, and the element of competitiveness undergirding such ‘actual or mental’ associations. Comparison (and its semantic web of analogy, contrast, correspondence, or association) has been a common

³⁹ ‘compare, v. 1’, *OED Online*, June 2018 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37441?>> [accessed June 28, 2018].

mode of enquiry, understanding and interpretation, whether or not it has been adopted as a self-conscious theoretical stance or rhetorical practice.

Comparativist reflexes of early modernity

Comparative historiographical topoi from medieval Europe --*Translatio imperii* and *Translatio studii* -- had been persistent frameworks for much of the cultural self-fashioning in early modern Europe, informing conceptions of theology, empire and animating the very metaphor of the 'Renaissance'. This comparativist mode enabled a vision of history in which the locus of political and cultural power in a Europe-wide arena shifted from one state or culture to another. If the *translatio imperii* represented movement of imperial power across regions, *translatio studii* represented the shifts in centres of learning from the Greece and Rome of antiquity to contemporary Europe. In his wide ranging study of the history of the humanities, James Turner argues that the 'use of comparison to highlight similarities and differences in objects of study is ancient and perhaps universal', and adds that philologists had been the 'most numerous, obstinate, thoroughgoing practitioners' of the comparative method even before it was codified in nineteenth-century disciplines.⁴⁰

Following Turner, the period between the so-called late Middle Ages and the late seventeenth century can be characterised as having a discernible spirit of the age across Europe, which saw domains of intellectual inquiry expand and change character.

Comparison was a widespread reflex both of humanist scholarship and in the practical domains of communication driven by an increase in intercultural contact. It was also a tool serving religious and political rhetoric in the rivalrous world of emergent early modern States and the divergences brought on by the Reformation.

Generally speaking, humanist intellectual culture of the European Renaissance was interested in the revival, emulation, as well as emendation of the rhetoric of antiquity.

⁴⁰ James Turner, *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. xiv.

Antiquarian fascination with the past also spurred a differentiated understanding of the broadly classical universe, its chronologies, and the varieties of its civic and rhetorical models.⁴¹ Having become a key contested ground during and in the wake of the Reformation, biblical exegesis became a field of play for competitive hermeneutic moves propelled by specific politico-religious imperatives.⁴² Chronologies, chronicles, antiquarian research into national pasts, and chorographies served the establishment of States and memorialisation of regimes.⁴³ In sum, an ‘internal dynamic of erudition’, tempered by political and religious motives, mobilised the early modern comparative mode.⁴⁴ If the present was understood in terms of the past, various differentiated pasts were also assessed against each other.

Another kind of comparativism grew prominent in the face of a polymath expansion of domains of enquiry beyond scripture and the classics.⁴⁵ The ‘intellectual imperialism’ of the period—to use Turner’s phrase—was typified by a capacious curiosity aided by the eventful expansion in commercial, diplomatic, and missionary activity beyond the Continent.⁴⁶ In all these learned pursuits, Turner writes, ‘history usually played some role—whether the history of languages, of nations, or of the biblical text—while comparison provided a common method—whether comparing tongues, customs, or manuscripts’.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 34.

⁴² If the first keeper of the Bodleian Library at Oxford claimed in 1602 that it was to ‘beate the Papists with the forcible weapon of Antiquitie’, the papists of the Bibliothèque du roi in Paris gathered manuscripts to counter the rebel Protestants. ‘The Reformation’, Turner writes, ‘made erudition a weapon of war’ (Ibid., p. 48).

⁴³ As Richard Helgerson has argued, all English writing in the sixteenth century, irrespective of genre, was engaged with a transition into nationhood, and posited definitions without necessarily ever reaching a consensus. Diverse groups of writings -- ranging from poetry, propaganda, plays and linguistic works -- all ‘wrote England’, which itself was a variable object of representation. See Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 5.

⁴⁴ Turner, *Philology*, p. 48.

⁴⁵ As historicised by Turner, this trend took root in the wake of the Reformation and saw the emergence of a ‘polyhistor’ scholar as exemplified by a German author of a text from 1578, which includes in the purview of philology the study of linguistic matters, aphorisms, proverbs, fables, histories, chronology, significant people, rivers, mountains, landscape, cities, morals, the cultures of peoples and races, religious rituals. Everything, in short, that was to be found in ‘good authors’ (Ibid., p. 49)

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 49.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 63-4.

As the sixteenth century progressed, English trade and diplomacy in the Levant, and subsequently the East Indies, extended the range of linguistic and cultural material available to the inquiring disposition. These encounters supplied material for early modern ‘orientalist’ scholarship and generated complex representations of a range of cultural identities.⁴⁸ The so-called English Renaissance, for instance, has been evaluated as a vibrant period of cultural and intellectual exchange within Europe,⁴⁹ and between the West and the East.⁵⁰ Writings by travellers, intermediaries, and other cultural go-betweens from the East and the West constructed one in the mirror of the other.⁵¹ Following Stephen Greenblatt, it has become possible to take a view that the aesthetic and rhetorical construction of early modern identity through acts of ‘self-fashioning’ was ‘the ideological product of the relations of power in the particular society’.⁵² The self-fashioned public behaviour and the authorial self-representation of a class of people in sixteenth-century English society, Greenblatt suggests, was typically structured in terms of an internalised encounter and conflict between an authority (configured as a divine, institutional, or aesthetic hierarchy representing desirable order) and its ‘alien’ other (characterised as the chaotic, false, or negative foil to order).⁵³ In the light of the above discussion, we can hold that acts of comparison were significant to self-fashioning in early modern England in many ways. This comparativism emphasised similarity or difference, and implicated a range of others

⁴⁸ Donna Landry has shown that early modern English representations of the Ottoman Empire displayed a ‘proto-orientalism’, in which ambivalent representations of the Ottomans as exceptionally barbaric as well as strangely civil testified to English imperial aspiration, to an anxiety of belatedness, and, to employ Gerald MacLean’s term, imperial envy; Donna Landry, ‘Said before Said’, in *Debating Orientalism* ed. by Ziad Elmarsafy, Anna Bernard and David Atwell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 55-72 (p. 58-65).

⁴⁹ See essays in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Andreas Höfele and Werner von Koppenfels (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

⁵⁰ See Gerald MacLean, ed., *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); *Cultural Encounters between East and West*, ed. by Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2005); Jane Grogan, *The Persian Empire in English Renaissance Writing, 1549-1622* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art between East and West* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); essays in *The English Renaissance, Orientalism, and the Idea of Asia*, ed. by Debra Johanyak and Walter S. H. Lim (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁵¹ See, for instance, essays in *Indography: Writing the “Indian” in early modern England*, ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Nabil Matar, *Europe through Arab Eyes, 1578-1727* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

⁵² Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 256.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

contemporary or ancient, collaborative or agonistic, desirable or undesirable, found within and outside texts.

The comparative method of late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

As a systematic theoretical stance, a comparative method took decisive shape in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the context of knowledge-production in this period, acts of comparison acquired a somewhat different inflection from those discussed in the previous section.⁵⁴ As Devin Griffiths summarises, the method:

which analyses two or more systems of relation for common patterns and distinctions (usually identifying these patterns as products of either a shared genealogy or shared responses to specific historical conditions), emerged in the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century as the preeminent method for finding commonalities across an extraordinary range of aesthetic, social, and scientific fields of research, from philology to anatomy, from geology to sociology.⁵⁵

At the turn of the eighteenth to nineteenth century, comparativism had emerged as the dominant method of cultural and intellectual enquiry across a range of disciplines influenced by William Jones's landmark hypothesis of a 'common source' of Indo-European languages and its enthusiastic reception by intellectuals on the Continent.⁵⁶

Though similarities between Sanskrit and European languages had been noticed by

⁵⁴ For an account of the history and prehistory of the nineteenth-century comparative method, see Devin Griffiths, *The Age of Analogy: Science and Literature between the Darwins* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), pp. 1-20, p. 30. As rhetorical forms and modes of organising knowledge, Griffiths points out, 'comparison' and 'analogy' had differentiated histories that came together in the late eighteenth-century disciplinary turn towards the 'comparative method'. Broadly, analogy was understood as a strategy of finding similarity or resemblance; in Michel Foucault's influential account, it was the characteristic mode of organising knowledge and representation in the early modern or 'Renaissance episteme'. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things, An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1970). Comparison was more often used to describe contrasts in writings such as judicial proceedings, the rhetoric of blame, in the sub-genre of 'comparison tracts' in seventeenth-century England. It remained a popular format for printed criticism until at least the 1800s. In later uses, the two terms were used interchangeably such that the comparative method included in its ambit both similarity and contrast. See Devin Griffiths, 'The Comparative Method and the History of the Modern Humanities', in *History of Humanities* 2.2 (2017), 473-505 (p. 475, n. 6).

⁵⁵ Griffiths, 'The Comparative Method', p. 474.

⁵⁶ Ibid.; Turner, *Philology*, pp. 125-46.

European missionaries and merchants in the sixteenth century, Jones was the first to marshal the observed resemblances into a cohesive speculation of universal import.⁵⁷ This brought about changes in the objects and purpose of comparativism in language study. The objects of comparison were no longer just individual languages, their diachronic variants, or other closely related tongues, but a diverse set of seemingly unrelated languages and their cultural worlds.⁵⁸ The goal was no less than finding the common fount of human civilisation itself. Comparison triggered the universalist hypothesis, gave its method, and the resemblances so recovered became its confirmation. Projects of linguistic comparison gained a character that was both descriptive and inventive. As Tony Crowley writes:

By comparing distinct elements and forms the new ‘science of language’ imposed historical order and constructed a history: which is to say that comparative philology started with analysis of the disunited elements solely in order to restore them to an ordered totality.⁵⁹

Jones’s universalist paradigm and intellectual labours found institutional validation in the milieu of late eighteenth-century British colonialism in India.⁶⁰ Bengal’s governor-general, Warren Hastings, was an enthusiastic proponent of scholarship about India as a tool of empire as well as a fruitful realm of knowledge; these two programmes, like Britain’s imperial and cultural missions in India, were deeply imbricated (in different ways) through the course of the British rule.⁶¹ As a companion to Sanskrit-focused Indology, eighteenth-century comparative philology both informed European imperial paradigms of the East, and triggered transformations in the Eurocentric republic of letters such as the emergence

⁵⁷ In 1583, English Jesuit Thomas Stephens and Italian merchant Filippo Sassetti had noticed and documented similarities between Sanskrit and European languages; Giulio Lepschy (ed.), *History of Linguistics, Vol. IV: Nineteenth Century Linguistics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 61.

⁵⁸ Apart from positing a common proto Indo-European ancestry for a vast set of languages, Jones’s early speculations posited likenesses between Greek, Roman, and Hindu gods, which were later extended to gods of Egypt, China, Persia, Syria, and other lands, including old northern Europe and some of the southern kingdoms, islands, and even parts of America. These, he argued, pointed to a common origin of all these religions; See Turner, *Philology*, p. 96.

⁵⁹ Crowley, p. 16.

⁶⁰ Jones came to India as a judge on the Bengal Supreme court and was a pioneering member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, first organised as a group of Indophile British men who met in Calcutta in 1784 to begin enquiries into the history, antiquity, arts, sciences, and literatures of Asia. This would be the first organisation in the world dedicated entirely to studies of Asia (Turner, *Philology*, p. 94)

⁶¹ Chapter 2 of this thesis contains a brief discussion on the ideologies of colonial education policy.

of national literatures and languages, the idea of ‘world literature’, and new academic specialisations in university departments and scholarly networks.⁶² The ‘oriental Renaissance’⁶³ also framed a compelling and influential topos: Indian antiquity was ‘discovered’, and its present ‘invented’ in the process of the European colonial encounter of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶⁴

Though Europe’s fascination and contact with the East had long preceded the eighteenth century, it reached a programmatic crescendo in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Orientalist fascination, along with Whiggish and Utilitarian viewpoints, had been the predominant forms taken by colonial British historical thinking about India.⁶⁵ Seen in the mirror of ancient India, the orient was an object for Romantic preoccupation and desire, and was famously deployed to satisfy what have been called the West’s ‘psychocultural needs’.⁶⁶ India’s Hindu-Sanskrit universe presented a spiritual fount and repository; a narrative of origins, lineage, and spiritual succour were the least of its seductive offerings. Such idealisations were possible as much due to India’s enticing offerings as to its construction as an object utterly compliant with Eurocentric notions of universality. Hegel’s evocative metaphor in *Philosophy of History* envisaged the march of history as the journey of the sun from the East to the West, and thus located India on the ‘horizon of World History’.⁶⁷ Romanticising India entailed capturing it as an object of

⁶² Aamir Mufti, ‘Orientalism and the Institution of World Literatures’ *Critical Inquiry*, 36.3 (2010), 458–93; Turner, *Philology*, pp. 123–28.

⁶³ From Raymond Schwab’s characterisation of the ‘discovery’ of India in the eighteenth century as a second renaissance for Western Civilisation. See Raymond Schwab, *La Renaissance Orientale* (Paris: Payot, 1950).

⁶⁴ The premise that Europe’s colonial project invented the East by manipulating already existing knowledge and practices was the essence of Edward Said’s pathbreaking formulation of ‘Orientalism’ as the complex of processes and institutions by which ‘European culture was able to manage -- and even produce -- the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period’; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 3.

⁶⁵ The utilitarian view of history, typified by the historical work and political attitudes of James Mill and Thomas Macaulay, took a critical view of Asian civilisations under their theory of ‘oriental despotism’; Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p. 6. Mill’s history of British India was the first to periodise Indian history into the Hindu civilisation, Muslim, and British period -- a narrative that has been tremendously persistent in Indian popular imagination to this day. See James Mill, *The History of British India*, 3 vols (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1817).

⁶⁶ David Kopf, ‘Hermeneutics versus History’, *Journal of Asian Studies* 39.3 (1980), 495–506 (p. 495).

⁶⁷ Jenny Sharpe, ‘The Violence of Light in the Land of Desire; Or, How William Jones Discovered India’, *boundary 2*, 20.1 (1993), 26–46 (p. 45).

European desire, less an agent of its own history.⁶⁸ Universalist paradigms of German-Romantic provenance (such as Goethe's *Weltliteratur*) crucially depended on presumptions about European centrality; on, as Sheldon Pollock writes, 'an encounter with what was outside of, yet seemingly encompassed by, a European theory of culture as convinced of its universal truth and applicability as European power was then convinced of its universal right to rule'.⁶⁹ Jones's philological orientalism was enthusiastically received even in more localised speculative expressions of 'universal' fellowships across the world: ranging from German Romanticism's self-definitions through Sanskrit poetry and religious texts, and to fanciful Druidic speculation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Celtic and Irish antiquarianism.⁷⁰

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, the more predominant trend in language study utilised a variant of historical comparativism, which we can, in contrast to comparative philology's universal and cross-cultural tenor, characterise as insular and self-referential. As Crowley has argued, a new discourse -- 'the history of the [English] language' -- took root in Britain with more enthusiasm than did comparative philology's fascination with the history of language as such.⁷¹ Here, works about language more routinely focused on the relationship of the English language, and past and present history.⁷² An example is

⁶⁸ Sharpe describes Hegel's selective vision which saw India as simultaneously politically inert, ancient and timeless -- i.e., without or outside history -- as well as a 'wonderland overflowing with exquisite delights'. See Sharpe, p. 46.

⁶⁹ Sheldon Pollock, introduction to *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. by Pollock (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 1-36 (p. 3).

⁷⁰ For instance, British antiquarian and military surveyor Charles Vallancey undertook an investigation into the relationships between Gaelic and the languages of India. Using often dubious philological, historical, mythological, and archaeological evidence, he argued for an ultimately Eastern origin for ancient Irish civilization. Anglican orthodoxy was known to be interested in the notion of Brahminical Druids, which originated in a late seventeenth-century speculation about a common religion given by Abraham to the Druids and the Brahmins. Welsh Anglican Clergyman and Celtic scholar Edward Davies had speculated on the Indian origin of the druids both in *Celtic Researches* and in *The Mythology and Rites of the British Druids* (1809); English orientalist and Anglican apologist Thomas Maurice devoted the sixth volume of his *Indian Antiquities* (1800-1) to a treatise on the Indian origin of the Druids, which highlighted the 'striking affinity' between the religious rites in ancient British Isles with those of the Brahmins; See Colin Kidd, 'Wales, the Enlightenment and the New British History', *The Welsh History Review* 25 (2010), 209-30 (p. 230).

⁷¹ Crowley, p. 22. Crowley argues that this discourse was brought about by scholarly concerns about the state of British intellectual culture as well as by shifts in the political, economic and cultural discourses in early- and mid-nineteenth-century Britain that led linguists to pursue not language, but 'a language (English)' (for an account, see Crowley, pp. 26-42.)

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

John Free's *An Essay Towards an History of the English Tongue* (1733), which assessed the 'era' of the English language relative to ancient languages of Britain, namely the Roman (Latin), British (Welsh), the Pyntas (Pictish), Scots (Erse).⁷³ This work sought ambitiously to chronicle the history of English as a powerful composite of disparate dialects, to link the history of the language to the history of its people, and to offer 'proofs...

.... that the English is still essentially a dialect of the Saxon Tongue, -- from the radical Similitude between the names of Persons, Places, and Things; the Analogy of their ancient and modern Grammar; and from the Nature and Origin of English Poetry....⁷⁴

The point relevant to my argument here is not that the Saxon origins were given primacy -- there were positions that did not consider Englishness rooted in Saxonism -- but that proofs such as these had recourse to a rhetorical comparativism as they projected a historical consciousness and served a broadly patriotic purpose.⁷⁵

Several nineteenth-century linguistic historians in England, Crowley notes, followed in the trail set by works undertaken during the Reformation to prove the 'continuity and stability of the English church and nation'.⁷⁶ If the Anglo-Saxon language testified to the presence

⁷³ John Free, *An Essay Towards an History of the English Tongue*, 3rd edn (London: W Brown, J Williams, 1773), title page.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁷⁵ Robert J. C. Young's account has analysed the rise of Saxonism in nineteenth-century England in terms of the juxtaposition of the Saxon to the Celt, the incorporation of Celticism in an idea of an Englishness that came to include the entire empire of English-speakers. Arguing that English identity was transnational in essence, Young interprets that Anglo-Saxonism represented the 'first hyphenated identity' for England; Robert J. C. Young, *The Idea of English Ethnicity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), p. 181. As Lynne Wal Hinojosa has pointed out, the late nineteenth centuries saw competing positions between those in the so-called 'Teutonic School' who continued to promote Anglo-Saxon origins for English language and literature, and those who promoted the Elizabethan and Shakespearean origins for it; in particular, she notes, Anglo-Saxon ancestry was noticeably less valorised in works with a patriotic tenor published in the 1880s and 90s. See Lynne Walhout Hinojosa, *The Renaissance, English Cultural Nationalism, and Modernism, 1860-1920* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 185-7.

⁷⁶ Antiquarian John Leland, for instance, collected materials for a history of English writers to be incorporated into John Bale's *Illustrium Maioris Britanniae Scriptorum Summarium* (1548). In 1566, a reproduction of an Anglo-Saxon text (Aelfric's 'Easter Homily'), printed in Anglo-Saxon letters, appeared in *A Testimonial of Antiquity*. Many of such works appeared in the seventeenth century, but, Crowley notes, began to be widely recognised only in the eighteenth century (Crowley, p. 30). The continuity of this intention was acknowledged by many; George Lillie Craik, for instance, said in 1861 that Anglo-Saxon, a 'form of the national speech', had been studied by English reformers 'for evidence of the comparatively unromanised condition of the Early English Church'; G. L. Craik, *A Compendious History of English Literature and of the English Language from the*

of what was un-romanised in English religio-political character, speculations that the English language had Greek origins could speak for its affinity with classical political precepts. For George William Lemon, the ‘groundwork of our modern English tongue [was] Greek’, led to the implication: ‘as England is the land of liberty, so is her language the voice of freedom’.⁷⁷ Lemon wrote:

Others then may admire the flimsiness of the French, the neatness of the Italian, the gravity of the Spanish, nay even the native hoarseness and roughness of the Saxon, High Dutch, Belgic and Teutonic tongues; but the purity and dignity, and all the high graceful majesty, which appears at present in our modern English tongue, will certainly recommend it to our most diligent researches.⁷⁸

Anxieties of defining English identity through the question of language and in acts of comparison persisted in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century histories of the English language. The tenor of these questions and their rhetorical construction were resonant with early modern defenses of English, though they were embedded in better-defined disciplines and discourses of language study.

Contiguity of concerns apart, the early modern period was also marshalled to construct a range of identities for English language, literature, nation and empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Norman Conquest; with Numerous Specimens, vol. 1, (London: Griffin, Bohn & co., 1861), p. 33, cited by Crowley, p. 30.

⁷⁷ G. W. Lemon, *English Etymology; Or, A Derivative Dictionary of the English Language in Two Alphabets. Tracing the Etymology of Those English Words Derived from (i) Greek and Latin. (ii) Saxon and Northern Tongues* (London: G. Robinson, 1783), p. v, cited by Crowley, p. 34.

⁷⁸ Lemon, pp. 6-7, cited by Crowley, pp. 34-5. Patriotic defenses of English, which positioned it on a par with other worthy languages and cultures, were common in the sixteenth century. Some of these are documented in Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis. A notable instance is Richard Mulcaster’s statement from 1582: ‘I loue Rome but London better, I fauor Italie, but England more, I honor the Latin, but I worship the English’. Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chieflye of the Right Writing of Our English Tung* (London: T. Vautroullier, 1582), p. 254.

Early modern presences in the nineteenth-century imagination

The ‘Renaissance’ and its worlds had an active place in the nineteenth-century European imagination. It is well established that the Renaissance -- as a European cultural phenomenon, historical period, and metaphor for cultural revolutions -- was given standard shape in the nineteenth century. If the ‘discovery’ of the Italian Renaissance provided a historical model for the rebirth of culture, its English variant helped legitimise notions of the national and imperial culture whose roots, as Lynne Walhout Hinojosa writes, ‘were recovered from the sixteenth century and formulated into a coherent historical period: the Elizabethan Age (or Tudor Age or English Renaissance)’.⁷⁹ Modes of writing about cultural history, Hinojosa shows, treated Renaissance historicity as a ‘period concept’ which was embedded within a Classical-Middle Ages-Modernity scheme.⁸⁰ Applying the concept of the Renaissance to England in the sixteenth century and associating it with the reign of Elizabeth, the age of ‘discovery’, and of literary efflorescence, enabled nineteenth-century British thinkers to idealise the period as one in which intertwined ideas of a distinctly English cultural character, nationhood, and modernity took root and grew. That landmark events such as the discovery of new lands, trade routes and technologies, were broadly coincident with the retroactively-idealised classical revival has led to a compelling association of ‘the age of reconaissance with the era of the renaissance’.⁸¹ As one of the ‘enduring myths of modernity’, this idealisation, in the words of David Armitage, ‘confirmed the moderns in their modernity’.⁸² In 1880s and 90s the Elizabethan Age was idealised as the glorious age of seafaring and imperial expansion in works such as James Anthony Froude’s *Oceana, or England and Her Colonies* (1886) and *English Seamen* (1896). In the sphere of culture, John Addington Symonds’ *Shakespeare’s Predecessors in the English Drama* (1884), constructed the Elizabethan Age as an ideal and lost period of English

⁷⁹ Hinojosa, p. 4.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁸¹ David Armitage, ‘Literature and Empire’, in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century: Vol. 1 of The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. by Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 99-123 (p. 100).

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

cultural expression, in which the English language was gloriously vivid and its culture less in thrall to traditions.⁸³

The metaphor of rebirth had been attractive to cultural nationalists in England since the late nineteenth century, which saw dramatists, literary historians, and writers on culture idealise the Elizabethan age when calling for transformation of their own contemporary culture.⁸⁴ The 1880s saw the beginnings of a phenomenon in which literary historians worked to standardise the Elizabethan age as the origin of modern, national English literary culture. Promoting Shakespeare's 'Englishness', often by wresting it from Continental (often German) appropriations, became a typical move in these attempts.⁸⁵ Nineteenth-century literary histories were patriotic in the spirit of earlier historical renderings such as those of John Dryden and Samuel Johnson, but differed in their type of argument and method.⁸⁶ For instance, George Saintsbury's 1887 *History of Elizabethan Literature* located the origins of English literature in the Elizabethan Age between 1560 and 1660. 'It cannot be said with any precision', he wrote, that before that period 'there was an English literature at all'.⁸⁷ Moreover, it was the 'greatest period of the greatest literature of the world'; the English language resulting from this period had 'nearly, if not quite, equaled in perfection,

⁸³ See John Addington Symonds, *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama* (London: Smyth, Elder & co, 1884), pp. 4-7.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁸⁵ The late 1800s saw a spate of amateur Shakespeare scholarship published in many different periodicals. Published editions of the plays, including translations and retellings for children, rose exponentially between 1880 and 1910. Shakespeare was taught in more and more elementary and secondary schools; some, like actor-manager Frank Benson, took Shakespeare's plays touring in local theatres to match the school curriculum. For an account see Hinojosa, pp. 152-65; Linda Rosmovits, *Shakespeare and the Politics of Culture in Late Victorian England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

⁸⁶ As Hinojosa notes, earlier articulations of English literary history tended to occur in the context of debates between the merits of classical/ancient rules for poetry and vernacular/modern ones. In later studies, accounts of English literary history were more systematically associated with the urge to memorialise national identity, and to institutionalise cultural history by establishing English as an academic discipline in British universities (*Ibid.*, pp. 179-80). Interestingly, British orientalist attention to vernacular languages and literatures of India in the East India Company's training institution at Calcutta (Fort William College) predated academic attention to England's own 'vernacular literature' in England. Professorships in classical and vernacular languages of India were established at the time of the Fort William College's inception in 1800; the first professor of English literature in England was appointed to the University College, London in 1828 even though the subject continued to be taught alongside classical studies, rhetoric and composition until 1839. See Vinay Dharwadker, 'Orientalism and the Study of Indian Literatures', in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 158-88 (p. 165).

⁸⁷ George Saintsbury, *A History of Elizabethan Literature* (London: MacMillan, 1887), pp. 446-47, cited by Hinojosa, p. 189.

while it was much exceeded in bulk and length of flowering time, the produce of Greece'.⁸⁸ Histories of language, literature, and national-cultural identity were linked in projects such as these. In 1869, the headmaster of the City of London School, Edward Abbott, proposed that that English language-use would be standardised by studying the best in English literature and published a school textbook titled *A Shakespearian Grammar: An Attempt to Illustrate Some of the Differences between Elizabethan and Modern English*. In the third edition of the work, produced in 1897, Abbott's claim had taken on a bigger ambition. 'I believe', he wrote, 'that an intelligent study of English is the shortest and safest way to attain to an intelligent and successful study of Latin and Greek, and that it is idle to expect a boy to grapple with a sentence of Plato or Thucydides if he cannot master a passage of Shakespeare or a couplet of Pope'.⁸⁹ The cautious adjectives used belied the assured confidence in the English language, and the sense that it had more than earned its place in the school classroom as a building block of erudition.

If some looked back in fascination to seek validation from tradition, others saw the early modern as the repository of the new. This association with newness was fundamental to Jacob Burckhardt's influential nineteenth-century Romanticist appraisal of the Italian Renaissance as a turbulent occasion for the birth of the modern. His statement that the 'essence of the phenomena [of the Renaissance] might have been the same without the classical revival' suggested that the aspect of revival was somehow subordinate to that of creation.⁹⁰ A sense of newness and self-discovery was so strongly associated with Renaissance that even the orientalist 'discovery' of classical Indian culture in the 18th century was termed the 'Oriental Renaissance' by European scholars.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Edward A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar: An Attempt to Illustrate Some of the Differences between Elizabethan and Modern English*, 3rd edn (London: MacMillan, 1897), p. xxiv, cited by Hinojosa, p. 182.

⁹⁰ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. by S. G. C. Middlemore (Vienna: Phaidon Press, 1878), p. 89.

Emending, by ‘Englishing’, the Renaissance was also on Matthew Arnold’s mind when he wrote *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869. Coining the word ‘Renaissance’, Arnold stated in a footnote:

I have ventured to give to the foreign word ‘Renaissance’, —destined to become of more common use amongst us as the movement which it denotes comes, as it will come, increasingly to interest us, —an English form.⁹¹

Though England had faced the events of the historical period, Arnold believed that it had not partaken of its cultural fruits. England, he wrote, had known the influence of the Renaissance mainly through the Reformation, ‘its subordinate and secondary side’ that, despite its strengths, had ‘never consciously grasped or applied the central idea of the Renaissance’.⁹² In this view, the ‘Renaissance’ was a promise of things yet to come; for the nineteenth-century British intellectual culture, it was to be the product of self-conscious acts of imbibing the spirit of the historical Renaissance.⁹³

In some quarters, the laudable nineteenth century already had imbibed the spirit of the early modern period. In 1873, historian E. A. Freeman stated that the nineteenth century represented a state in human thought comparable to early modernity:

I do not hesitate to say that the discovery of the comparative method in philology, in mythology, let me add in politics and history and the whole range of human thought – marks a state in the progress of the human mind at least as great and memorable as the revival of Greek and Latin learning. The great contribution of the nineteenth century to the

⁹¹ Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (London: Smith, Elder & co., 1869), p. 159.

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 159-60.

⁹³ As discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis, George Grierson uses the term’s Arnoldian spelling ‘Renaissance’ to describe the nineteenth-century revival in the world of Indian letters supported and encouraged by British institutions and technologies.

advance of human knowledge may boldly take its stand alongside of the great contribution of the fifteenth.⁹⁴

In 1895, Richard Burton, a proponent of the so-called ‘Teutonic school’ (that believed in the Anglo-Saxon roots of English literature), wrote an article titled ‘The Renaissance in English’, in which he said that the renaissance in literary uses of the English language belonged in the nineteenth century when past literary treasures had been revived by specialists.⁹⁵ In the Haklyut Society’s 1899 edition of Ralph Fitch’s travels, editor John Horton Ryley saw Empress Victoria’s late nineteenth century reign in India as comparable to Elizabeth’s rule in the sixteenth century:

Elizabeth died in 1603 and Akbar in 1605, but before either of these dates the systematic attempt to open up trade by the establishment of the East India Company had been launched. Further, at the end of the sixteenth century, history tells us, Akbar, in a spirit not the less magnanimous because it was crude, was trying to rule his empire on principles founded on the welfare of the vast aggregate of his peoples; at the end of the nineteenth century the Queen-Empress of England and India, in a more enlightened because more modern fashion, is engaged in the same task, but over a still wider area, in the same land.⁹⁶

This construction of the sixteenth century was one in which the Elizabethan and Mughal rulers had established trading links; the nineteenth century rule of India, Ryley implied was a modernised improvement on Akbar’s sixteenth-century rule.

Idealisations of early modernity, whether as a period in history or as the bearer of cultural paradigm shifts, served constructions of cultural and political identities in nineteenth-century England. It is not altogether surprising, then, that the texts of British linguists in

⁹⁴ E. A. Freeman, *Comparative Politics: six lectures read before the Royal Institution in January and February 1873: with, The unity of history: the Rede lecture read before the University of Cambridge, May 29, 1872* (London: Macmillan, 1896), cited in Crowley, p. 14.

⁹⁵ Richard Burton, ‘The Renaissance in English’, *Forum* 20 (1895–1896): 181–192 (p. 181), cited by Hinojosa, p. 187.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

nineteenth-century India would also find use for the historical and metaphorical repertoire offered by ‘early modernity’ as they involved their reform of Indian languages in narratives about their own cultural and political identities.

When we focus on what the prefaces have to say for themselves, an altogether inconsistent comparativism reveals itself. Documenting the way British linguists of ‘Hindustani’ construct their comparisons, as the following chapters do, makes it apparent that they were not simplistically heuristic or even along consistent chronological axes. If early modern English and eighteenth-century Hindustani were seen at similar states of their development, England and India were also seen to share coeval golden ages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. If British reformers could utilise the lessons from the early modern classical Renaissance to catalyse a colonial one in the nineteenth century, they could also imagine themselves as the new and improved Romans bringing civility and culture to barbarians. If sixteenth-century England was the source of idealised topoi of English ‘triumph’, ‘golden age’, and ‘renaissance’, it was also invoked as a period of agonism, uncertainty, and worry about the nature of English character. The comparisons took various forms: from allusions and analogies, to correspondence and contrasts. Entangled in inconsistent comparative relations, the objects of comparison themselves had a shape-shifting quality. What then can these comparisons tell us, if they only draw up an inconsistent, protean picture of the objects being compared? For one, they can lead us to ask why comparisons were being made, what purposes they were serving. Following the tracks of the inconsistent comparativism in the rhetoric of British reformers of Hindustani, in which early modern English and Hindustani in colonial India were positioned as analogues, we can draw out the complex of concerns these associations addressed in order to shed light on both historical instances of language reform.

Cross-reading: What and Why?

However sincere or comprehensive the effort of the linguistic entrepreneurs for English and Hindustani may have been, their quest for legitimation always went beyond linguistic fidelity, and sought the acquiescence of administrators, kings, markets, and mythologies. An integral part of these projects was the appropriation (or dismissal) of the others from whom separateness or strategic affinity was sought; their presence was invoked in various games of comparison. Thus, in seeking to compile the paraphernalia for an authentic tongue or a universal colloquial medium they also constructed arguments featuring tales of difference and similitude. My approach to the making of early modern English and colonial Hindustani focuses on these relational dynamics. To this end, comparison is both object and method.

This thesis began with an impulse to document potential correspondences between works of language reform in early modern England and colonial India, based on the observation that the two moments had been tied in an analogical relationship in some key colonial texts such as Gilchrist's works on Hindustani and Grierson's history of Hindustan's modern vernaculars. Gilchrist, as we shall see, painted a picture of the English language as a tongue both ravaged and enriched by foreign languages to say how it was like Hindustani, which itself had gone through a similar history of foreign accretions over a native base.

The presence of this analogy, among others, led me to wonder whether Gilchrist fashions or intends to fashion Hindustani in accordance with a received narrative about the triumph of the English language. In other words, did early modern ideas about the English language and literary culture influence nineteenth-century British linguists' approach to Hindustani? Similar questions were posed to the more layered comparativism found in Grierson's literary history. This text presented the sixteenth century as the time in which England and India shared a 'golden age' with comparable literary stalwarts; embedded Hindi's literary

history within a Classical-Middle Ages-Modernity scheme; and presented the British rulers as the catalysts for a Hindi literary ‘renaissance’ in the nineteenth century.

But upon closer reading it was apparent that Gilchrist’s invocations of early modern English did not have a salient bearing on the technical aspects of his construction of Hindustani. Rather, they seemed to function as rhetorical flourishes serving the promotional aspects of his linguistic enterprise. In any case, the analogies were based on some suspect presumptions about the origin and correspondence of these two language-complexes. The equivalences projected in Grierson’s comparisons too were not attached to a rigorously defined chronological scheme. His literary-historical narrative lacked an overarching cohesion: multiple comparative frameworks (based on timelines, typologies, or metaphorical resonance) overlapped to construct a retroactive literary lineage for the modern Hindi ‘invented’ by British facilitators. Gilchrist’s and Grierson’s prefaces were a part of a colonial context which displayed ‘competing and fluctuating logics of similarity and difference’,⁹⁷ bore primary allegiance to acquiring and mastering the ‘language of command’,⁹⁸ held ambivalent attitudes about the agential role of natives in producing their own linguistic apparatus,⁹⁹ and also involved the motives of British individuals seeking to pursue their passions or make their fortunes in the colony.

⁹⁷ To borrow a phrase from Lisa Lowe’s characterisation of the paradoxical rhetoric of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu’s Turkish Embassy Letters (1717-1718), in which English and Turkish women are likened despite the fact that the typical impulse of orientalist travel writing is to cast them as fundamentally different; Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 45.

⁹⁸ I take this phrase from Bernard S. Cohn’s reading of British knowledge-gathering about Indian languages as part of colonialism’s cultural project of control. Indian languages were constructed as European objects within grammars and lexicons produced by British officials in order to master Indian languages for issuing commands and gathering information. See Cohn, ‘The Command of Language’, pp. 16-56.

⁹⁹ The nature of interaction between ‘native’ and ‘colonial’ agency has been a matter of debate ever since colonial knowledge has emerged as a ‘central analytic category’ -- to use Indra Sengupta and Daud Ali’s phrase -- of colonial studies in the wake of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. Critiques of Indology and projects of information-gathering have accompanied more diverse interdisciplinary enquiries such as those of the Subaltern Studies Collective (which focuses on the voice and agency of the marginal, colonised subject in the colonial archive); histories of colonial empirical and investigative projects (that study the nexus between knowledge and state power); and intellectual/social histories (that focus beyond discourse analysis on the ‘local pragmatics’ of knowledge-gathering to assess its dialogic, entangled, and fragmented nature). See Indra Sengupta and Daud Ali, introduction to *Knowledge Production, Pedagogy, and Institutions in Colonial India*, ed. by Indra Sengupta and Daud Ali (Houndsmills, New York: Palgrave, Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-18; Tony Ballantyne, ‘Colonial Knowledge’, in *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, ed. by Sarah Stockwell (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), pp. 177–98; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘Can the Subaltern Speak?’, in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

Despite the lack of a strong causal relation or chain of influence between the development of English in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the colonial linguistic programme shaping Hindustani in the nineteenth century, the resonances between these two periods continued to be intriguing. This was not because of any technical character these languages might have shared with each other but in the parallels which could be found in the motive forces that drove these projects. These parallels did not just draw attention to the resemblance between the two contexts, but also lent a perspective to each of the individual contexts. Yet if the parallels were not satisfactorily contained in relationships of cause and effect, how might they meaningfully be pursued?

To pursue these parallels in a manner that side-steps the limits of explanations based on cause and effect, I follow a method of cross-reading the two moments. As the spatial metaphor of the term implies, it involves reading the two not along their own insular contexts but across each other's. Cross-reading is best described as a stance of reading one text or phenomenon in the light of another. It is a type of comparison whose aim is mutual illumination. To that end, staging a cross-reading entails: (a) selecting objects of enquiry that can be meaningfully compared for mutual insight; (b) identifying the features that render the two objects comparable; and (c) drawing upon these features to pursue relations between the compared elements that would have been sidelined were the comparison to be rooted in strictly chronological contexts and generic categories, or committed to more specialised or ideologically overdetermined schemes (for instance, nation-centric approaches to standard languages; nationalist mythography; colonial knowledge-gathering viewed exclusively through the lenses of critiques of imperialism or of local pragmatics within the colony). For this thesis, the claims of this approach are based not on

1988), pp. 271–313; Ranajit Guha, 'Dominance without Hegemony and Its Historiography', in *Subaltern Studies VI* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 210–309; Partha Chatterjee, 'Their own words? An essay for Edward Said', in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. by Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), pp. 194–220; Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987); Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge*; Eugene F. Irschick, *Dialogue and History: Constructing South India, 1795-1895* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1994); C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

documentary evidence of historical connection but on the recovery of rhetorical resemblance within the texts with respect to their practice of comparison.

For two elements from two different contexts to be cross-read meaningfully, it becomes important, as Tuula Sakaranho writes, ‘to keep one’s mind open to family resemblances between different phenomena and, with respect to these family resemblances, to get a methodological hold of the underlying processes which are at work in particular contexts’.¹⁰⁰ As she elaborates, ‘instead of confining the analysis to comparing the same variables in different contexts, such as religion and language, one can instead focus on resemblances in the dynamism of different kinds of signification processes and thereby come up with interesting findings in the way certain matters are argued about’.¹⁰¹ My cross-reading, then, follows suggestive resemblances between the two moments to focus on the shapes of the rhetorical arguments of these texts, how and why they are performed, and the discourses (beyond the linguistic) upon which they impinge. This kind of engagement aims to supplement, rather than supplant a comparison of texts from early modern England and colonial India in terms of their linguistic content or political/commercial value alone. For instance, we can note that Gilchrist’s first Hindustani grammar and Bullokar’s first English grammar both made a case to promote undervalued vernaculars on the grounds of their utility in practical and profitable domains beyond their immediate speech communities. Inquiring into Gilchrist’s analogy between Hindustani and English gives us purchase on the ideological lineaments of his nineteenth-century context and its uses of English early modernity. In turn, revisiting the development of early modern English through elements of this nineteenth-century analogy drawn in support of a ‘practical orientalism’¹⁰² gives us a

¹⁰⁰ Tuula Sakaranho, *Religious Freedom, Multiculturalism, Islam: Cross-Reading Finland and Ireland*, Muslim Minorities 6, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 81. Sakaranho’s study cross-reads attitudes to Islam in two different national contexts by analysing them with respect to the rise of multiculturalism in both societies and the idea of religious freedom in public discourse.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² To use Gilchrist’s characterisation of his own pedagogy in the title of an 1816 work evidently designed as a one-stop shop for ‘useful’ ‘oriental’ and ‘occidental’ learning: *The Orienti-Occidental Tuitionary Pioneer to Literary Pursuits, by the King’s and Company’s Officers of all Ranks, Capacities, and Departments, either as probationers at scholastic establishments, during the early periods of life, their outward voyage to the East, or while actually serving in British India...A Complete Regular Series of Fourteen Reports...earnestly*

perspective on the texts and events that make it possible for the first English grammar to make a utilitarian case for studying English as a translocal language. Though a cross-reading such as this is primarily interested in inquiring into the rhetoric of the argument rather than in corroborating its factual content, it can lead us to insights about the contextual factors that facilitate certain types of arguments. A study that thinks through resemblances can then facilitate reflection on the dynamics of the making of two languages in different national contexts.

This focus on resemblance does not impose an identity between early modern England and colonial India or serve a claim about sequential influence. It has a strategic purpose: to release the possibilities of comparison that may emerge when we attend to similitude. In that, it draws upon Susan Manning's assertion about what a comparative literary study rooted in the rhetorical field of texts can achieve.¹⁰³ She qualifies that analogies are not merely identities -- 'similarity necessarily also implied difference, as correspondence implies distance' -- before going on to elaborate:

Literary criticism offers instead the opportunity to ask questions about the nature of the bridge which similitude offers between two or more works: if all judgement is comparative, as Samuel Johnson put it, what is the 'texture' of likeness in a particular case? How is it compounded of similarity and difference, and what are the rhetorical markers of resemblance?¹⁰⁴

recommending also the general Introduction, and efficient Culture immediately, of Practical Orientalism, simultaneously with Useful Occident Learning at all the Colleges, respectable Institutions, Schools, or Academies, in the United Kingdom,...a brief prospectus of the art of thinking made easy and attractive to Children, by the early and familiar union of theory with colloquial practice, on commensurate premises, in some appropriate examples, lists, &c. besides a Comprehensive Panglossal Diorama for a universal Language and Character...a perfectly new theory of Latin verbs, (London: [n.p.], 1816).

¹⁰³ See Susan Manning, 'But is analogy argument?', introduction to *The Poetics of Character: Transatlantic Encounters 1700-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 3-54. Manning's study proposes that a comparative study of transatlantic literature is well served by bypassing nation- and genre-centric, chronological, influence-based, or causal paradigms and focusing on a rhetorical field that recasts relationships between literary works in terms of sympathy, correspondence, and analogy.

¹⁰⁴ Manning, *The Poetics of Character*, p. xiii.

Though Manning's analysis of construction and reception of character (including national character) in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and American literary works does not explicitly label itself a cross-reading, her insight about the rhetorical basis of staging comparisons is at the root of my method. Taking a position that 'history, rhetoric, poetics, and nationhood were mutually implicated in post-Enlightenment Anglophone literary history', Manning argues for:

[The] critical and comparative value of recovering underlying structures of analogy in character and correspondence in relation to ethos and practice, in particular how tropes of analogy and their narrative extension in allegory contribute to an aesthetic of 'correspondence' between texts that enables comparison in contexts not driven by models of influence.¹⁰⁵

Reading arguments from early modern England and colonial India on the basis of their own 'aesthetic of correspondence', I pursue my cross-reading, to borrow Manning's phrase, 'in terms more sensitive to literary practice than cultural or political history'.¹⁰⁶

Chapter Summaries

In the following chapters, the perspective gained from cross-reading allows for a reading of the selected texts in which both projects of standardisation are encountered as discourses animated by anxieties of self-definition at the level of author, nation, and Empire. Since its conceptual lenses are generated in the process of reflection, the method of cross-reading has a dynamic quality. In Sakaranho's characterisation, cross-reading 'constantly aims at creating new conceptual lenses as the research moves forward'.¹⁰⁷ Instead of committing itself to one particular approach 'from beginning to end', research driven by cross-reading

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 30.

¹⁰⁷ Sakaranho, p. 80.

uses its data as ‘a springboard for the formulation of new questions, and these questions will in turn operate as conceptual lenses for the next stage of analysis’.¹⁰⁸ Cross-reading then helps create an ‘argumentative plot’, where ‘every chapter can be read as an argument which in turn creates an argumentative lens for the following chapters’.¹⁰⁹

Taking its cue from Sakaranho’s sociological cross-reading, the ‘successive and cumulative’ line of reasoning created by the chapters in this thesis brings together ‘different sides as a part of the same story, which creates a kind of narrative tension for the changing scenes’.¹¹⁰

Chapter One follows the cross-cultural tracks of the trope of ‘Rome’ in the shifting self-definitions of English (and later British) imperial and cultural missions in early modern England and India. It sets the tone of this thesis as a story of national and imperial fashioning animated by inconsistent comparativism, ambivalence, and anxiety. If the subsequent three chapters look at works engaged in defining or defending the character of national or colonial tongues, this chapter explores statements that define or defend formulations of national and imperial character. It foregrounds the rhetorical uses of Rome as an exemplary model and cautionary tale whose historical and mythographical value was located variously in the ancient Republic or Empire; in evidence of its despotism or acculturating influence; or with reference to its colonisation of Britain. It served pro- and anti-imperialist agendas, engendered Romanitas as a cultural ideal, and animated the first proposals to colonise the New World in the mirror of Britain’s Roman past. The chapter shows that a qualified embrace of Rome helped fashion a mythography of nation and empire by redirecting any contradictions towards a rhetoric of the historical distinctiveness of the British Empire in India, and of the English nation as an emergent modern empire. Observing the multivalence of Rome in imperial self-fashioning indicates that imperial ideological stances can be characterised as a dynamic of reflexes rather than as static

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 82.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

positions. The next three chapters follow in this vein. The case studies focus on different facets of the linguistic enterprise: grammars, dictionaries, the building of literary canons.

Chapter Two attends to the inconsistent analogy in John Gilchrist's early grammars that forge similarities between the early modern development of English and the state of Hindustani at the turn of the nineteenth century in the context of the early colonial programmes of language pedagogy, linguistic paradigms, and ideologies. As illustrated above, annotating elements of this analogy with early modern texts and events in turn facilitates a cross-reading of William Bullokar's grammatical works in the context of the changing role of vernaculars in Latin-focused pedagogical grammars, the political fate of the English language at home, and intimations of its international significance at the close of the sixteenth century.

If the first grammar imagined placing English on a translocal, utilitarian stage, early English dictionaries negotiated the influx of non-local words into a corpus for English users. They presaged the subsequent British encounter with the Indian lexical world, and shared concerns with several dictionaries compiled by the British lexicographers in nineteenth-century India. In both, the impulse to record the new world of words was shot through with prescriptions about ways of commanding them and their users. The rhetoric of anxieties about infiltration and cultural contamination, about belonging and social access to the worlds opened up by these words, form the basis for comparing a select assortment of lexicographic works from early modern England and colonial India in *Chapter Three*.

It stages its cross-reading by means of an exploration of similarities in the way the compilers imagined and addressed their users and contexts. Reading the prefaces to bilingual and polyglot lexicographic works, and those of 'hard words' in English published between 1582 and 1623 draws attention to the ambivalence towards incoming words, unregulated coinages, specialised usage, and foreignness that was a companion to the

cosmopolitanism of an increasingly capacious English lexis. Attending to prescriptions, addressees, and purported functions gives purchase on the ways in which lexicographers traversed various political, commercial, and social realities in their bid to legislate English word-meaning and use in its territory. In particular, the attention tendered to women and the unskilled by the first dictionaries of ‘hard’ English words, and the subsequent dilution of their importance, allows us to see that these supposedly inclusive genres of works had a marginalising impetus towards the very classes they sought to benefit. In doing so, early dictionaries of English instigate what Juliet Fleming has characterised as a type of ‘colonialist discourse’ which proceeds by ‘the full exhibition of that which is to be effaced or repressed’.¹¹¹ I then read select bilingual and specialist dictionaries compiled in India between 1772 and 1886 along the locus of themes derived from the aforementioned reading of works from early modern England. This approach foregrounds the ambivalent relationships between the two cultures, addressees, and purported functions present in works that recorded the increasingly complex picture of Hindustani vernacular worlds drawn up in British eyes, including specialised pockets of British-Indian words. This reading, in turn, sheds light on the lexicographers’ perception of themselves, their patrons and projects; on the contours of the ‘colonialist discourse’ with respect to the classes and dialects valorised or afforded selective focus; and on anxieties about ways of belonging to the foreign culture whose tongue they sought to comprehend and master.

Chapter Four explores the nature of equivalences drawn between English and subcontinental cultural pasts, and the counter-chronological use of tropes in George Grierson’s *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (1889). It unpacks the implications of projecting sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and India as coeval ‘golden ages’; the Elizabethan and Mughal courts as progressive literary patrons; sixteenth-century poet Tulsidas as the Indian Shakespeare; and the British as the purveyors of a nineteenth-century ‘Renaissance’ for

¹¹¹ Juliet Fleming, ‘Dictionary English and the Female Tongue’, in *Enclosure Acts: Sexuality, Property and Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Richard Burt and John Michael Archer (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp. 290-325 (p. 295).

Hindi letters. Drawing attention to the uses of the early modern literary past, this reading speculates about the value of such memorialisations to the colonial project, and to contemporary concerns in the metropole about English national and literary character. As an epilogue, I read the preface to the 1914 Hindi poem *Priyaprasava* by Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay 'Hariaudh' as a response to Grierson's conclusions about modern Hindi poetry's shortcomings, and as a gesture symmetrical to Samuel Daniel's 1603 *Defense of Ryme* and its own announcement of English poetry's stylistic and nationalist autonomy from opinions insisting on its deficiencies.

The chapters present different aspects of an overarching theme: the strategies of linguistic entrepreneurs seeking rhetorical mastery over the languages they sought to shape within discourses of national and imperial character. The case studies inflect accounts of the early modern development of English language and British construction of colonial languages with observations about their relational assertions and anxious impulses of self-fashioning. If examining comparisons can enable insights into the motivations of standardising discourses, undertaking comparison led by patterns of similarity can throw into relief the discontinuities, ambivalence, and nonconformities marking them.

CHAPTER ONE

**Comparing Empires:
The afterlife of Rome in early modern England and British India**

In *The New Comprehensive, Impartial and Complete History of England* in 1790, Edward Barnard proposed the following relationship between the Roman Empire and the British nation:

Thus did Britain, like a young phoenix, rise into existence from the ashes of its mother. If a finite mind may be allowed to explore the intricate ways of infinite wisdom, it should seem, the Roman Empire was demolished, that the magnificent structure of British glory might be raised upon its ruins; that a nation might flourish, who should not only improve the Roman arts, but enjoy the best form of government, and the purest religion in the whole worlds.¹

In this vision, the Roman Empire was the progenitor of the British nation, and by implication, of the British Empire. The rubble of Rome's fall had provided the building blocks for glorious British structures imagined as improvements on Roman arts, government, and religion: fruits to be enjoyed by a 'flourishing' nation. Nearly a century later on August 4, 1860, British politician Richard Cobden's letter to William Hargreaves expressed concern that the potentially unsavoury domestic impact of politics in the Empire had been foreshadowed in the fate of the Greco-Roman imperial contact with Asia: 'Is it not just possible that we may become corrupted at home by the reaction of arbitrary political maxims in the East upon our domestic politics, just as Greece and Rome were demoralised by their contact with Asia?'²

These two statements were separated by an eventful century for the British Empire in India. An anxiety about the degenerative consequences of the contact between the colony

¹Edward Barnard, *The new, Impartial and Complete History of England: from the very earliest period of authentic information, and most genuine records of historical evidence, to the end of the present year* (London: Alex Hogg, 1790), p. 29.

²John Morley, ed., *The Life of Richard Cobden* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1881), p. 553.

and the metropole had now inflected Barnard's insular fantasy of national health free from foreign contamination. In 1914, James Bryce's influential study of jurisprudence contained a comparative commentary on the nature of the British Empire in India. *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India: The Diffusion of Roman and English Law throughout the World*, the study made a case for the usefulness of the analogy between the British and the Roman Empires:

When we wish to examine the methods and the results of British rule in India by the light of any other dominion exercised under conditions even remotely similar, it is to the Roman Empire of the centuries between Augustus and Honorius that we must go (p. 7).³

Read together, these statements encapsulate the qualified embrace of the idea of the Roman Empire in the British national and imperial imagination. Roman history, exempla, models and motifs were repeatedly used to reconstruct the past, understand the present, and project into the future. Its glories and follies, might and despotism, ascent and decline offered a seductive vista as well as a cautionary tale. The term 'Roman' lent itself to a variety of positions, ideologies, and institutions. For British imperial self-fashioning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, 'Rome', 'Britain' and 'India' were often the protagonist nodes structuring writings about the origins, state, and fate of the British Empire.⁴ The comparative presence of Rome in the intellectual scaffold of the British Empire could be observed through imbricated lines of questioning about the liberal, modernising ideal of modern imperialism; effects of empire on the conquerors; and the fate of the empire.

Unpleasant associations with imperial Rome were often turned to British advantage and

³ James Bryce, *The ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India: The diffusion of Roman and English law throughout the world: Two Historical Studies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914). Further references to this edition of Bryce are given after quotations in the text.

⁴ For an account of the 'mobile quality of comparativism' in British imperial attitudes to India, refracted through Rome, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see Javed Majeed, 'Comparativism and References to Rome in British Imperial Attitudes to India', in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789-1945*, ed. by Catharine Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 88-109 (p. 109).

made to serve as a 'heuristic reinforcement' in imperial thought of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵ Rome had been utilised even by those indicting imperial policy in India, and by those expressing more strident anti-imperialist and anti-ruling class sentiments, such as the Chartists.⁶

The Roman Empire was also a significant 'other' in the early modern histories of the British Isles that often relied on tales of a glorious past and worthy lineage to fashion national self-worth. Since Britain had itself been an outpost of Rome, it was unsurprising that Rome proved a fertile mine for images to construct national identity. That Britain was perceived as a Roman 'discovery' was not a fact without implications for the early modern present. Any history drawing from Britain's Roman past had to engage with images of the isles' native inhabitants as uncultured savages, which could potentially undermine its self-image as a cultured -- and acculturating -- force in Europe and the New World. In the representational strategies that consequently emerged, 'Rome', 'Britain' and the 'savages' of potential colonies interacted through projected comparisons that spun a tale of Britain's historical distinctiveness. Pre-Roman Britons were figured variously as noble savages, apt pupils for Roman tuition of civility, and valorous resisters of foreign rule.

Analogies such as those cited above were often unstable, at their most tenuous in the very unities they were trying to forge. The figure of Rome, for instance, was ready to serve a pro- or anti-imperialist agenda in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the Roman Empire could be seen as an agent of a net common good when compared to the decadent brutality of other 'tribal' oriental empires; the pre-Roman Briton could be figured as a brute savage or a noble warrior; Roman and British Empires could share typology but also be respectively different as territorial and maritime empires; contemporary India could be seen

⁵Raymond F. Betts, 'The Allusion to Rome in British Imperialist thought of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', *Victorian Studies*, 15.2 (1971), 149-59 (p. 158).

⁶ Phiroze Vasunia, introduction to *India, Greece, and Rome, 1757 to 2007*, ed. by Phiroze Vasunia and Edith Hall, Volume 108 of *Supplement to the Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2010), pp. 1-12 (pp. 2-3).

as kindred to Roman Britain or be seen as an Oriental absolute ‘other’. The inconsistent and anachronistic axes of the analogies nevertheless succeeded in fashioning a rhetoric in which the past was put to imaginative use for current political purposes.

Discussing the modes of historical representation in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English poetry, Gerald MacLean proposes three ways in which poets represented the past in analogy with the present. Synchronic ‘historical allusions’ were ‘designed to illuminate some particular aspect of a current situation by specific comparison and contrast with a comparable person or event from the past’; diachronic ‘exemplary history’ offered a comparison ‘between a discrete pattern or sequence of events that occurred in the past and one occurring in the present’; and appeals to the past operated through evaluative contrasts governed by a set of judgements assumed to be shared by readers and often utilised feelings of nostalgia or pride in past ways of life.⁷ In the set of writings from early modern England and British India featured in this chapter, similar poetic strategies of representations were at play with respect to analogies with Rome. Far from being a matter of fact, Rome (in itself and in relation to significant ‘other’ empires) was sustained as a protean trope in writings about the British Empire and its definitions through the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.⁸ In what follows, I track some distinctive ways in which the trope of Rome helped fashion a mythography of nation and empire by redirecting any contradictions and anxieties towards a rhetoric of the historical distinctiveness of the British Empire in India, and of the English nation assessing its character as an emergent modern empire.

⁷ Gerald MacLean, *Time's Witness: historical representation in English poetry, 1603-1660* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 141-42.

⁸ For the shifting importance of Greece and Rome in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British thought, see Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority: Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 231-321.

Civilisation and Nationality: Rome and Britain as unifiers

Despite the fact that they were separated in time and never shared an imperial mission, Roman and British Empires were frequently compared especially with reference to India. Imperial Rome had served as a source of inspiration and comparison, if not outright emulation. Comparisons with the ancients were most common in discourses on European classical heritage, language, law and antiquarianism. There were more apparent similarities: Roman technological bequests to its provinces (roads and walls) were replicated by the British steamships and railways in the colonies; both empires were united under a sovereign. The sheer spread of the Roman Empire had made it possible to see it as a unifying, globalising, and uniformly civilising force -- an attractive analogy for the British Empire's actions in India. Bryce's 1914 study had deemed Rome and Britain as being similar in 'acquiring and administering dominions outside the original dwelling-place of their peoples, and impressing upon these dominions their own type of civilisation' (pp. 1-2). The two were projected as occupying parallel positions of significance in the world historical order at different points in time. Modern imperialism was seen as a globalising force, bringing about a unity of mankind, in no small part due to the dominion of a few 'world languages' as vehicles of communication, and through a 'general diffusion of civilisation' (p. 3).

Historian John Seeley's description of the 'problem' of India in an influential series of lectures, *The Expansion of England* (1834-1895), made copious use of comparisons to define the unique value of the modern British Empire for India. Seeley too saw the value of the English in uniting a linguistically- and racially-diverse India. To explain why Indian languages lacked an obvious community, he compared 'Hindi' languages to the Romance languages of Europe (p. 225).⁹ Conveying that true community came from mutual intelligibility rather than structural affinity, he likened the case of North Indian vernaculars

⁹ John R. Seeley, *The Expansion of England: Two Courses of Lectures*, 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1914), p. 255. Further references to this edition of Seeley's *The Expansion of England* are given after the quotations in text.

to that of Italian and French, which despite belonging structurally together in the same language family, had not created a broader community. Foregrounding the strength of language communities formed through conquest, Bryce wrote of the spread of Greek over the coasts of the Eastern Mediterranean prior to Roman conquests. If, he said, Greek literature ‘was the basis of education, and formed the mind of the cultivated class’ (p. 65), the spread of Latin and the Vulgate had contributed to whatever unity there was among the Christian nations in the turbulent centuries of the Middle Ages. Moreover, most subjects of the Empire had the same models of poetic and prose styles from the pre-Augustan and Augustan Rome, which did much to promote an ‘imperial patriotism’ (p. 66) alongside nationalism. Bryce worried that the English in India had a tougher task at hand since they had not found a common national literature or language upon which to build a nationalistic value system coincident with imperial patriotism (p. 67).¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Roman experience had shown the value of providing an ‘education of the European type’ (p. 67) to Indians.

Seeley characterised India’s territorial unity as an almost arbitrary consequence of conquest-driven expansion, and concluded that ‘India [had] never really been united so as to form one state except under the English’ (p. 260). The role of the British Empire was, then, to infuse nationality even at a geographical level. Genealogical debts were duly paid in this account; civilisation was inherited from Europe and was a ‘product of the united labour of the European races held together and animated by the spirit of the ancient world’ (p. 278). The Romans were lauded for politically unifying and strengthening the civilisational legacies of the Greeks, for which Christianity was the ultimate cement. For Bryce, Europe was a ‘uniform type of civilisation which was Greek on the side of thought, of literature, and of art, Roman on the side of law and institutions’ (p. 3). Christianity, ‘in giving to all

¹⁰ As Chapter 4 of this thesis discusses, George Grierson’s *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (1889) had made a case for the persistence of a ‘common’ Hindi literature and ‘national’ value system, in which sixteenth-century North Indian poets had represented the subcontinent’s homespun ‘Augustan Age’.

these countries one religion and one standard of morality, created a still deeper sense of unity among them' (p. 3). British India was an exemplary case to bring home the analogy with Rome given that it was a 'single subject territory, and India is compact, governed on the same principles and by the same methods over an area not indeed as wide as that of the Roman Empire but more populous than the Roman Empire was in its palmyest days' (p. 5). The British Empire in India, then, would do well to model itself on the Romans in the days of 'Augustus and Honorius' (p. 7).

Genealogical Legacies: Romans in Britain, British in India

The question of Roman lineage of the Britons was a significant component of nineteenth-century writings on Roman Britain: H. C. Coote's *The Romans of Britain* (1878) and H. M. Scarth's *Early Britain, Roman Britain* (1882), incorporated scientific theories into their accounts of Roman Britain to support the idea that the Romans were the biological ancestors of modern Britons.¹¹ Contemporary Britain was often identified with ancient Rome; the Romans were believed to have brought 'civility' to the barbaric Britons. Some insisted on the congruence between the Roman imperial ethic and the logic of modern empire, on the grounds of the preceding experience of Roman Britain. In 1897, Bertram Windle wrote that a comparison had justly been made between 'the Roman occupation of Britain and our own occupation of India, for in both cases the 'intention of the conquering race has been, whilst firmly holding the dominions of which they have become possessed, to interfere as little as possible with the natives so long as they were content to submit quietly to the demands of their conquerors'.¹²

¹¹ Richard Hingley's study of Roman archaeology in late-Victorian and Edwardian Britain offers an insightful account of the way images from the impact of classical Rome on ancient Britain helped define ideas of imperialism and Englishness. See Richard Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen: The Imperial Origins of Roman Archaeology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

¹² Bertram Windle, *Life in Early Britain: Being an Account of the Early Inhabitants of this Island and the Memorials which they have left behind them* (London: D. Nutt, 1897), p. 11.

Yet another mode of figuration projected identification between Ancient Britain and contemporary India.¹³ In *Researches into the Ecclesiastical and Political State of Ancient Briton under the Roman Empire* (1843), Rev. Francis Thackeray saw third-century Britain as comparable to the state of Hindostan when it was first subject to the English.¹⁴ S. R. Gardiner's children's history *Outline of English History* (1887) also endorsed the parallel by suggesting that the Romans treated the British like the nineteenth-century British had treated the people of India.¹⁵

The Romano-British past was often invoked to establish racial elitism, even inflecting nationalist expressions of 'Englishness'. Not only were the Romans seen as being culturally aligned to English elites, they were seen as the racial ancestors of nearly all Britons, especially modern Englishmen. This was exemplified in Egyptologist Arthur Weigall's comparison: '[T]he Cockney of to-day is as much Roman as he is anything else'.¹⁶ In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the issue of national origins came to be focused upon a series of representations, which argued that the English imperial spirit was derived from a mixed genetic inheritance, including ancient Britons, classical Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Danes.¹⁷ Images of an English racial inheritance derived from the Romans appeared to have gained in popularity between the 1890s and the 1920s, taking precedence over other origin myths.¹⁸ This narrative of inheritance drew upon the fact of Roman imperial conquest, but also foregrounded the native Britons' valorous resistance to it. Writings on

¹³For an account of British parallels between Britain's colonial past as an outpost of Rome and its own colonisation of India, see Richard Hingley, 'The Roman occupation of Britain and our own occupation of India', in *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906: A Colony So Fertile*, Oxford Studies in the History of Archaeology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 238-325.

¹⁴ Francis Thackeray, *Researches into the Ecclesiastical and Political State of Ancient Britain under the Roman Emperors. With Observations on the Principal Events and Characters Connected with the Christian Religion during the First Five Centuries: Volume I* (London: Thomas Cadell, 1843), p. 213, cited by Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906*, p. 270.

¹⁵ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *Outline of English History B.C. 55 to A.D. 1886*, rev. edn (London: Longmans, Green & Company, 1892), p. 3.

¹⁶ Arthur Weigall, *Wanderings in Roman Britain* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1926), p. 80 cited by Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, p. 105.

¹⁷ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, pp. 86-89.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

archaeology supported the notion of racial continuity between the Romans and the Britons, implying that a heterogeneous Romano-British civilisation was passed on to the English, which led directly to the modern state of Britain.¹⁹ As such, the natives of pre-Roman England were seen to have adopted and improved upon the Roman civilisation, even as they had in resistance displayed a brave native spirit. Speculating on the post-Roman history of Britain in *Roman Britain* (1923), archaeologist and philosopher R. G. Collingwood suggested that a Romano-British race had survived the Anglo-Saxon invasion, and had since flourished:

Can we go further and claim for ourselves a real kinship with Romanized Britons, as the modern French rightly claim continuity with the Romanized Gauls? It may seem fantastic, but I cannot resist the impression that the qualities in Romano-British art are qualities especially English, qualities re-expressed in all the great English artists and valued by English people more than others. The civilization vanished, but the race remained, and its character, I venture to think, has reassessed itself – mental and physical character alike.²⁰

England was seen as having inherited the best of the Romans and the Saxons, engendering a distinct character that blended Roman love of good governance with the self-reliance of seafaring Saxons. Even those who dismissed a necessary racial connection between the English and the Romans acknowledged the inheritance of spirit, and of an imperial ideal.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 107-08.

²⁰ R. G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), p. 101 cited by Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, p. 97.

²¹ Hingley, *Roman Officers and English Gentlemen*, p. 100; The discourse of race with respect to India did not just look to establish divergence between Indians and the European races. Similarities between Greco-Roman and South Asian classical antiquity was the premise for William Jones' doctrine of an Indo-European common-source; the notion of shared ancestry in this doctrine gave rise to a Sanskrit-centric 'aryanism' was to prove fundamentally divisive. For an account of Aryanism in the British orientalist policies in India, see Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 18-55.

Imperial Contrasts: Counterparts, rivals, and amendments to Rome

The filial sympathy between Britain and Rome allowed Seeley to seek another type of analogy: as the Roman Empire was one of ‘civilisation over barbarism’ (p. 282), the British Empire in India was ‘the empire of the modern world over the medieval’ (p. 282). The ‘medieval’ here referred to the Ottoman and Mughal Empires of the ‘Great Turk’ and the ‘Great Mogul’ (p. 277) conquerors. Seeley warned that any identification with these could cause one to mis-classify the historical significance of British rule. He urged classifying the English conquest of India among the European and not Asian conquests: the Greek conquest of the East, and the Roman conquest of Gaul and Spain, ‘and not along with those of the Great Turk and Great Mogul’ (p. 277). To identify with the latter was to be misled by ‘splendour and magnitude’, which belonged to ‘the history of barbarism rather than to that of civilisation’ (p. 277). Seeley drew clear demarcations between civilising European conquests and decadent Oriental ones. Assessed within this network of contrasting empires, the British Empire in India needed to establish clearly its allegiances.

Far from the simplistic role they served in Seeley’s rhetoric, the Ottomans, Mughals, and the Persians had been significant figures for national and imperial fashioning in early modern England and Britain. As MacLean and Nabil Matar have shown, the Islamic world and its empires were received in the early modern English imagination in ways wide-ranging and heterogeneous.²² They were not agonists always and everywhere, were often

²² As MacLean and Matar note, the contact between the Islamic world and Western Europe in the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries ranged across territories of the Ottoman, Persian, and Mughal empires, and the North African regencies. Reports from and reactions to these entities depended on the power relationships emergent through the course of the century corresponding to the shifts in the nature of British commercial, military, and diplomatic clout in these regions. Further, there were geographical, commercial, and ideological distinctions between the key sources of information about the respective regions (the Levant and East India Companies in the Eastern Mediterranean and Indian Ocean worlds; or factors, consuls, and released captives of Barbary pirates in the North Africa.) Presumptions about the ‘Turk’ marked by fear and hostility were distilled from Greco-Roman and biblical sources, prejudiced memories of the Crusades, and more contemporary European writings in the wake of military confrontations between the Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Captivity narratives of Britons about Barbary pirates and Islam furthered a terrorising, violent antagonism. Writings from Persia and India were significantly less polarised on religious grounds and showed a more fascinated, conciliatory aspect focused on trade and diplomacy. Plays and sermons did not denounce Mughal and Safavid rulers as they did the ‘Grand Turk’. The nature of engagement and contest also varied: no naval or military force was used by the Levant Company to pursue its goals in the Ottoman

courted as diplomatic and commercial allies in the present, and even furnished encouraging examples of empires past. As Jane Grogan's study has demonstrated, the Persian Achaemenid empire of antiquity and its founder Cyrus II vitally influenced the English imperial imagination in the sixteenth century.²³ Persia's significant rank among the empires of classical antiquity was exemplified, for instance, in Joannes Philippon's list of principal empires in *Briefve Chronicle of the foure principall Empyres To wit of Babilon, Persia, Grecia and Rome* (1568). So long as English imperial fantasies remained decisively rooted in models from antiquity, qualified identifications with Persia were deployed along much the same lines as those with Rome. Grogan shows how Renaissance ethnography decreed the English and Persians as hardy northern races with a common ancestor; medieval reports of Persian pride, wealth and luxury were countered by 'classical counter-narratives' of Persian 'temperance and frugality' to match the stereotype associated with said 'northern' races; chorographers and chronicles located ancient Persia in biblical time; and some radical Protestants linked Protestant England to ancient Eastern Empires of Assyria and Persia to appropriate the historiographical trope of *translatio imperii* in favour of England as the next worldly empire.²⁴ English translations of Greek texts of Cyrus' Persia – especially Xenophon's *Cyropedia* – were popular and helped shape humanist thought. Its story of Cyrus leading a barbarian people to great wealth and imperial might proffered an enticing example of a monarchical empire outside the long shadow of Rome. A 'barbarian' Persia, Grogan writes, 'offers an England embarrassed by its own barbarism an appealing alternative to Rome, and a reason to imagine a new imperial history for itself to exorcise its colonial past'.²⁵

The fascinated focus on ancient Persia offered a safe distance from ancient Rome and also from contemporary Safavid Persia, with whom commercial and diplomatic ties were

Mediterranean, while North Africa saw a series of failed and successful British and French military action through the seventeenth century, and the East India Company in India had set up garrison towns controlled by military governors as early as 1650s. See MacLean and Matar, pp. 1-12.

²³ See Grogan, pp. 1-69.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

maintained. Ancient Persia was much admired by educated English and British humanists in the period between 1549 and 1622, in spite of the relatively slow diplomatic and commercial relations between England and contemporary Safavid Persia. By the end of the sixteenth century, the Ottomans, England's new trading partners, displaced Cyrus' ancient Persia as the 'cipher of imperial fantasy and possibility', just as a new paradigm of commercial and maritime empires came gradually into prominence.²⁶

Writing in 1883, Seeley's selective appropriation of the interactions between the Christian West and the Islamic East displayed little memory of the early modern appropriations of Cyrus' Persia. His contrast between the genteel tutelage of civilisation and the brute logic of conquest used the Roman Empire as a foil to the Persian and Mongol empires. He exemplified the difference between conquest and civilisation by using 'Cyrus' and 'Zingis' Khan as metonyms for a 'typical conqueror' (p. 276). 'A great conquering race', he wrote, 'is not usually advanced in civilisation. The typical conqueror is some Cyrus or Zingis Khan — that is, the chieftain of a hardy tribe, which has been steeled by poverty and is tempted by plunder' (p. 276). This juxtaposition was a far cry from the admiring reception of the Achaemenid Empire in the early modern period. Invocations of the empire of Persia now served to illustrate the historical demarcation between the Occident and the Orient, civility and barbarism, and the values of temperance and excess.

Seeley's framing of the comparison in his lectures appeared to be a detailed instruction on how to compare. If it had to preserve its own reputation for posterity, any contemporary account of the British Empire had to be careful when forging identification with previous historical actors. While ancient empires had equipped Britain with the superiority necessary to 'civilise' in the manner of its own precedent, the idiom of the new empire had to be significantly, if subtly, distinct. Insisting on the need to review the outlook of rule by conquest, Seeley remarked: 'For we are not really conquerors of India, and we cannot rule

²⁶ Ibid., p. 11.

her as conquerors' (p. 271). Rome, again, marked the call for caution by illustrating the self-destructive nature of subversion: '[h]ad England as a state undertaken to subvert the Empire of the Great Moghul, she would have destroyed her own constitution in the process, no less than Rome did by the conquest of Europe' (p. 286).

It was not unusual for medieval and early modern empires in the West to see themselves in the image of Rome. The Holy Roman Empire had seen itself as an extension of the Roman Empire in the West, which was both counterpart and rival to the Byzantine Roman Empire in the East.²⁷ The new generation of Western empires that emerged after the decline of the Holy Roman Empire and the fall of Constantinople too aspired to the Roman Empire and its grand reputation. This was true, for instance, of the Spanish empire, the Christian terms of whose mission allowed it to identify with the idea that the Roman Empire was the chosen vehicle for the spread of Christianity.²⁸ The British Empire in the eighteenth century had projected a legacy of being 'Protestant, commercial, maritime, and free' in an obvious contrast to its continental rivals like the Catholic Spaniards.²⁹ The Romans provided a model here too. Bryce had drawn parallels between the transformative role played by Romans in early modern Europe and the English in late-Mughal India, respectively:

Let anyone think of the general state of the ancient world before the conquests of Rome, and let him then think of the condition not merely of India after the death of the Emperor Aurungzeb, but of the chief European countries as they stood in the seventeenth century, if he wishes to appreciate what Rome did for her subjects, or what England has done in India (p. 22).

Though the ancient empires were a persistent presence in modern European political

²⁷ Krishan Kumar, 'Greece and Rome in the British Empire: Contrasting Role Models', *Journal of British Studies* 51 (2012), 76–101 (p. 77).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 173.

thought, they were not always the undisputed primary historical templates for modern ‘empire-thinking’. Evaluating the purport of a majority of nineteenth-century British political thought, Duncan Bell suggests that the overwhelming tendency in elaborating visions of empire was to eschew Greek and Roman models, and look instead towards America as a ‘constructive template for the future’.³⁰ This turn away from the past represented a self-conscious break from older modes of imperial argument, and an increasing predilection for a progressive view of history in which a society and polity could learn from the past but were not fated to repeat its mistakes. The fate of the Roman Empire had done much to support the view that empires were necessarily ‘self-dissolving’.³¹ Imperial declension had been a key theme in popular works of a historically-conscious age such as Edward Gibbon’s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–88) and Baron de Montesquieu’s *Considerations on the Causes of the Grandeur and Decadence of the Romans* (1734).³² For the modern history of imperial Britain to transition into a narrative of a progressive world order, Britain had to be seen as ‘yoked to the idea of progress’.³³ Visions of a disintegrating empire were of particular concern after the British began losing American colonies in the 1750s. While British territories abroad had gradually expanded in the seventeenth century, thirteen American colonies were lost between the 1750s and 1780s, triggering concerns about the empire’s decline. Since the later eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, the character of the Roman Empire, especially its despotic nature, was a problematic feature with which any identification had to contend.

The unease between the ideals of liberty and empire was also foregrounded as a consequence of the political liberalism on the rise in nineteenth-century Britain.³⁴ The

³⁰ Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 208.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Kumar, ‘Greece and Rome in the British Empire’, pp. 76-77.

³³ Bell, p. 209.

³⁴ For an account of nineteenth-century British liberalism see Richard Bellamy, ed., *Victorian Liberalism: Nineteenth-Century Political Thought and Practice* (London: Routledge, 1990); an insightful discussion on the crisis of liberalism in the later years of the British Empire in India can be found in Thomas Metcalf, ‘Liberalism and

modern British Empire, it was often insisted, was driven less by the brute militarism and profiteering that ailed ancient and medieval empires and more by loftier ideals of civilisation and pragmatic concerns of territorial unification. For the modern British Empire, civility was often projected as the very principle of empire rather than its by-product.

Calibrating distance between Roman and British Empires

Championing the virtues of British imperial rule in its colonies, James Froude's 1886 account of travels through Australia, New Zealand, America, and South Africa summoned a multi-faceted comparison with Rome, '[b]y its intellect, by its character, by its laws and literature, by its sword and cannon, it [Britain] has impressed its stamp upon mankind with a print as marked as the Roman'.³⁵ Britain's impact on these colonies was seen as a military, political, and cultural dominion, and associated with an idealised vision of the Roman legacy to posterity. Charles P. Lucas offered a more calibrated comparison in which the Romans and British were kindred yet also markedly different. Though 'the Romans and British alike had an innate capacity for ruling which grew by use', Lucas wrote, their empires were structurally dissimilar:

[...] the Roman Empire was one, that the British Empire is two in one; that each of the two halves of the British Empire contains the most diverse elements; that one half is a political structure which has no common ground whatever with the Roman Empire and cannot be compared with it in any way; that the other half admits of comparison but still more of contrast.³⁶

Empire', in *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 28–65. For an assessment of British imperial ideologies between early and later years of the nineteenth century in terms of the gradual repudiation of liberalism as the moral justification for the empire see Karuna Mantena, *Alibis of Empire: Henry Maine and the Ends of Liberal Imperialism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), pp. 21–55.

³⁵ James A. Froude, *Oceana, or, England and Her Colonies* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1886), p. 392.

³⁶ Charles P. Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), pp. 154–55.

The notion that the British Empire was two empires in one referred to the fact that it was not, like the Roman Empire had been, territorially contiguous. It supported the view held by many imperialists that Britain's transoceanic empire had had two distinct limbs: the English-populated dominions and a 'subservient tropical empire', each of which had different political structures.³⁷ The two were separate in time as well as character, allowing them to be characterised as the 'first' (maritime, commercial, settled in by British migrants) and the 'second' empire (of military conquest). As Armitage has noted, though many historians of eighteenth century Empire do not subscribe to such 'crudely overdrawn' separations between two overlapping moments that shared common 'purposes and personnel', the term 'British Empire' in the popular imagination has denoted the 'second' empire rooted in India, ascendant after the Battle of Plassey (1757) in which the British East India Company secured a decisive victory against the Nawab of Bengal and his French allies.³⁸

In this account of a 'second empire' on distant shores, it was possible to imagine that the Empire could be separate from the metropole not just in terms of its physical distance and racial composition, but also its political character. Yet the national imagination was far from insulated from the empire. The infiltration of the empire into the national zeitgeist was exemplified in the decree of the Royal Titles Act of 1876 that had transformed the queen into 'Regina et Imperatrix'. The following statement by Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India between 1899 and 1905, illustrated the way the separation between the national and imperial worlds could be emphasised by comparing with the Roman exercise of power:

Indeed, though we speak of the British Empire, we never call its monarch the British Emperor, preferring to adhere to the older and more appropriate title of King. But in India he is rightly termed the Emperor, or King-Emperor, because there his power is that of the Roman Emperor, exercised it is true through his Ministry responsible to Parliament, but

³⁷ Betts, p. 154.

³⁸ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British*, pp. 1-2.

wielded without the restraint of many of the checks with which we are familiar in Western States possessing what is called constitutional government. Thus, if India were to remind us that in the British system she is the sole and veritable Empire, the pretension could not be denied.³⁹

India represented but an exceptional case, in which Britain's pretensions of being a Romanesque imperium could be justified. Curzon's rhetoric had sought to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable ideologies of imperial rule after conquest, domestic monarchy, and constitutional democracy. Yet an empire predicated on conquest, racial subjugation, and economic exploitation was incompatible with the homeland norms of liberty, equality, and the rule of law.⁴⁰ *Libertas* and *imperium* had seemed incompatible values in the classical Roman historical and moral traditions in which many British theorists had been educated.⁴¹ These incompatibilities and the threat they posed to the metropolitan political ideal of liberty, Armitage argues, demanded that the eighteenth-century history of Empire be differentiated from British domestic history, and that the Empire itself be increasingly exoticised.⁴² If Curzon's gesture isolated India as a special case, Bryce painted a picture of an empire of conquest necessitated by exigencies of trade. Bryce wrote:

The English went to India as traders with no intention of fighting anybody, and were led into the acquisition of territory partly in order to recoup themselves for the expensive efforts they had made to support their first allies, partly that they might get revenue for the East India Company's shareholders... (p. 9)

Any military action was presented as being in the service of trade and shareholders at home, to whom benefits of conquest would accrue. In introducing the railways in India,

³⁹ Lord Curzon of Kedleston, *The Place of India in the Empire: Being an Address Delivered Before the Philosophical Institute of Edinburgh by Lord Curzon of Kedleston on October 19, 1909* (London: John Murray, 1909), p. 10.

⁴⁰ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁴² In contrast, the 'first' early modern British Empire -- seen broadly as a consequence of maritime discoveries, trade, and settlement -- was more closely assimilated to domestic histories of the Three Kingdoms (England, Ireland, and Scotland). See Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 3.

the British were said to be similar to the road-building Romans, but with an additional noble purpose. The railways in India were seen as the panacea of all manner of social ills, having succeeded in breaking down the differences and demarcations from what Bryce called the ‘jarring elements, racial and linguistic, as well as religious, which have divided India into a number of distinct, and in many cases hostile, groups’ (p. 21).

Seeley had made a case for re-interpreting the term ‘Empire’ itself as it applied to the diversity of British colonies around the world. Since the word seemed ‘too military and despotic to suit the relation of a mother-country to colonies’ (p. 44), Seeley pointed out that historians would do well to remember that ‘our colonies do not resemble the colonies which classical students meet with in Greek and Roman history, and our Empire is not an Empire at all in the ordinary sense of the word’ (p. 60). In other quarters, contrasts between the Roman and Grecian modes of colonial authority had been summoned to insist on the political diversity within the British Empire, and potentially to reconcile the conflict between liberty and imperium that arose in seeking too close an alliance with the Roman model.⁴³ If Grecian elements were imputed to the self-governing settlement colonies of British heritage, the Roman elements of empire were those non-European parts that were despotically governed.⁴⁴ Given that the Greek contrast was often deliberately deployed to mitigate the pejorative associations with Rome’s imperial fate and follies, it was selected with caution. As Kumar notes, imperial models in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain were exercises in omissions and silence:

The Greek model of empire might avoid reference to the short-lived (and oppressive) Athenian empire and concentrate instead on the Greek pattern of colonialism—a more benevolent construction—as the essential form of empire. Similarly, the Roman model of empire might concentrate almost exclusively on Rome’s far-flung rule over foreign peoples

⁴³ For an account of the notable proponents of the Greek imperial model in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain see Kumar, ‘Greece and Rome in the British Empire: Contrasting Role Models’, pp. 76–101.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

and ignore its own style of “internal colonialism,” the planting of colonies of Romans and Italians in strategic areas throughout the empire.⁴⁵

Selective appropriations from the histories of Greece and Rome, and from the countries to which they were applied, gave rise to a ‘game of Greeks and Romans’ whose rules were always provisional and changing.⁴⁶ William Jones’ mythopoeic contribution to the colonial game of Greeks and Romans made the imaginative leap of envisaging ancient Greece and India both as colonies of Britain. In a letter addressed to the second Earl Spencer on 23 August 1787, Jones wrote:

To what shall I compare my literary pursuits in India? Suppose Greek literature to be known in modern Greece only, and there to be in the hands of priests and philosophers; and suppose them to be still worshippers of Jupiter and Apollo; suppose Greece to have been conquered successively by Goths, Huns, Vandals, Tartars, and lastly by the English; then suppose a court of judicature to be established by the British parliament, at Athens, and an inquisitive Englishman to be one of the judges; suppose him to learn Greek there, which none of his countrymen knew, and to read Homer, Pindar, Plato, which no other Europeans had even heard of. Such am I in this country; substituting Sanscrit for Greek, the Brahmans, for the priests of Jupiter, and Valmic, Vyasa, Calidasa, for Homer, Plato, Pindar.⁴⁷

As Phiroze Vasunia points out, the Greece here invented by Jones was not entirely classical (it had been conquered), though not yet modern (gods and priests still in attendance).⁴⁸

Greece was pictured, like India, as a colonial space occupied by the English and over which English-administered courts had jurisdiction.⁴⁹ The curious English judge was a purveyor of law and government, overseeing the transformation from ancient to modern. Greece

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 81.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ William Jones to Lord Althorp, 2nd Earl Spencer, August 1787, in *The Letters of Sir William Jones*, ed. by Garland Cannon, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), II, no. 464, pp. 755-56.

⁴⁸ Phiroze Vasunia, *The Classics and Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 3.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

and India were both exoticised in this anachronistic image; the focus on benevolent British wisdom glossed over any uneasy identification with the Goths, Huns, Vandals, Tartars – other colonial powers in the inventory of conquerors. Seeley's resolution was to underplay the political value of liberty itself. There were, he wrote, 'other good things in politics besides liberty' and 'a government that allows no liberty is nevertheless most valuable to progress towards other goals, namely civilisation and nationality' (p. 275).

Roman echoes in anti-imperialist sentiment

Classical presences were also to be felt at the anti-Imperial end of the political spectrum, especially in the wake of resistances to the British Empire. Though it was quickly contained, the resistance to British rule in India manifest in the Rebellion of 1857 appeared, as Edith Hall notes, as something of a rude shock given its timing at the peak of British military success in the 1840s.⁵⁰ In 1858, the Crown took over direct responsibility over the Company's Indian territories. Its first official act put forth a doctrine of non-intervention as the directive principle of British rule, and represented, as Karuna Mantena argues, a decisive turn away from its earlier actively liberal-reformist ideology.⁵¹ Roman echoes were discernible in the few statements made by British politicians admitting British culpability for the Rebellion and its aftermath. Benjamin Disraeli's address to the House of Commons on July 27, 1857 addressed the Rebellion as an event in the broader arc of empires: 'The decline and fall of empires', he said, 'are not affairs of greased cartridges. Such results are occasioned by adequate causes, and by an accumulation of adequate causes'.⁵² The Rebellion was said to have been precipitated by the mutiny of Indian soldiers of the Bengal Army, itself triggered by rumours that the cartridges for their guns had been greased using

⁵⁰ Between 1842 and 1849, Britain had annexed Afghanistan, Sind, the Punjab, Hong Kong, Labuan in Indonesia, and, in Africa, Natal, the Orange River, and Gambia. War was waged against the Maoris in New Zealand, and lower Burma was conquered in 1854; Edith Hall, 'British Refractions of India and the 1857 "Mutiny" through the prism of Ancient Greece and Rome', in *India, Greece, and Rome* (See Vasunia and Hall, above), 33-49 (p. 33).

⁵¹ Mantena, p. 1.

⁵² Benjamin Disraeli's speech 'The State of Affairs in India', delivered on 27 July 1857, in *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates: Third Series 20 July, 1857-28 August, 1857: Vol. 147* (London: Thomas Curson Hansard, 1857), p. 475, cited by Hall, p. 34.

cow and pig fat. Instead of fixating on supposed immediate causes, Disraeli invoked the cautionary tale of the decline and fall of empires. The Governor of India, Lord Canning, called for the Augustan virtue of clemency in dealing with the rebels.⁵³ These were, however, voices in the minority. There was a conflict of images: The Indian rebel was represented as a barbarous heathen deserving of righteous Christian wrath, or as a warrior for freedom resisting the cruelties of Rome.⁵⁴ Very few tropes or images from ancient Greece or Rome were to be found in popular representations of India in 1857-8, despite, as Hall says, ‘the Greco-Roman style of the helmets worn by the Bengal Horse Artillery, and despite the continuing tendency of the military leaders in India to reinforce their mutual identity as classically trained gentlemen by writing dispatches to each other which interspersed English with phrases in Latin or even ancient Greek’.⁵⁵

The most significant classical parallels in the discourse of the Indian uprising were to be found in dissident anti-empire voices, most notably Karl Marx and the Chartists. Not only did the question of India spur reflection on the inequities of British imperialism, it also occasioned comment on the exploitation of the working classes at home.⁵⁶ Living and writing in London, Karl Marx in 1853 equated the British rule in India with the worst of the Romans:

After the British intruders had once put their feet on India, and made up their mind to hold it, there remained no alternative but to break the power of the native princes by force or by intrigue. Placed with regard to them in similar circumstances as the ancient Romans with regard to their allies, they followed in the track of Roman politics.⁵⁷

⁵³ Hall, p. 35.

⁵⁴ Hall observes that the uprising by and large displaced the classical, and brought to fore medieval and Christian imagery as the dominant frame of reference for British perceptions of their hegemony in India. Moral legitimacy was acquired through visions of Christian heroism, the British were portrayed as righteous Christians delivering justice to barbaric heathens, or as new Israelites defending Canaan. For instance, a balladeer invoked the Old Testament and urged Sir Colin Campbell, the British military Commander-in-Chief, to ‘tame the black Sepoy and [will] drive them to the other side of Jordan’; See Ibid., p. 34.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 39.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

⁵⁷ Karl Marx, ‘The East India Question: July 25, 1853’, in *The New-York Daily Tribune*, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1853/07/25.htm>> [accessed 1 September 2017].

More strident criticism followed in the wake of the 1857 uprising. He wrote: ‘The Roman *Divide et impera* was the great rule by which Great Britain, for about one hundred and fifty years, contrived to retain the tenure of her Indian empire’.⁵⁸ Marx likened debates in the British Parliament to orations of Roman Senators declaiming on the decline of their Empire. He compared the brutalities meted out by the rebelling Indian soldiers with those of British, French, and Roman powers across their histories:

The cutting of noses, breasts, &c., in one word, the horrid mutilations committed by the Sepoys, are of course more revolting to European feeling than the throwing of red-hot shell on Canton dwellings by a Secretary of the Manchester Peace Society, or the roasting of Arabs pent up in a cave by a French Marshal, or the flaying alive of British soldiers by the cat-o’-nine-tails under drum-head court-martial, or any other of the philanthropical appliances used in British penitentiary colonies. Cruelty, like every other thing, has its fashion, changing according to time and place. Caesar, the accomplished scholar, candidly narrates how he ordered many thousand Gallic warriors to have their right hands cut off. Napoleon would have been ashamed to do this. He preferred dispatching his own French regiments, suspected of republicanism, to St. Domingo, there to die of the blacks and the plague.⁵⁹

These juxtapositions even offered redemption to the brutal violence of the Roman Empire on the grounds that it was at least less hypocritical than that meted out by modern Europeans to their own subjects.

Hall draws attention to British Chartist Ernest Jones’ 1850 poem ‘The New World’, a veritable anti-imperialist wish-fulfilment fantasy, in which modern European and ancient Roman Empires featured as the antagonists.⁶⁰ The poem turned out to be remarkably prescient in predicting the 1857 Rebellion and was re-published in 1857 under the new title

⁵⁸ Karl Marx, ‘The Indian Revolt: September 16, 1857’, in *The New-York Daily Tribune*, <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1857/09/16.htm>> [accessed 1 September 2017].

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Hall, p. 47.

of ‘The Revolt of Hindostan’. It fixed India as the beginning of the West’s ‘warrior-march’, and went on to paint an ominous picture of the horrors that were to follow:

When erst the West its warrior-march began,
 The eyes of earth were drawn to Hindostan:
 Long time the clouds stood gathering, tier on tier,
 And thickening thunders, muttering, growled more near.⁶¹

The poem prophesied that a military mutiny would become a national uprising against the imperial rule:

Back press the frontiers, once the example given,
 In part by force, but more by panic driven.
 Victorious deluge! from a hundred heights
 Rolls the fierce torrent of a people’s rights,
 And Sepoy soldiers, waking, band by band,
 At last remember they’ve a fatherland!
 Then flies the huxtering judge, the pandering peer,
 The English pauper, grown a nabob here!
 Counting house tyranny, and pedlar-pride,
 While blasts of freedom sweep the country wide!⁶²

The mutiny was figured a struggle for people’s rights, against tyrannies of ‘counting houses’, ‘pandering peers’, and the nouveau-riche ‘pauper’ Englishmen who made their fortune in the colony.⁶³

⁶¹ Ernest Jones, *The Revolt of Hindostan; or The New World: A Poem* (London: Effingham Wilson, 1857), p. 7.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

⁶³ The poem ended with a fantastic vision of anarchy involving other global empires and the ghosts of empires past: the Indian rebellion led to freedom; triggered anti-imperial uprisings in Africa; caused the fall of the Ottoman and French cities of North Africa, and Constantinople; led to the raid of the modern city of Rome, where the spirits of ancient slave leaders joined the struggle to demolish Roman emperors and their successors; and finally led to the creation of a global socialist utopia ruled from Tahiti.

In general, parallels between Rome, Britain and India in British writings of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century were, in Majeed's terms, more 'anxious than reinforcing', due largely to the discomfiting possibility that Britain, at any stage of its historical development, was reducible to the same status as contemporary India.⁶⁴

Comparisons addressed this by providing a narrative which, despite parallelisms, was held up by elemental differences. Lest it be assumed that Indians could pose a significant threat to the English empire -- given the popularity of accounts stating that the dissolution of Roman Empire began with the withdrawal from Britain in AD 411 -- Bryce invoked the discourse of race to establish a fundamental asymmetry between the English and Indians to assuage any concerns that the fate of the two empires would be mirrored.

The English, Bryce noted, are too unlike the races of India to mingle with them, 'or to come to form, in the sense of Claudian's words, one people with them' (p. 69). The English, despite their subservience to Rome, were one people with it. Moreover, he wrote, history had shown that the provincial English had bested their conquerors. While Rome's provinces had 'avenged themselves upon their conquerors' (p. 70), he predicted that England would always remain free and insular (p. 71). The comforting implication here was that Indians may not be as worthy pupils to English tutelage as the English were to the ancient Romans.

Modulating Roman tutelage in Early modern English culture

England's Roman tutelage was an enduring component of the early modern English cultural, political, and intellectual ethos. Images of interaction between ancient Rome and Britain were used to make sense of emergent racial, geographical, historical and cultural identities at home and in new territories abroad. Roman influence was conspicuous in writings, pictures, buildings and coins. English humanists had been influenced by the

⁶⁴ Majeed, 'Comparativism and References to Rome', p. 89.

political philosophy of Roman Stoics when formulating a language of politics; ideas from Republican Rome had helped construct ideals of civic duty in a princely commonwealth.⁶⁵

Roman history was rich with models of nationality and imperial development. The term empire in its early modern usage was itself a Roman derivation, being ‘a vernacular analogue of imperium’, and denoting a feature of Roman political system in which the highest authority was held by a military commander.⁶⁶ Even as the term’s connotations transformed through the early modern period, various meanings of empire were broadly ‘distilled from Roman precedents and their later analogues’.⁶⁷ The earliest articulations of British colonial theory derived its intellectual framework from classical republicanism and its moral thought; the writings of Cicero, Latinised Aristotle, and Roman historians Sallust, Livy and Tacitus were invoked in the first reports of voyages to the New World, and in tracts promoting emigration and colonisation as advantageous to the nation.⁶⁸ Like the British imperialists in India, the English were also fascinated by the perceived incommensurability between the ideologies of imperium and liberty. In *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (1531) Machiavelli had characterised Rome’s victory over Carthage as the event that led to the collapse of republican liberty and civic institutions, suggesting that the pursuit of a grandiose empire undermined liberty.⁶⁹ The Holy Roman Empire was also the tacit ‘other’ in the post-Reformation articulation of England and its own ‘empire’. The Elizabethan construction of empire as ‘Protestant, *Anglo*-British, benign and extra-European’ rested on the notion that it was a product of uniquely-English activities in a post-Reformation England.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Richard Tuck, ‘Humanism and Political Thought’, in *The Impact of Humanism on Western Europe During the Renaissance*, ed. by Anthony Goodman and Angus Mackay (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), pp. 43–65.

⁶⁶ Armitage, ‘Literature and Empire’, p. 103.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 106–7.

⁶⁹ Kumar, ‘Greece and Rome in the British Empire’, p. 79.

⁷⁰ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 6.

Literary and cultural transmission of *romanitas* in the popular zeitgeist took place through classical learning as well as popular drama. If stalwarts in Elizabethan drama (such as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *Marc Anthony*, *Cleopatra*, or Jonson's *Sejanus*) engaged with 'Roman' ideal values of nobility and virtuous public conduct, others (such as *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus*), also associated Rome with darker, more barbarous realities which became occasions to reflect on domestic vicissitudes.⁷¹ Many notions of Rome found their way into several cultural performances in Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. Between the lost, anonymous play *Julius Caesar* in 1562 and the closing of the theatres in the mid seventeenth century, there were nearly forty tragedies or masques that staged Roman history,⁷² almost two thirds of which were written in years between 1580 and 1610.⁷³ While a majority of these plays valorised *romanitas* as an ideal of public conduct and saw the decline of the Republic as a fall from grace, this was by no means the only heuristic role to which Rome was put. As Manfred Pfister's reading of *Coriolanus* has shown, the play exposed 'the very ethos of *romanitas* to a sceptical anatomy'.⁷⁴ Reading the play as an exemplary instance of Shakespeare's 'anatomy theatre', Pfister characterises the tragedy of *Coriolanus* as one of a self produced in a doomed performance.⁷⁵

For *Coriolanus*, acting as a virtuous Roman precludes or obscures other ways of being himself. His fate dramatised the self-destructive challenge built into an absolute subscription to *romanitas* as the criterion for being a good Roman, and allowed Shakespeare to present *romanitas* ambivalently as 'the cause of Rome's greatness as well as her self-destruction'.⁷⁶ Noting the ways in which classical authors and their words found their way into the world and mouths of violent characters -- Goths as well as Romans -- in *Titus*

⁷¹ For a multifaceted evaluation of Rome in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, see essays in Maria Del Sapio Garbero, ed., *Identity, Otherness and Empire in Shakespeare's Rome* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), and Warren Chernaik, *The Myth of Rome in Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁷² Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama. 975-1700*, rev. by Samuel Schoenbaum (London: Methuen, 1964), pp. 36-134, cited by Manfred Pfister, 'Acting the Roman: *Coriolanus*' in *Identity, Otherness and Empire in Shakespeare's Rome* (see Garbero, above), pp. 35-48 (p. 36).

⁷³ Pfister, 'Acting the Roman', p. 36.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

Andronicus, Barbara Antonucci has shown how Shakespeare showed a Rome on the eve of its collapse ‘as if he wanted to mock *romanitas* itself and the function of classic authors whose quotations become instruments of death, metaphors that materialize into real figures of fierce revenge’.⁷⁷

England’s own Roman past (both mythic and historical) played a key role in the construction of a post-colonial Englishness through the early modern period. The myth of the Trojan Brutus, the first king of England and a descendant of Aeneas, entailed that English and Romans belonged to the same ancestral stock, yet also succeeded in framing British history separate from a more generally Roman one. Later seventeenth-century chronicles relying on Roman sources painted a picture of an encounter between ‘savage’ ancient Britons and ‘civil’ Romans: an analogy that was recreated in images of the first English colonial encounters in the New World. Rome was selectively appropriated across these deployments. Early modern political thought engaged most consistently with a specific period in Roman history -- the end of the Roman Republic and the beginnings of the Empire under Augustus -- which was mined for political lessons in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart years.⁷⁸ The change in historiographical fashions in the early seventeenth century saw chronicles increasingly focused on Roman sources of ancient Britain, rather than on the myths of English monarchs and tales of their battles with Rome. The dilemmas, inconsistencies, and rhetorical strategies of resolving them persisted in the British imperial discourse in India.

Though Roman ruins, coins, histories, and myths were in circulation in England before the sixteenth century, no systematic history of the Roman Republic and Empire or of Roman Britain was available in English till the century’s end. English translations of Plutarch’s *Lives*, and Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita*, were principal sources for representations of Romans and

⁷⁷ Barbara Antonucci, ‘Romans versus Barbarians: Speaking the Language of the Empire in *Titus Andronicus*’, in *Identity, Otherness and Empire in Shakespeare’s Rome* (See Garbero, above), pp. 119-130 (p. 121).

⁷⁸ Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2012), p. 2.

the Roman Republic in the Renaissance.⁷⁹ There were broadly two traditions of representing ancient Britain in early modern England. The first patriotic myth, which drew from Geoffrey of Monmouth's twelfth-century *Historia Regum Britanniae*, focused on the tales of Brutus and Arthur. If Trojan Brutus was heroic for establishing in ancient Britain a second Troy, successive kings (Cassivelaunus and Cymbeline) were noted for having resisted repeated Roman invasions under Julius Caesar and later, Claudius. King Arthur's reign was also presented as one in which hostilities with Rome were renewed, and the Roman general Lucius defeated.⁸⁰ This account acknowledged the racial solidarity between the Romans and Britons, and also defined ancient Britain's glory as a function of its valorous resistance to Roman attacks. However, these legends also had Caesar and Claudius recognising the bravery of their antagonists, the British. The second tradition, represented in the chronicles of William Camden and Ralph Holinshed, turned to Roman sources of information about ancient Britain. Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* and Tacitus's *Agricola* were two primary Roman accounts of the confrontation of Rome and ancient Britain. Camden's account of 'Romans in Britain' in *Britannia* (1610) was composed largely of extended quotations from Caesar, Tacitus, and other Latin authors. Following Caesar, Camden presented the ancient Britons as a primitive tribe, that hadn't discovered agriculture or civilisation. Moreover Caesar, like Tacitus, presented the British tribes as courageous and worthy adversaries like the Gauls and Germanic tribes.⁸¹

Britain through Roman Eyes, early English visions of the New World

Some of earliest English representations of their own geography, character, and colonial aspiration relied upon accounts of Roman Britain, and of Roman encounters with ancient Britons. English cartographer and historian John Speed's *The Historie of Great Britaine* (1611) and *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1612) mapped the composition of Roman

⁷⁹ Chernaik, p. 25.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 219-20.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Britain onto contemporary landscape. This first attempt by an English author to produce an atlas of Britain quoted Edmund Spenser's *The Fairie Queene* to project British history as one of a sparse and unmannered people's rise to imperial might:

The Land which warlike Britaines now possesse
 And therein haue their mighty Empire raisede,
 In ancient times was saluage wildernessse,
 Vnpeopled, vnmanurd, vnproude, vnpraisde.⁸²

Yet Speed's vision of ancient Britain, as it had been found by the Romans, was one of pastoral beauty; The following epigram (translated from an anonymous Italian verse) presented the 'motives for Caesar's coming':

Albions high tos her Woody lockes far Shew,
 With quiers of chanting Birds these Woods Resounding.
 Her Downs and Meadows clad in Verdant hew,
 Meadows and Downs with flocks & heards abounding.⁸³

Sir Thomas Smith -- one of Elizabeth's counsellors, an authority on ancient Rome and a classical scholar at Cambridge -- planned in 1571 the establishment of an English colony in 'the Ardes' (Ards Peninsula) and adjacent areas of Northern Ireland. Though these expeditions failed, Smith's broadsheet proposal for them were significant in setting out the first sustained argument for overseas colonisation. In particular, ideas of native Irish society as pastoral and nomadic drew upon classical writings about barbarians; colonisation was proffered as a mission to reform, much like the Romans did the Britons. Much like Speed would later describe ancient Britons through Roman eyes, Smith described the Irish colony as pastoral and beautiful:

⁸² John Speed, *The theatre of the empire of Great Britaine presenting an exact geography of the kingdomes of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the iles adioyning: with the shires, hundreds, cities and shire-tonnes, within ye kingdome of England* (London: William Hall, 1612), p. 1.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[T]here cannot be . . . a more fertile soil thorowe out the world for the climate than it is, a more pleasant, healthful, ful of springs, rivers, great fresh lakes, fishe, and foule, and of moste commodious herbers. England giveth nothing save Wne woolle, that will not be had also moste abundantly there, it lacketh only inhabitants, manurance, and pollicie.⁸⁴

Ancient Britons were not just one-dimensional savages; they were often projected as being worthy of Roman instruction, and possessing sufficient innate character to carry off any inherited civility. Ideas of ‘civility’ or ‘civilisation’ made references to Tacitus’ *Agricola*, which recounted the education and enslavement of Britons by the Roman governor Agricola in the first century. In 1606, John Clapham called Roman governance a process ‘Agricolaes pollicie to plant civilitie among the Britans’.⁸⁵ Civility, Hingley points out, was a powerful idea as it enabled English the claim ‘cultural link with the world of the classical Mediterranean through the Roman conquest of southern Britain’.⁸⁶ As such, the fact that ancient Britain was a Roman conquest could be re-purposed as a positive happenstance that had caused English character to develop in consonance with Greco-Roman antiquity. It was unsurprising that Tacitus’s accounts of Roman colonisation of Britain were received with great enthusiasm in England given that they presented the British in a broadly positive light, and considered Roman invasion as a force for good. Though the Briton islanders had long remained free from the Roman yoke, they were also shown to be marred by tribal infighting. Tacitus’ *Agricola* presented these Britons as lovers of liberty, and Agricola’s government as profitable and politic.

Drawing from Tacitus’ account, John Milton’s *The History of Britain* (1670) praised Agricola’s political acumen and style of governance. Agricola, Milton wrote, was significant

⁸⁴ Thomas Smith, *A Letter sent by I. B. Gentleman unto his Very Friend Maystet R. C. Esquire, wherein is contained a Large Discourse of the Peopling & Inhabiting the Cuntrie called the Ardes, and other Adiacent in the North of Ireland, and Taken in Hand by Sir Thomas Smith one of the Queenes Maiesties Pruiue Counsel, and Thomas Smith Esquire, his Sonne* (London: Henry Binneman for Anthonson, 1571) p. 10, cited by Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906*, pp. 61-62.

⁸⁵ John Clapham, *The Historie of Great Britannie* (London: Valentine Simmes, 1606), p. 74.

⁸⁶ Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906*, p. 10.

not for bringing war to a speedy end but for ‘cutting off the causes from whence Warr arises. For he knowing that the end of Warr was not to make way for injuries in peace, began reformation from his own house...’⁸⁷ For Milton, Agricola’s role as a propitious patriarch in English history was cemented by his ‘worthie actions’ after war such as laying roads, winning over the locals by ‘gentle demeanour’, and promoting ‘like a public Father the institutes and customes of civil life.’⁸⁸ However, he was quick to warn, the popularity of civil Roman fashions also caused less-civil imitations:

Then were the *Roman* fashions imitated, and the Gown; after a while the incitements also and materials of Vice, and voluptuous life, proud Buildings, Baths, and the elegance of Banqueting; which the foolisher sort call'd civilitie, but was indeed a secret Art to prepare them for bondage.⁸⁹

Milton’s assessment illustrated the pitfalls of self-fashioning: civility was as much a tool to ensure enslavement as it was a companion to liberty. By implication, a few discerning persons were more likely to imbibe the essence of civility without getting lost in its paraphernalia.

The qualities of savagery and civility interacted in representations of ancient Britons popular in early modern England. Representations of Boudica, queen of the Celtic Iceni tribe who led a failed uprising against Roman occupation in AD 60-61, exemplified the way definitions of British character negotiated savagery and civility.⁹⁰ Two panels from Speed’s *The History of Great Britaine* imagined ancient British men and women as naked, tribal and violent figures foregrounded in barren landscapes. ‘Later’ British people were shown clothed and groomed, the ships and the group of men in the background implying a civic world of contact, communication and community. The ‘Lady’ Boudicea, projected as the

⁸⁷ John Milton, *The History of Britain, that part especially now call'd England from the first traditional beginning, continu'd to the Norman conquest* (London: J. M. for James Allestry, 1670), p. 70.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁹⁰ Hingley, *The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586-1906*, p. 51.

‘after’ image to the savage woman, had painted tattoos on her arms and legs, yet was cloaked and dressed to demonstrate that she had been inducted into a prototypical, regal modesty:

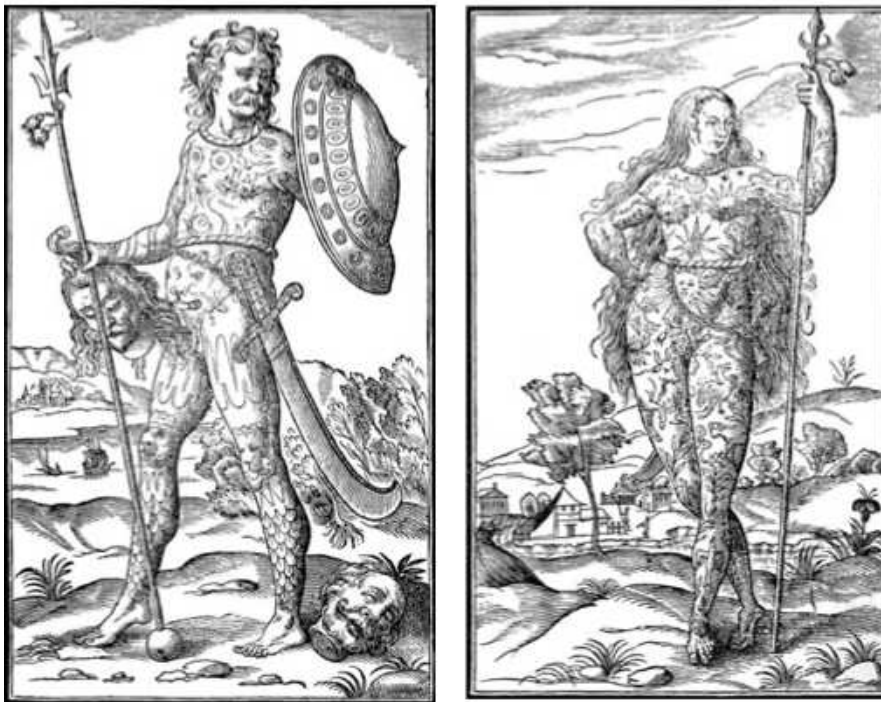


Fig (1): John Speed's ancient British Man (L) and ancient British woman (R)⁹¹

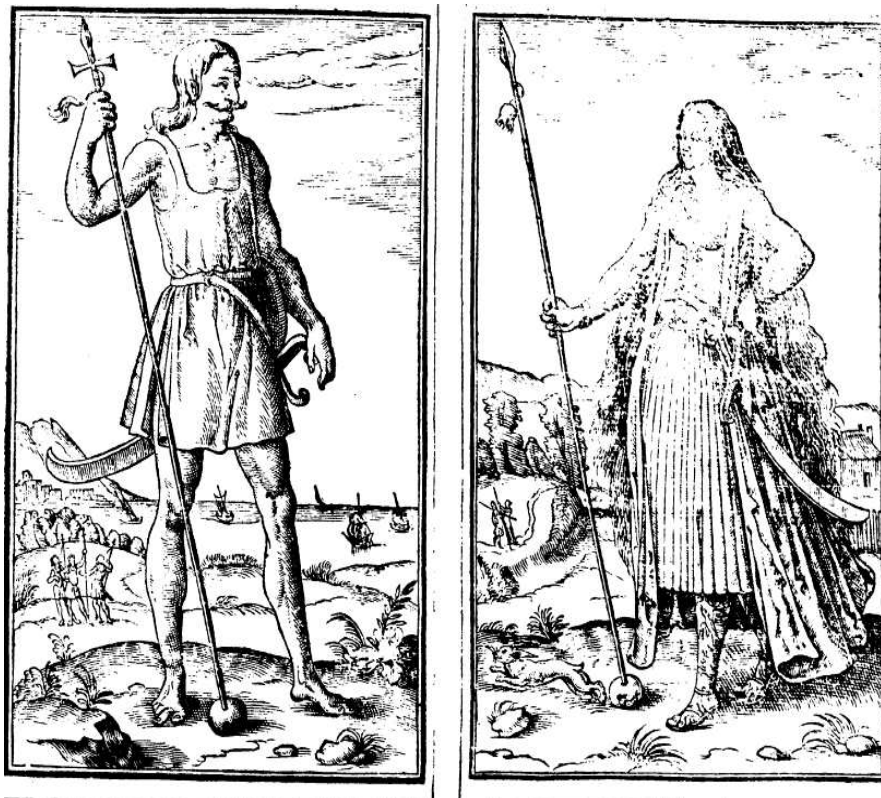


Fig. (2): John Speed's 'later' British man (L) and 'Lady Boudicea'⁹²

⁹¹ Woodcuts by Christoph Schweitzer, in John Speed, *The History of Great Britaine under the conquests of ye Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* (London: William Hall and John Beale, 1611), p. 180.

As the antagonist to the civil Romans, Boudica was a vengeful savage, yet Tacitus' *Annales* also portrayed Boudica sympathetically as a patriot and champion of liberty, who was wronged by the Romans. The Elizabethan years saw a resurgence in popular representations of Boudica, in which parallels were drawn between the ancient and early modern queens. In the years between 1570s and 1590s, the peak years of the Anglo-Spanish conflict, Elizabeth's similarity to Boudica was invoked in images that saw both queens as able native rulers who led their country into war, and who had sought to protect against invaders seeking territories to incorporate within expanding continental empires.⁹³ Both represented the resilience of 'liberty' against the might of 'empire'. Stephen Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579) praised 'Bundica' as a 'notable woman and queen of Englande', Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (first published in 1577) included two speeches by 'Voadicea' on the subject of 'ancient liberty'.⁹⁴ In 1588, Italian soldier and courtier Petruccio Ubaldini presented Elizabeth with a manuscript of *The Lives of the Noble Ladies of the Kingdom of England and Scotland* (published in 1591). The list of noblewomen included Boudica (called Voadicia), and were presented as comparable role models to Greek and Roman female exemplars of virtue. This account of Boudica too was largely drawn from a Roman source -- Tacitus' *Annales*.⁹⁵

The figure of Boudica, refracted through a Roman lens, lent itself to more complex stances on contemporary politics in the seventeenth century, as exemplified by Beaumont and Fletcher's *Bonduca*, first performed in 1613. As Claire Jowitt has argued, the network of projected resemblances and the effects generated by them dramatised the 'benefits and drawbacks' of Romanisation and the English colonisation of Virginia.⁹⁶ While Britons in the play partly stood for the Native Americans in Virginia and were depicted as savage

⁹² Ibid., p. 181.

⁹³ Richard Hingley and Christina Unwin, *Boudica: Iron Age Warrior Queen* (London, New York: Hambledon, 2005), p. 118.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 118-20.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 122.

⁹⁶ See Claire Jowitt, 'Colonialism, Politics, and Romanization in John Fletcher's "Bonduca"', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 43.2 (2003), 475-94 (p. 475).

pagans, they were also vehicles of patriotic pride in the way they resisted the invading Romans.⁹⁷

The colonial encounter itself triggered retroactive forays into ancient British history. As Anthony Grafton has noted, early colonial encounters with indigenous ‘others’ abroad made it possible to imagine the origins of British society in new ways.⁹⁸ Ancient Britons could be cast as tribal savages over which imperial dominion had imposed civility; such images could in turn be used to describe contemporary colonised lands and people. This was manifest most famously in Thomas Hariot’s report on Virginia following a 1585 voyage, which contained Theodore de Bry’s woodcuts of Algonquian Indians (rendered from the ‘first hand’ witness of John White’s watercolours)⁹⁹ and of ancient Picts (from ‘a ooldd English cronicle’) (sig. E^v).¹⁰⁰ In the 1590 edition of *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia*, Hariot made an editorial decision to include images of the tribal Picts ‘which in the olde tyme did habite one part of the great Britainne’, in order to ‘showe how that the Inhabitants of the great Britannie haue bin in times past as Sauuage as those of Virginia’(sig. E^v).

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 475-76.

⁹⁸ Anthony Grafton, April Shelford and Nancy G. Siraisi, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (London: Belknap Press, 1992), pp. 54-58.

⁹⁹ Artist and cartographer John White accompanied the linguist and surveyor Hariot on the 1585 voyage from England to the outer coastline of present-day North Carolina as a part of Sir Walter Raleigh’s plan to settle a colony. During a thirteen-month stay at the Roanoke Island, White made a series of ‘ethnographic’ watercolour drawings depicting the native people, lifestyle, flora, and fauna. In 1590, Theodor De Bry made engravings from White’s drawings to be printed in Hariot’s own account of the journey.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Hariot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia of the commodities and of the nature and manners of the naturall inhabitants* (Francoforti ad Moenum: Typis Ioannis Wecheli, sumtibus vero Theodori de Bry anno M D XC. Venales reperuntur in officina Sigismundi Feirabendii, 1590). Further references to this edition of Hariot’s *briefe and true report* are cited after the quotations in the text.

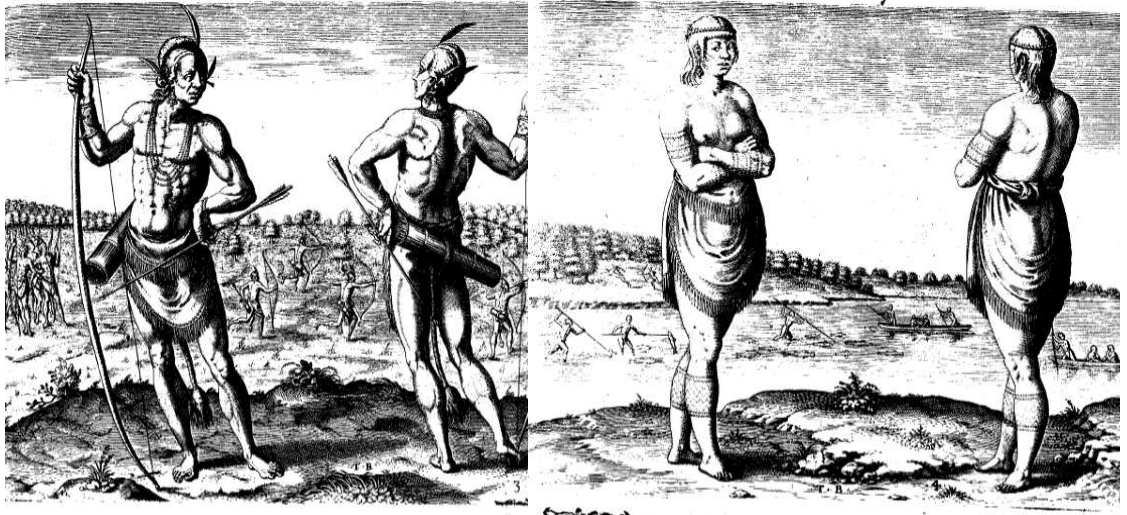


Fig (3): (L) 'A weroan or greate Lorde of Virginia'; (R) 'On Off the Chiefe Ladyes of Secota' (sig. A2^v)

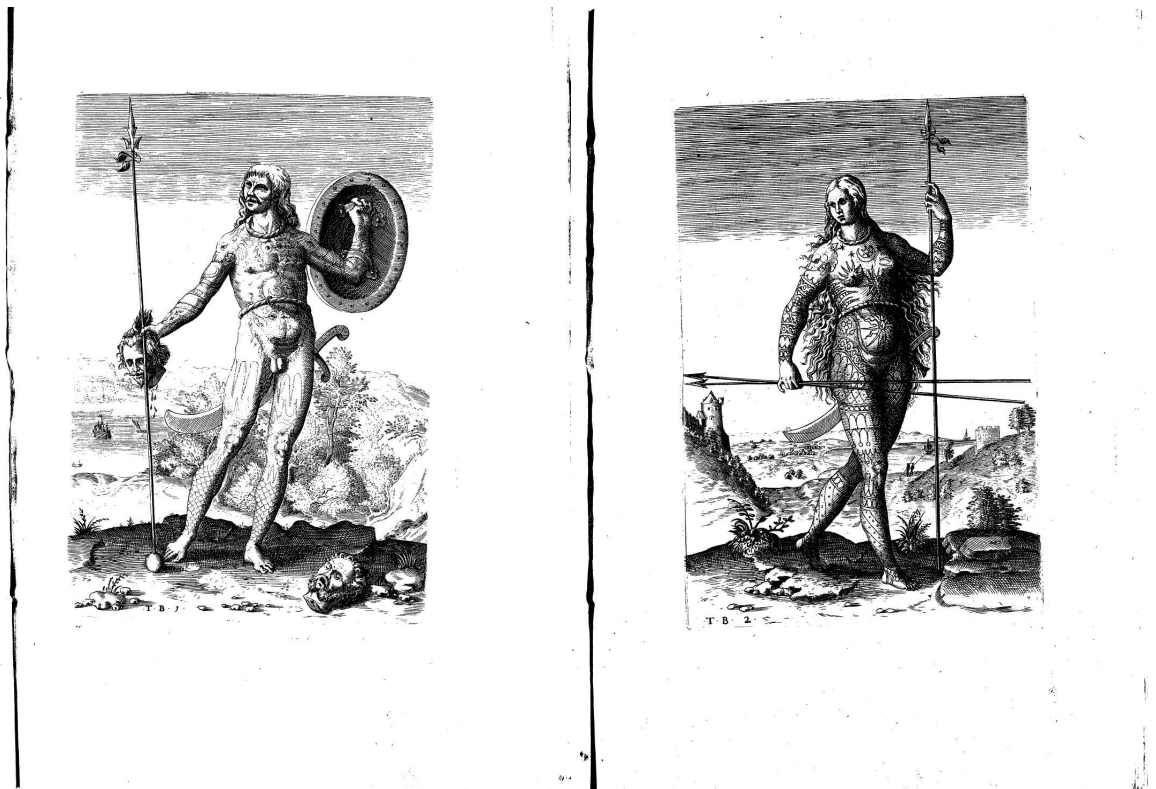


Fig. (4): (L) 'The Trvve Picture of one Picte'; (R) 'The Trvve Picture of a VVomen Picte' (sig. A2^r)

Hariot's report was a colonial promotion. It addressed 'Adventvrers, Favorers, and vvelvvillers [wellwishers] of the Enterprise for the Inhabitting and planting in Virginia' (sig. E1^v) and was designed to be an inventory of its 'Merchantable' commodities, source of victuals for potential settlers, and the nature and custom of the indigenous people (sig. a3^r-6^v). Intending to reassure readers who could influence the fate of any reconnaissance missions, plantations and settlements, Hariot insisted that the natives were 'not to be feared', and had cause 'both to feare and loue vs, *that shall inhabite with them*' (sig. 24^r).¹⁰¹ This statement assured that the English would be safe, but crucially also tantalised with a vision of sustainable coexistence. This possibility of coexistence within a social hierarchy that would decisively favour the English colonists was predicated upon the natives' potential to grow out of or subdue their savagery. On the one hand Hariot reported that the natives were riven by civil war-like skirmishes, used primitive weapons, were poor and lacked discernment between 'trfiles' and 'thinges of greater value' (sig. 25^v). On the other, they were found to possess enough inherent ingenuity and 'excellencie of wit' to be amenable to be reformed in an English fashion (sig. 25^v). 'Whereby', Hariot wrote, 'may bee hoped if meanes of good gouernment bee vsed, that they may in short time be brought to ciuilitie, and the imbracing of true religion' (sig. 25^v).

Yet the decision to include images from ancient Britain, presumably to effect a comparison with the present-day New World, was an odd one if the point was to establish England's credentials as an agent of good governance and civility. Revisiting the De Bry engravings of Figures 3 and 4, it is possible to see that the comparisons projected between the two times and people are rather notional. If they are meant to show the two people as coextensive in their savagery, then the only markers are their relative nakedness, violent behaviour (skirmishes in the backdrop of Fig 3 (L) and severed heads in Fig 4), and primitive weapons (arrows in Fig 3 and lances in Fig 4). The postures, actions, and even appearance of the figures in the two sets of images all paint a picture that the savagery of the Picts is much

¹⁰¹ Emphasis mine.

more fearsome. Associating the Algonquians with this type of heightened ‘savage’ imagery does not serve the purpose of presenting them as ultimately compliant and easily vanquishable. Rather, what bound the two and justified the invocation of the Picts in a document of colonial promotion was an implicit narrative of the historical transaction between savagery and civility. Much like the Algonquians ‘discovered’ on the coastline of the New World, the Picts too had been peripheral figures in mainland Iron Age Britain. Popular imagination envisioned them as tattooed raiders who lived on the northern peripheries of ‘Bretainne’ and the beyond the wall of Roman Britannia.¹⁰² As untamed and uncolonised societies, the ancient Picts and contemporary Algonquians could then occupy the same position in the comparative matrix along which Harriot’s editorial decision was structured. The fact of Britain’s own ancient colonisation was the unacknowledged grounds for kinship with the natives of the New World, while serving as a heuristic reinforcement for the belief that an English colonising mission would be successful since tribes belong to its own past and periphery too had been ‘successfully’ civilised. This parallel between America and England was more obviously commemorated in a ballad from 1612 promoting the ‘success’ of the Virginia Company’s colonial ventures:

Who knowes not England once was like a Wildernesse and savage place,
Till government and use of men, that wildnesse did deface:
And so Virginia may in time, be made like England now¹⁰³

The political and moral context of proposals to colonise also relied heavily on the ideal of Romanitas to promote their cause. As Armitage points out, Richard Haklyut’s *Discourse on Western Planting* (1584) was presented to Elizabeth along with an additional document – a

¹⁰² The term ‘Pict’, as the Oxford English Dictionary notes, was not a self-appellation but a designation drawn from Latin ‘Picti’ (to paint, the root of ‘picture’), used by later writers in Old English chronicles and Irish annals on account of their alleged habit of painting or tattooing their bodies; See ‘Pict, n. and adj.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2017), <www.oed.com/view/Entry/143485> [accessed 5 October 2017]; see also Sally M. Foster, *Picts, Gaels and Scots: Early Historic Scotland* (London: Batsford, 1996), pp. 11-18.

¹⁰³ C. H. Firth, ‘The Second Part of London’s Lotterie’, in *An American Garland: Being a Collection of Ballads Relating to America 1563-1759*, ed. by Firth (Oxford: B. H. Blackwell, 1915), p. 24, cited by Armitage, ‘Literature and Empire’, p. 112.

Latin synopsis of Aristotle's *Politics*.¹⁰⁴ George Best's account of Martin Frobisher's first voyage in search of the Northwest Passage invoked Cicero's moral dictum of service to the commonwealth being the duty of man.¹⁰⁵ Analogies and discussions remained popular despite the fact that neither the English nor the Scots had settled anywhere decisively except Ireland until the 1620s, and that there appeared to be no systematic strategy of settlement, emigration or conquest despite several overseas adventures and widespread privateering. The site for imperial self-fashioning in the sixteenth century, then, was the idealised rhetoric promoting overseas colonial ventures.

Roman presences in early modern imperial ideas

Affirming the separation of the church of England from the Roman Catholic Church, the Act in Restraint of Appeals in 1533 declared that the realm of England was 'an empire' that 'hath been accepted in the world'.¹⁰⁶ This was an empire:

[...]governed by one supreme head and king, having the dignity and royal estate of the imperial crown of the same, unto whom a body politic, compact of all sorts and degrees of people divided in terms and by names of spirituality and temporalty, be bounden and ought to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience.¹⁰⁷

In this usage, the word empire corresponded to the Roman 'imperium', which originally signified the supreme authority held by a military commander and went on to denote any political community that was 'self-governing and acknowledged no higher allegiance'.¹⁰⁸

John Dee, the first to use the term 'British Empire' in a maritime context in *General and Rare Memorials Pertaining to the Perfecte Arte of Navigation* (1577), conceived of an empire of

¹⁰⁴ Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 107.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ *Tudor Constitutional Documents AD 1485-1603 with an historical commentary*, ed. by J. R. Tanner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 41.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Armitage, 'Literature and Empire', p. 103.

seas featuring a territorial core extending into the Northern Atlantic world. Dee advised Elizabeth to institute a ‘Petty Navy Royal’ for the protection of her claims on the Atlantic islands (including Britain, Ireland, Iceland, Greenland, and Friesland) and cited Pericles on Pompey on Athenian naval supremacy.¹⁰⁹ A few years earlier in 1568, Welsh antiquary Humphrey Llwyd had also made a British-Roman parallel by calling King Arthur’s monarchy under the last British kings the ‘Britannicum imperium’; the English translation of the work referred to the ‘British Empyre’ and its decadence.¹¹⁰

Roman echoes were persistent across these early definitions of the British Empire, thus far imagined in terms of territorial dominion by English monarchs, and overseas commercial ambition. Until the mid-seventeenth century, the British ‘Empire’ usually referred to Great Britain and Ireland rather than to territories further afield. The relatively restricted definition of the British Empire in the sixteenth century made it, as Armitage notes, ‘congeries of kingdoms and colonies within Britain and Ireland that were controlled by an actually or aspiringly British monarchy, imagined as centered upon London, and dominated by the English’.¹¹¹

Rome-inspired ideas had inflected the rhetoric of British monarchs even before the seventeenth century. Anglo-Saxon charters from the tenth century had described kings by the Latin term ‘Imperator’ or the Greek equivalent ‘Basileus’ (used for the Byzantine emperor of the Roman Empire in the East).¹¹² The expansion of the imperial idea using lessons from Roman history, the rise in British emigrant settlement and overseas commerce, and the rise of republicanism in seventeenth-century England, invoked the dilemma between the values of empire and liberty. Machiavelli’s *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (1531) was popular in England, and argued that the Roman Empire’s

¹⁰⁹ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of The British Empire*, p. 106.

¹¹⁰ Humphrey Llwyd, *Commentarioli Britannicae Descriptionis Fragmentum* (1572), cited by Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, p. 46.

¹¹¹ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of The British Empire*, p. 113.

¹¹² Norman Vance, ‘Imperial Rome and Britain’s Language of Empire 1600–1837’, *History of European Ideas* 26 (2000), 211–24 (p. 213).

excesses had wiped out the civic institutions of the Republic. The republican tradition had engendered ideas of a commitment to liberty with a responsibility for the collective well-being of the community. Yet Machiavelli had insisted on the complementary primacy of ‘greatness’ (*grandezza*) in defining the character of the commonwealth, suggesting that the compulsion to expand in the service of greatness would make it difficult to escape the loss of liberty.¹¹³ As Armitage has persuasively argued, attempts to reconcile the dilemma between liberty and empire in early modern England were made in the context of a gradually-emerging typology of a maritime, mercantile empire; a commercial ‘empire of the seas’ could generate wealth *and* promise grandeur without compromising on domestic stability and liberty.¹¹⁴

Defined in these terms, the British Empire had affinity not with Rome or empires of conquest like the Spanish Empire in the New World, but with successful contemporary commercial republics such as Florence, Venice, and the Dutch. The myth of the British Empire as an ‘empire of the seas’, run by sailors and traders rather than by armies, would also allow it to be imagined as an ‘empire of liberty’.¹¹⁵ This rhetorical strain contributed to the idea of a historically-distinct, modern British Empire, in which justice, civility, and liberty of its citizens was somehow compatible with mercantile acquisitiveness overseas. John Dryden’s *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders* (1666) exemplified the shift away from an idea of a Roman, martial empire as a touchstone of ‘greatness’ by celebrating Britain as a trading nation rather than an imperial power. The poem used the analogy between the Anglo-Dutch Wars and the Punic Wars between Carthage and Rome, to assert the significance of England and Carthage as great trading nations.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, pp. 126-28.

¹¹⁴ See, in particular, *Ibid.*, pp. 125-45.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

¹¹⁶ John Dryden, ‘Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders 1666’, in *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, ed. by W. D. Christie (London: Macmillan, 1870), pp. 35-86 (p. 44).

The repertoire of analogies with Rome across the chequered career of British imperial imagination framed historical events in line with MacLean's taxonomy of the ways seventeenth century poets described their present in the mirror of the past. The Roman Republic and Empire, Roman Britain, early modern England, and British India interacted in analogies in which specific 'historical allusions' were made to Roman myths, emperors, generals, military milestones. Rome offered glorious or cautionary modes of 'exemplary history', and emotive 'appeals to the past' did much to shape the rhetoric of Britain as a modern empire continuing in the spirit of, and improving upon, the great empires of antiquity. Plotted across these interactions, the story of England's early modern self-fashioning emerged in acts of emulation, projection, and assertions of distinctiveness. In the vexed discourse of the 'language question' in early modern England, Roman authority and all that it represented was indexed to Latin, as illustrated in the following statement by Richard Mulcaster in 1582:

For is it not in dede a meruellous bondage, to becom seruants to one tung for learning sake, the most of our time, with losse of most time, whereas we maie haue the verie same treasur in our own tung, with the gain of most time? our own bearing the ioyfull title of our libertie and fredom, the Latin tung remembring vs, of our thraldom & bondage? (p. 254)¹¹⁷

The Latin tongue represented the memory of England's oppression, and the unfathomed riches of English its potential for liberty and freedom. Yet the gains to learning had made this a 'marvellous' oppression. Richard Carew's 1595 essay 'The Excellency of the English Tongue' gave systematic English counterparts to classical greats:

Will you have Plato's vein? Read Sir Thomas Smith. The Ionic? Sir Thomas More. Cicero's? Ascham. Varro? Chaucer. Demosthenes? Sir John Cheke... Will you read Virgil? Take the earl of Surrey. Catullus? Shakespeare and Marlowe's fragment. Ovid? Daniel. Lucan?

¹¹⁷ Richard Mulcaster, *The First Part of the Elementarie Which Entreateth Chiefly of the Right Writing of Our English Tung* (London: T. Vautroullier, 1582). Further references to this edition of Mulcaster's *Elementarie* are given after quotations in the text.

Spenser. Martial? Sir John Davies and others. Will you have all in all for prose and verse?

Take the miracle of our age, Sir Philip Sidney.¹¹⁸

Carew's rhetorical flourish served to demonstrate that the English had successfully and systematically emulated classical styles and authors. Milton's list of civil bequests of Agricola also included the Roman gift of 'Latin Eloquence' to a select class of British people:

The Inhabitants rude and scatter'd, and by that the proner to Warr, he [Agricola] so perswaded as to build Houses, Temples, and Seats of Justice; and by praying the forward, quick'ning the slow, assisting all, turn'd the name of necessitie into an emulation. He caus'd moreover the Noblemens Sons to be bred up in liberal Arts; and by preferring the Witts of *Britain*, before the Studies of *Gallia*, brought them to affect the Latine Eloquence, who before hated the Language.¹¹⁹

In this characterisation, the Roman tuition of civility was necessary, wide-ranging, and had been internalised through education and public institutions. Recalcitrant 'natives' had been won over by being 'bred up in liberal Arts'. Centuries later in 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* would revisit this moment to imagine a revisionist possibility of an England without Roman tutelage:

Had our ancestors acted as the Committee of Public Instruction has hitherto noted, had they neglected the language of Thucydides and Plato, and the language of Cicero and Tacitus, had they confined their attention to the old dialects of our own island, had they printed nothing and taught nothing at the universities but chronicles in Anglo-Saxon and romances in Norman French, would England ever have been what she now is? What the Greek and Latin

¹¹⁸ Richard Carew, 'The Excellency of the English Tongue' (1595), in William Camden, *Remaines Concerning Britain* (1614), repr. in *Library of Old Authors* (London: John Russell, 1870), pp. 42-51 (p. 51).

¹¹⁹ Milton, p. 71.

were to the contemporaries of More and Ascham, our tongue is to the people of India. The literature of England is now more valuable than that of classical antiquity.¹²⁰

Macaulay used this analogy to argue for an English-focused ('Anglicist') policy of education in India. The moment projected an identification between sixteenth-century England, in which a 'great revival of letters' was focused on the writings of Greeks and Romans, and nineteenth-century India, in which a similar revival was due. Britain, under the sign of English language and literature, was now congruent with Greece and Rome. The analogy served the idea of an Anglicist revival in India by projecting English as being on a similar stage as India at a different, comparable point in its history. Having proven itself worthy of Greek and Roman tutelage, England was now an empire and not just an island; English was more than just an 'old dialect'; and the value of 'modern' literature of England now surpassed that of its mentors from 'classical antiquity'. The gains made by English through its own 'early' and 'late' modernity was being offered as a model for the Indian initiation into Western-style modernity. The following chapter engages with the discourse of one such initiation: the first British grammars of Hindustani language. A conspicuous rhetoric of affinity between English and Hindustani fashioned the Indian vernacular as suitably modern, and British tutelage as suitably modernising given the evidence of its own journey from neglect to triumph. I then revisit the milestones in the retroactive narrative of the early modern triumph of English to examine the rhetorical strategies of self-fashioning in the first English grammar that endorsed the idea of a nation on the cusp of a modern, commercial, cosmopolitan empire.

¹²⁰ Thomas B. Macaulay, 'Minute on Education', Feb 2, 1835, in *Selections from Educational Records, Bureau of Education, Part I (1781-1839)*, ed. by Henry Sharp (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1920), pp. 107-117 (p. 111).

CHAPTER 2

**A Fellowship of Vernaculars:
Affinity and Aspiration in John Gilchrist's Hindustani and William
Bullokar's English grammars**

The philological labours of surgeon, Indigo planter, linguist, translator, and language-entrepreneur at large, John Borthwick Gilchrist (1759–1841), are widely credited for having ‘invented’ Hindustani by rendering it consistent, rescuing its pedagogy from incompetent instructors, spurring official interest in Indian vernaculars, and in a less complimentary vein, for catalysing the split between Hindi and Urdu. Gilchrist’s *A Grammar of Hindoostanee Language* (1796) was the first to offer a systematic grammatical account of the language-complex dubbed Hindustani, while making a plea for it to be acknowledged as a sophisticated language worthy of wide-ranging use. It caught the attention of patrons that mattered: the Governor General of Bengal, Arthur Wellesley, and the Court of Directors of the East India Company. Gilchrist’s appointment in 1801 as Professor of Hindustani at the newly-established Fort William College for the training of British officials was a testament to the success of his appeal.

In an intellectual climate in which Sanskrit and Persian had captured the bulk of European philological interest, Gilchrist’s attention to the vernacular was in itself unusual. William Jones’ ‘inescapable hypothesis’ about a common Indo-European source language was predicated upon structural similarities observed between Sanskrit, Latin, and Greek.¹ Indian vernaculars, however, had not merited an equivalent scrutiny in this scheme. Further against the grain of extant colonial language primers for Hindustani (and its other appellations) that tended to treat it as a limited jargon, Gilchrist argued that it was capable of being represented grammatically and of serving as a nation-wide lingua franca. To that

¹ Martin L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 1.

end, his prefaces contained an uncharacteristic rhetorical move: the projection of affinities between Hindustani and English.

This chapter attends to the scattered analogies across Gilchrist's early works for Hindustani to show that they plotted an account of the early modernity of the English language based on its relationship with classical and vernacular tongues, its genealogy, and hybrid nature. This narrative construction featured complementary topoi: of a triumph of the English language, the fate of its subservience to other languages, and the memories of political conquest with which it had to contend. Captured in an analogy with a story of Hindustani, this account of the troubled yet triumphant fate of English gave a precedent and aspirational horizon to the colonial vernacular. The association between the two languages also helped stage the anxieties and fascinations surrounding the colonial construction of Hindustani -- its place in the pragmatics of empire and in orientalist acculturation, and as the conduit for the dilettante grammarian's ambition.

What aspects of this story of the origins, suppression, neglect, and rise of the English language recommended it as a useful comparandum for Gilchrist as he sought to fashion an embryonic 'early modernity' for Hindustani and himself as its farsighted foster-parent? To seek possible insights into this question, I revisit some texts and events that presaged the first monolingual grammar for English in the late sixteenth century: William Bullokar's *Bref Grammar* (1586). This inquiry leads us to interpret the vagaries in the fate of the English language before an account of its triumph took on a self-evident air.

Both Gilchrist and Bullokar sought to present the vernacular as an object worthy of study, and as suitable for wide use in emergent political units (empire and nation). The early grammars were in both cases products of individual enterprise, yet were inextricably linked to the exercise of political authority. Both were influenced by pedagogical grammatical traditions in which the domains of popular instruction and erudite learning overlapped and

remained in contest. Fashioning vernacular modernity was for both as much a project as a prospect. Associating the two linguists on the basis of these shared features, I suggest that the prefaces of Bullokar and Gilchrist shared a congruent reflex in which attempts to promote a grammatical rendition participated in fledgling visions of a cosmopolitan English nationhood at the turn of seventeenth century, and a reformist British Empire at the turn of the nineteenth century, respectively.

The following sections delineate Gilchrist's analogy by situating his works for Hindustani in their colonial contexts, after which I annotate his story of the development of English with early modern texts and events that provide the conceptual lens to examine William Bullokar's 1586 grammar.

What was colonial 'Hindustani'?

In its pre-colonial connotations, as a late eighteenth-century colonial construct, and as a linguistic identity entangled with those of Hindi and Urdu in subsequent public discourse, the term 'Hindustani' has had a history of inconsistent and contradictory definitions. It is widely agreed that the term 'Hindustani' was the favoured British term for the North Indian lingua franca spoken in and around the Delhi region. This dialect, known as 'Khari Boli', acquired a continuum of styles over time ranging from less to more Persianised variations.² Of these, the terms 'Hindi' and 'Hindavi', which emerged roughly around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, were Persianate adjectives signifying a 'language or resident of Hind' (the Persian language name for the subcontinent). The admixture in the region was acknowledged in the name 'rekhta' given to its literary/poetic style in which Persian and Hindi/Hindavi combined. The term 'Urdu' had its roots in the Turkish 'Oordoo', also etymologically linked to 'horde', and was stabilised in the eighteenth century to the adjectival compound 'Zubaan-e-Urdu-e-mua'lla-e-Shahajahanabad' (the language of

² Alison Safadi, 'The Colonial Construction of Hindustani: 1800-1947' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Goldsmiths University of London, 2012), p. 55.

the camp neighbourhood of the capital city Shahjahanabad).³ With its roots commonly ascribed to the Turkish ‘Oordoo’, also etymologically linked to ‘horde’, Urdu was easily associated with the patois of the army camp and its ‘bazaars’ (markets), consolidating the perception that it was somehow unsophisticated. Yet, as Shamsur Rehman Faruqi has argued, not many British accounts of how Urdu was named by its users were necessarily historically accurate. Further, local perceptions of the language varied by place and time. By the mid eighteenth century, for instance, there were popular and elitist positions among ‘Urdu’ users around Delhi, who sought to fit within the range of implied associations with the name ‘Urdu’. For some, ‘Urdu’ was the language of the ‘royal city’ (i.e. Delhi) and therefore closer to Persian, for others it was the language of the royal encampment used more informally around the court, and so less fastidiously linked to Persian.⁴

The Indian vernacular space represented a ‘unique network of giant coexisting speech communities’ utilising languages belonging to different language families, with a few dominant languages (Sanskrit, Persian and English) serving as link languages at different points in time.⁵ The Hindi grammatical tradition was essentially a pedagogically developed system for a vernacular which was itself fashioned in the act of philological description.⁶ The difficulty of circumscribing linguistic homogeneity in a multilingual space shaped the discourse of early colonial grammars and lexicons, which gave a fair amount of attention to naming and describing the linguistic unit they had provisionally fixed in a bid to pick up rudimentary communicative skills in a foreign land. The regional vernacular, best understood as a continuum of several regional dialects and admixtures, had been known by various names in precolonial times. Despite the variation in naming, it had been registered that there did exist a recognisably coherent vernacular. European visitors since the late

³ See Shamsur Rehman Faruqi, ‘History, Faith, Politics: Origin Myths of Urdu and Hindi’, in *Early Urdu Literary Culture and History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 21-44.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 21-44.

⁵ Tej K. Bhatia, ‘English and Vernaculars of India: Contact and Change’, *Applied Linguistics* 3.3 (1982), 235-45 (p. 235).

⁶ Tej K. Bhatia, *A History of the Hindi Grammatical Tradition* (New York: Brill, 1987), p. 13.

seventeenth century had called it Indostan, Moors, Hindustanic, or, following Gilchrist's more abiding ascription in his late eighteenth-century grammars, 'Hindoostanee'.

Though Gilchrist was widely credited with having 'invented' Hindustani as a composite vernacular by delineating it in grammatical renditions, what Hindustani actually was remained, as Safadi points out, 'a matter of confusion and contradiction during the entire colonial period'.⁷ The terminological instability was exacerbated by the confusion between the terms Hindustani, Hindi and Urdu. Gilchrist had insisted that 'Hindoostanee' was to be the 'general, conciliating, comprehensive term' across India, despite the fact that 'the natives and others call it also *Hindee*, Indian, from *Hind*, the ancient appellation of *India*...'.⁸ That this naming was a matter of judicious choice by a colonial agency was clear when he insisted on adhering to his opinion that 'we should invariably discard all other denominations of the popular speech of the country, including the unmeaning word Moors, and substitute for them *Hindoostanee*, whether the people here constantly do so or not'.⁹ However in an 1804 work of bilingual dialogues, Gilchrist used 'Hindoostani' in the English translation of phrases while consistently using the word 'Hindee' in the actual Hindustani versions. This, as Safadi has noted, reinforced his statement that the preferred term by Indians was 'Hindee' and not 'Hindoostanee'.¹⁰ Elsewhere, he acknowledged the presence of 'Oordoo' as a cognate of the term 'Rekhtu', describing the latter 'that mixed dialect also called Oordoo or the polished language of the Court'.¹¹

Gilchrist's definition of the language divided it into a hierarchy of styles: a highly Persianised court style, middle style of educated men, and the rustic Hindawi.¹² He favoured the middle style, which was not excessively Persianised, and was based on the khari boli dialect. As Safadi summarises, 'Gilchrist's construct of Hindustani was the entire khari boli

⁷ Safadi, p. 53.

⁸ Gilchrist, *Anti-Jargonist*, p. iii-iv.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. iii-iv.

¹⁰ Safadi, p. 55.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

continuum, as it existed in 1800, including both Perso-Arabic and indigenous vocabulary and written in either Persian or Nagari script.¹³ While his hierarchy distinguished between styles favoured by Hindus and Muslims, he included both in the ‘umbrella’ term Hindustani.¹⁴

The inclusiveness in Gilchrist’s influential construction proved to be a source of confusion for subsequent learners and linguists. Some preferred to see Hindustani as synonymous with Hindi, others conflated Hindustani with Urdu, or continued using them interchangeably and arbitrarily.¹⁵ In sum, the two main types of definitions were mutually contradictory causing a fundamental confusion. Hindustani ‘was either seen as an overarching all-inclusive language encompassing the entire khari boli continuum, or it was equated with Urdu. Since khari boli was simply a dialect of Hindi and Urdu was Persianized khari boli, this rendered Urdu (and therefore Hindustani) a dialect of Hindi.’¹⁶ The confusions continued to feature in linguistic publications till the early twentieth century, and Safadi demonstrates, were translated into the practical apparatus of the examination syllabi that civil and military officers had to follow.¹⁷ Even when the syllabi were standardised in the early 1860s, the definitions and usage were not rationalised.¹⁸ The British had ‘gravitated towards the Urdu end of the continuum, and, by 1895, the issue had become academic as it was decided to exclude Hindi and Nagari from the examinations syllabuses’.¹⁹

Nevertheless, the evidence of variations and reversals in official usage and syllabi that Safadi provides shows that ‘Hindustani’ and ‘Urdu’ were interchangeable terms, and were

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁵ Safadi’s account of the theoretical opinions about the definition of Hindustani held by British linguists between the early 1800s and 1940s shows that the confusions triggered by Gilchrist were not altogether resolved; the varied accounts of what Hindustani was (especially in relation to Urdu or Hindi) in linguistic texts stemmed from the initial confusions even though the knowledge of linguistics had evolved considerably since Gilchrist’s time. See Ibid., pp. 54-65.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 69.

often conflated despite occasional attempts to choose one over the other.²⁰ For instance, an attempt to standardise the terminology took place in 1903 during a discussion about changes to military examinations; the Government of India accepted the Board of Examiners' recommendation to use 'Hindustani' as the official term instead of 'Urdu'. Though this decision was officially endorsed in 1906, Hindustani and Urdu continued to be used interchangeably in official documents, examination syllabi, and textbooks. This decision was officially reversed in 1922 when the 'Urdu Preliminary Examinations' were introduced; discussions about changes to examination patterns that took place in 1924-27 and in 1932 both officially used Urdu rather than Hindustani.²¹ It came to pass since the beginning of the twentieth century that the British had increasingly used the word 'Hindustani' to mean the 'register of Urdu that they themselves learnt', a tendency that had become received wisdom by World War II.²² Yet, as Safadi demonstrates from the evidence of the minutes of official meetings of the India Office till the early 1930s, both terms continued to be used arbitrarily to refer to one another.²³

Despite occasional missives such as those above, the confusions within its definitions were never addressed programmatically. George Grierson's account of Hindustani in his monumental survey of Indian languages indicated the state of affairs in 1914. The survey's definitions of Hindustani were rife with qualifications about its regional, national, oral and literary identities. The survey also acknowledged that its lived identity exceeded the limits of colonial definition. Grierson described 'Hindustani' as the most important dialect of Western Hindi, whose home was a region spread over North and Northwestern India and defined as the 'centre of Hindu civilisation'.²⁴ Though the term Hindustani 'was coined under European influence' and meant 'the language of Hindostan', he noted that it

²⁰ See *Ibid.*, pp. 65-71.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, pp 69-70.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁴ *Linguistic Survey of India*, 11 vols., collected and edited by George Abraham Grierson, Vol. IX, Indo-Aryan Family, Central Group, Part I: Specimens of Western Hindi and Panjabi (Calcutta : Office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, India, 1916), p. 1.

‘connotes much more than it literally signifies’.²⁵ This was mainly because other languages besides Hindustani were spoken in the region, and Hindustani itself was extant in different forms beyond its regional limits. As a spoken vernacular, it was limited to ‘a comparatively small area in the North West corner’ of Hindustan. As a literary form ‘distinct from vernacular Hindostani’, it was ‘current, in various forms, as the language of polite society, and as a *lingua franca* over the whole of India proper.’²⁶ The survey registered three main varieties of Hindustani:

Literary Hindostani proper, employed by both Musalmans and Hindus for literary purposes and as *lingua franca*; Urdu, employed chiefly by Musalmans and by Hindus who have adopted the Musalman system of education, and a modern development, called Hindi, employed only by Hindus who have been educated in a Hindi system. Urdu, itself, has two varieties, the standard literary form of Delhi and Lucknow, and the Dakhini, spoken, and used as a literary medium, by Musalmans of Southern India.²⁷

Based on the vernacular Hindostani, literary Hindostani ‘grew up as a *lingua franca* in the polyglot bazaar attached to the Delhi court, and was carried everywhere in India by the lieutenants of the Mughul Empire.’²⁸ ‘Its simple grammar and enormous vocabulary,’ he added, ‘have rendered it able to fill the need which has always been felt in such a polyglot tract as India for a *lingua franca*.’²⁹ The term ‘Hindi’, referring to ‘the Sanskritised, or at least the non-Persianised, form of Hindostani’ was introduced under English influence, whence it ‘fulfilled a want’ and ‘gave a *lingua franca* to the Hindus’.³⁰ Like Hindi prose, Urdu prose too came into existence as a literary medium at the beginning of the nineteenth century ‘under English influence’, and to fulfill the need for text-books in ‘both forms of Hindostani’.³¹ He implied that Hindustani represented a happy median between modern

²⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 44.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

³¹ Ibid., p. 47.

Hindi and Urdu as it was ‘capable of being written in both Persian and Deva-nagari characters, without purism, avoiding alike the excessive use of either Persian or Sanskrit words when employed for literature’.³² Further describing Hindustani as being used by ‘better classes of Musalmans, by Native Christians, by educated Hindus as a *lingua franca*, and very generally in the large cities,’³³ Grierson implied that this dialect was rendered standard as much by its preferential use by urban elites as by its description in European grammars or ubiquity across a large region.

Evaluating the extent of Hindustani’s reach as *lingua franca* had also divided opinion through the nineteenth century. Lauding Gilchrist for simplifying the acquisition of ‘an elegant language’, orientalist H.T. Colebrooke had in 1801 called Hindustani a ‘common vehicle of colloquial intercourse among all well-educated natives, and among the illiterate also, in many provinces of India’, and said that it was ‘almost every where intelligible to some among the inhabitants of every village....’³⁴ H.H. Wilson, on the other hand, was doubtful that it was a vehicle of communication across classes and regions. In his 1855 *Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms*, Wilson held that Hindustani (conflated with Urdu) was one of two classes of languages of British India, that represented the admixture of the ‘original languages of the Mohammedan conquerors with those of the Hindus’. It was, however, ‘loosely spread’, concentrated only at the ‘still subsisting Mohammadan courts’, commonly used among the ‘native officers of our courts especially in communication with their European superiors’, understood ‘extensively, although not always accurately’ by the merchant classes and occasionally by soldiers, but was virtually unknown to the ‘agricultural population.’³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., p.170.

³⁴ H.T. Colebrooke, ‘On the Sanscrit and Pracrit Languages’, *Asiatic Researches*, vol. vii, (Calcutta, 1801) pp. 199-231, rpt. in *Miscellaneous Essays by H.T. Colebrooke in 2 Volumes*, Vol. II (London: W.H. Allen, 1837), pp. 1-34 (p. 26).

³⁵ H.H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms and of Useful Words Occurring in Official Documents Relating to the Administration of the Government of British India* (London: W.H. Allen, 1855), p. xix.

Seeking to offer a definitive account of Indian languages, Grierson's Linguistic Survey had demonstrated its vigilance to the discriminations within the term's definition and use. It acknowledged that the connotations of the term 'Hindustani' were in surplus of anything a standard reference could fix; its own attempts at categorical definition slipped into instability. In sum, they captured the tangled signifying relationships between Hindustani, Hindi, and Urdu in British eyes. Hindustani was a dialect of Western Hindi, a vernacular in some regions and not others. Literary Hindustani — which had served as the standard lingua franca since Mughal times — had several variants, including Hindi and Urdu — which were divided by script, preferential idioms, word orders, and vocabulary. 'Hindi' itself was many things: a region-wide dialect, an indigenous language of the Hindu lifeworld, as well as a British invention in its modern form. Having emerged under English influence, the modern standard forms of Hindustani fulfilled the pedagogical needs of British learners as well as addressed a tacit need for a common lingua franca. When described as a polite speech and the language of educated Musalmans, Hindustani was more closely allied to Urdu. Yet as a language that was capable of avoiding excessive purism, it was also separable from the segregated modern shapes taken by Hindi and Urdu.

Affinity as the pretext for reform in Gilchrist's renditions

Despite the confusions it engendered, Gilchrist's early construction was distinctive in that it did not take the vernacular's purported inferiority for granted. 'May we not', he wrote in 1803, 'reason thus from analogy, that the Hindoostanee will ascend as high on the Indian scale....as the English has done in a similar predicament in our own country?'³⁶ If we take Gilchrist at his word here, it becomes clear that his analogies did not serve just a simple heuristic relay of information between a source and target language. They mobilised a deeper argument that Hindustani could be the singular lingua franca across India and could

³⁶ British Library, India Office Records, Home Miscellaneous Series, IOR/H: 1600-1918, Vol. DLIX, June 27, 1803, p. 256.

conform to a consistent progression already exemplified by English. In another unusual quip, Gilchrist saw Hindustani participating in a global philological fellowship: ‘It will’, he wrote, ‘doubtless be deemed a curious inversion of opticks in philology, to examine English and Latin through a Hindoostanee medium’.³⁷

That Hindustani could mediate in English and Latin linguistics was a tantalising, radical ambition for a colonial vernacular that was yet to be described consistently. Yet ascribing precocious global ambition to Hindustani also served Gilchrist’s promotional design in more ways than one. As Richard Steadman-Jones has suggested, this fleeting, speculative argument was one of several instances through which Gilchrist sought to convey that his philological success with Hindustani in the colony qualified him to intervene in linguistic, political, and intellectual debates in the metropolis.³⁸ Invoking optical images rife in the discourse of natural science, the metaphor assigned to his speculations about English and Latin ‘a little of the glamour of scientific discovery’ and reinforced an idea that this grammar would transform British readers’ perception of the language-object in the colony.³⁹ It also helped frame him as a maverick linguist who approached Hindustani with a gravitas that others reserved for a study of classical languages or of English. At stake in Gilchrist’s grammatical representation, then, were ‘opticks’ of how Hindustani, its mentor, and the character of East India Company’s dominion would appear.

As we shall see, Gilchrist’s was a very qualified sense of parity, which perpetuated the imperial power gradient by apprehending the two language-objects of his comparison at separate stages of development. The English of the past, to which the present Hindustani was kindred, had in its current stage overcome the obstacles of the kind that still impeded Hindustani’s development. Yet the presentation of Hindustani and English as potential equals enabled language reform to be incorporated into the idiom of a reformist empire in

³⁷ John B. Gilchrist, *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee* (Calcutta: Stuart and Cooper, 1787-90), p. xlvi.

³⁸ Richard Steadman-Jones, “‘An Inversion of Opticks’: Glimpses of English in the Hindustani Scholarship of John Gilchrist (1759–1841)”, *Historiographia Linguistica* 33.1/2 (2006), 169-93 (pp. 173-76).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

which a vernacular triumph would be facilitated by British reformers with a progressive eye on their own past. When comparing it with a less-than-ideal English of times past, Gilchrist presented Hindustani's inferiority as a consequence of neglect and offered it reformist nurture in a linguistic, social, and political network. His idiom of affinity had a strategic complexity that was consonant with the complex shape of affinities recorded in British accounts of Indian encounters.

Through the course of their dominion, British attitudes towards India and Indians were far from consistent, and displayed 'competing and fluctuating logics of similarity and difference'.⁴⁰ The most famous purveyor of affinity in the imperial vision in the East India Company era was Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of the Bengal Presidency (and de facto of India), who was known for his orientalist policies designed to forge conciliations between the emergent empire and its subjects. Between 1773 and 1785, Hastings established 'orientalism as the official policy and the unofficial mood of the fledgling British government in Bengal'.⁴¹ Hastings' personal fascination with Islamic art and literature, and more broadly with Indian culture, was well known. He was a patron of scholars and poets, promoted an attempt to found Persian professorships at Oxford, commissioned translations of Arabic and Sanskrit legal texts into Persian and English, patronised a grammar of the Bengali Language compiled by Nathaniel Halhed, and founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 whose periodicals featured several prominent British scholars of 'Orientalist Studies'.

If comparative philology's paradigms had served matters of fact or flights of fancy, they had offered intellectual solidarity to Hastings' vision for Company policy. As Governor-general, Hastings had in 1780 supported a petition by a delegation of literate elite Muslims to found an institution of Islamic studies known as the Calcutta Madrasa. The policy

⁴⁰ Lowe, p. 45.

⁴¹ Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, introduction to *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781-1843*, ed. by Zastoupil and Moir, London Studies on South Asia, 18 (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), pp. 1-72 (p. 2).

outlook enabled by this gesture of support allowed civil servant Jonathan Duncan to successfully convince the then-governor general Lord Cornwallis to establish the Sanskrit College in Benaras in 1791 to endear the Government to the ‘native Hindoos’.⁴² Orientalist Indophilia aside, Hastings’ conciliatory position also saw the logic of securing power by fostering affinity to win popular support among Indians during a transition of power. By the late seventeenth century, as the British role in India grew more complex, cultural knowledge was codified in collaborative texts (language helps, grammars, translations, lexicons), which signalled, in Cohn’s summary, ‘the invasion of an epistemological space occupied by a great number of diverse Indian scholars, intellectuals, teachers, scribes, priests, lawyers, officials, merchants, and bankers, whose knowledge as well as they themselves were to be converted into instruments of colonial rule’.⁴³

An army of knowledge intermediaries ran the everyday affairs of the empire under the supervisory scrutiny of the British ‘masters’. Colonial policies were heavily informed by, and formed in dialogue with, influential locals who in turn helped to consolidate popular support for British policies. In most cases, their interests converged ‘if only temporarily and imperfectly’ with those of the British, and they could become willing allies and intermediaries.⁴⁴ A network of local informants and the rich indigenous public sphere, termed the ‘Indian ecumene’ by Bayly, was an active source of intelligence, information, and also on occasion a space of critical opposition.⁴⁵ Reckoned in terms of the directions taken by British education policy, early conciliatory positions such as the orientalism of Hastings gradually made way for those in favour of distance and separation; the 1857 uprising exacerbated the rift between the colonist and colonisers, muting the enthusiasm for conciliation as well as for reformist intervention. However, despite the ‘fluctuating

⁴² Zastoupil and Moir, p. 3.

⁴³ Cohn, ‘The Command of Language’, p. 21.

⁴⁴ Zastoupil and Moir, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Bayly demonstrates that highly-functioning indigenous networks of information (and successful manipulation of them by the British) significantly aided British military and diplomatic expansion in India. This was a diverse public sphere encompassing elite and popular cultures, literate classes as well itinerant folk bards and rumour mongers, knowledge intermediaries that mediated translations of law and administrative customs from the Persianate world that the British sought gradually to replace. See Bayly, *Empire and Information*, pp. 180-211.

logics' manifest in the cultural mission of the early years of East India Company rule, it is possible to see that Gilchrist shared a commitment to an idea of the British rule as a force for good.

Colonial education policy and the fate of affinity

Just as there was no concerted attempt to reach a standard definition for Hindustani, there was no uniform education policy or plan for the subcontinent despite the many strident views about the nature of education for Indians.⁴⁶ The shifting policy positions showcased the changes in the ideological contours of British attitudes to the education of Indians. The alternative to Hastings' conciliatory vision was expressed in two different conventions -- that of the evangelists, and of the Utilitarians. Consequently, it was possible to discern three dominant viewpoints about the Britain's cultural mission in India: the so-called orientalist (Indophiles who championed the study of indigenous languages and culture); missionaries (who sought to spread the Gospel and reform the perceived ills of Indian society); and the Utilitarians (who saw the scientific and material progress exemplified by the Industrial Revolution as the guideline and horizon for reform in India, and championed 'useful' education).⁴⁷ The missionary Charles Grant's *Observations on the State of Society Among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (1792) had argued that a policy of conciliation was detrimental to the moral improvement of Indians, and had lobbied for missionary activity

⁴⁶ As Clive Whitehead points out, there were no attempts to introduce an imperial Education Act, to impose uniform provision of schooling, to regulate education throughout India, or to impose a more globally uniform policy encompassing all British colonial territories overseen by the Colonial Office in London. In place of a coherent education plan, the East India Company, and later the Council for India in London, periodically issued statements of principles broad enough to be applicable across a variety of conditions. These caused significant regional variations. Further, though education was a matter for the East India Company before passing on to the Calcutta-based Indian Government overseen by the India Office in London, the day-to-day administration was devolved to various Indian provincial governments. The Wood's Despatch on Education (1854) and its endorsement by the Indian Government in 1859 acknowledged the need for a more direct involvement in Indian education but effectively left a lot of the initiative to market forces. The general tenor of education policy in and after the 1850s came to be that the 'state would subsidize local initiative in establishing schools by means of grants-in-aid but it was widely acknowledged that the Government had neither the resources nor the ideological commitment to establish a uniform and comprehensive nationwide system of schooling'; See Clive Whitehead, 'The historiography of British Imperial education policy, Part I: India', *History of Education* 34.3 (2005) 315–29, (pp. 318–20).

⁴⁷ An account of contrasting attitudes about Britain's cultural mission in India can be found in G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India 1784–1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

to be allowed in British territories. His case for the propagation of English rested on the comparative evidence of the popularity of Persian -- the 'official' language of Mughal governance -- among educated Hindus. Like Persian, he argued, English too was bound to be enthusiastically adopted by Indians were it to become the decreed language of government.⁴⁸ An official *and* popular English would then become the most efficient vehicle for the dissemination of Christian virtue and good governance.

The Charter Act of 1813 had marked a turning point in the history of British pedagogy towards Indians. Directed to set aside an annual sum of at least Rs 100,000 for the education of Indians, the Company was made directly responsible for the education of Indians. In a reversal of the Company's initial policy of religious neutrality, the Act also opened up the field for missionaries who were now allowed to preach and to establish schools.⁴⁹ The 1830s saw a public debate being played between the so-called 'Orientalists' and 'Anglicist' factions within the first Committee of Public Instruction instituted in Calcutta in 1823.⁵⁰

Thomas Macaulay's famous and contentious Minute on Indian Education in 1835 was a summation of the Anglicists' position. Endorsed by the then Governor-General William Bentinck, it helped direct British education policy to promoting English language instruction in schools and dedicating company funds to the pursuit of European arts and sciences. Across the various beliefs about the type and medium of education ran a common thread, best summarised in a minute issued by J. Farish in the Bombay Presidency in 1838:

⁴⁸ Zastoupil and Moir, p. 7.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 318.

⁵⁰ For an annotated account of the Orientalist vs. Anglicist debate, see Ibid., pp. 1-72.

The Natives must either be kept down by a sense of our power, or they must willingly submit from a conviction that we are more wise, more just, more humane, and more anxious to improve their condition than any other rulers they could possibly have.⁵¹

This view was tantamount to a justification of colonial subjugation of Indians, whether the idiom was one of courting affinity or prudent difference. As the British presence in India grew in size and complexity, these idioms also inflected the pragmatic need of learning languages to communicate with and to command the natives.

Gilchrist's moment: Language learning and the colonial enterprise

The early years of the British in India were characterised by an overwhelming focus on learning Persian as the language of politics, together with inconsistent attempts to learn a bare minimum of vernaculars for quotidian communication.⁵² The years between 1770 and 1785 were a time of apparatus-formation in which began the 'program of appropriating Indian languages to serve as a crucial component in their construction of the system of rule'.⁵³ The Asiatic Society of Bengal, founded in 1784, under Hastings' patronage and with William Jones at its head, represented one dominant ideological attitude of the British. Assimilation, curiosity, revival were keywords in this enterprise of understanding Indian culture sympathetically by looking to the cultural reserves of its Muslim and Hindu classical heritage.

From the 1790s, the Court of Directors of the East India Company had stressed the need for its employees to become proficient in what were called 'the country languages', but there had been no regular system of teaching and learning other than a reliance on Indian

⁵¹ J. Farish, 'Minute' issued in the Bombay Presidency, 1838, cited by Gauri Viswanathan, *Masks of Conquest: Literary Study and British Rule in India*, Social Foundations of Aesthetic Forms Series (New York NY: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 2.

⁵² Cohn, 'The Command of Language', pp. 17-20.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

interpreters.⁵⁴ By 1801, incoming British civilian officials were required to pass a written examination in Hindustani and participate in annual public disputation ceremonies. Formal examinations in Hindustani had been decreed by Governor-General Arthur Wellesley, whose enthusiastic support had led to the establishment of the Fort William College in Calcutta in 1801. The college was established without explicit sanction from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, earning their displeasure from its very beginnings.⁵⁵ Wellesley's justification for the College was laid out in his famous presentation to the Court of Directors of the East India Company on July 10, 1800. As the Oxford of the East, Fort William would foster a capable and disciplined class of European civil servants. His plea was instructive in the way it acknowledged the growing complexities of the Company's activities in the empire, and sought to re-describe its identity beyond the simplistically mercantilist. He implied that the British imperial identity mediated by the Company's commercial presence in India had a character distinct from European mercantilism. 'Even that department of the empire', Wellesley said, 'which is denominated exclusively commercial, requires knowledge and habits different in considerable degree from those which form the mercantile character in Europe'.⁵⁶

Any discussion of Indian languages served to demonstrate his pedagogic philosophy, in which young covenanted boys could master the pragmatics of life in India through a wide-ranging yet specialised academic training in a collegiate atmosphere. Commercial education, he declared, was not enough to train qualified servants. In the same vein as Hastings, Wellesley too noted that the 'happiness and welfare' (p. 326) of company's native subjects was an important goal of civil service. A civil servant was no longer merely a 'writer, factor, and merchant' but engaged in responsible tasks such as dispensation of justice,

⁵⁴ Extract Public Letter to Fort St George, May 1797, India Office Records, IOR/F/4/300/6934 cited by Safadi, p. 9.

⁵⁵ Contentions between Wellesley and the Court of Directors only escalated before the eventual dissolution of the College in 1854; in 1806, another training college had been established in Haileybury, England though graduating civilians from Haileybury had the option of learning languages at Fort William.

⁵⁶ *The Despatches, Minutes, and Correspondence, of the Marquess Wellesley, K. G.: During His Administration in India*, ed. by Robert M. Martin, 5 vols (London: John Murray, 1836-37), II (1836), p. 328. Further references to Richard Wellesley's presentation to the Board of Directors of the East India Company from this edition of his selected works are given after the quotations/mentions in the text.

administering revenue collection, and maintaining civil order in a vast and populous world: '[t]he civil servants of the English East India Company, therefore, can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern; they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign (p. 329).' A 'civil' service, in every sense of the word, would need to match the relevance of mercantilist and military instruments, if not altogether supersede them: '[i]n the civil service we must now seek, not the instruments by which kingdoms are overthrown, revolutions governed, or wars conducted, but an inexhaustible supply of useful knowledge, cultivated talents, and well ordered and disciplined morals (p. 340)'.

A cultured, utilitarian, empathetic class of British men, Wellesley suggested, would lead the charge for the powerful sovereign. Rather more strategically, he invoked pragmatic and commemorative justifications too: the college would help regulate the hiring of interpreters (p. 340), catch incoming civil servants at an impressionable age before they could get corrupted (p. 341-43), and would be an ideal way to memorialise the Company's conquest of Mysore at the close in 1799 of the three-decades long Anglo-Mysore wars (p. 269).

Gilchrist's first grammar for Hindustani was closely allied with Wellesley and shared his strategic invocations to pragmatism, sophistication, and deeper intellectual involvement in the language's vernacular culture. His own chequered career had begun in 1782 when he arrived in Bombay as an assistant surgeon with the Royal Navy. In February 1782, he was appointed an assistant surgeon with the East India Company's Bengal army, and was promoted to surgeon in October 1794. After a period of extended leave studying the vernacular languages of India, he had by 1798 produced his early works -- a dictionary, grammar, and a composite language-learning textbook, *The Oriental Linguist* -- and secured a commission to teach Hindustani and Persian to the Company's junior servants. In 1800, he

was appointed the first professor of Hindustani at Fort William College.⁵⁷ His early grammars and dictionaries sought to sell Hindustani to a wide range of skeptics as well as enthusiasts of Indian languages. In his rhetoric, the conciliatory orientalism of Warren Hastings collaborated with the Anglicist-flavoured idea of keeping English as a worthy model. Yet though Hindustani was in a way ‘classicised’ by rendering it grammatical, it was not in thrall to classical Sanskrit or courtly Persian. Nor was English given an overtly superior position. The representation of Hindustani as the ‘language of command’ in these grammars staged a modulated performance of what British command could look or sound like.

Gilchrist’s traditions: Colonial grammars, Anglophone language study

The earliest colonial grammars for Hindustani did not quite propose a theory of grammar or even that a latent system lurked amid a polyvalent complexity. It was more common for the features of the vernacular to be described in relation to how contrary, unsystematic or difficult it appeared to a European’s socio-linguistic orientation.⁵⁸ Dutch merchant J.J. Ketelaar’s 1698 grammar has been widely considered to be the oldest grammar of the Hindustani language. Its existence was known, though no printed copies were known to have survived until 1935. It was by and large held that the first known grammar of Hindustani was written in Latin by Benjamin Schultz in about 1744-45. Ketelaar’s grammar had noted that three languages -- Hindustani, Persian, and Moorish -- dominated the Indian linguistic space. Moorish appeared to refer to a variety of Hindustani spoken in the Deccan region in Southern India.⁵⁹ Ketelaar’s text focused on transliterating and pronouncing Hindustani words in Dutch. It contained a lexicon followed by short

⁵⁷ Gilchrist’s fortunes did not last very long; after an internal disagreement about the topic of public disputations, Gilchrist resigned from the Fort William College in 1804 and then from the Company altogether in 1809. By 1816, after a few years of political activism in Scotland, he set up a business offering private tuition to young British men bound for India. In 1818, he was re-hired by the company to teach assistant surgeons at London’s Oriental Institution, from which he also resigned in 1825.

⁵⁸ Bhatia, *The Hindi Grammatical Tradition*, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁹ Bhatia, ‘English and Vernaculars of India’, p. 10.

grammatical description, which ordered words in functional lists and semantic classes such as poisons, illnesses, poisonous animals and words for ‘God’, ‘the world’, and ‘the winds’.

Attitudes of disdain toward speakers of Hindustani could be seen in Ketelaar’s description of it in his introductory remarks as a language of barbarians with little erudite content. The author directed his frustrations not at the phonetic and phonological incommensurabilities between two language systems, but to the poor enunciation of Indians. It presented data on the vernacular language, and was designed for specific and language learning for commercial use rather than for a general scholarly perusal, even though grammatical categories were borrowed from classical grammar. In 1703, Francois Marie, a Capuchin friar in Surat, had compiled the *Thesaurus Linguae Indianae* which was the first dictionary of Latin and French to Hindustani. It contained Hindustani glosses in the devanagari script along with Roman transliteration, explained phrases in Latin, and provided French equivalents. Marie’s text, like Ketelaar’s, acknowledged and emphasised the hybrid character of this vernacular, and opted to write it in the devanagari script, prefiguring the idea of modern Hindi as a potential link language across large parts of the subcontinent.⁶⁰ These early linguistic works followed what Tej K. Bhatia has called a ‘religious-colonial-commercial’ model that represented a compromise between the sociological and purely linguistic view of language.⁶¹

In the relative absence of materials and reliable interlocutors, any grammatical endeavour needed to rely on individual intellectual enterprise. Even before systematic grammars were published for it, several pamphlets, notes, and manuscript-aids were in circulation for use by English East India Company officials. These works were pragmatic rather than

⁶⁰ Stuart McGregor, ‘Progress of Hindi Part I: Development of a Trans-regional idiom’, in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia* *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. by Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 912-57 (pp. 947-49).

⁶¹ See Tej K. Bhatia, ‘Religious-Colonial Models of Language and Early Hindi Grammars’, *Lingua* 65 (1985), pp. 123-34.

analytical texts. They served very specific pedagogical needs, and did not aim to provide an overarching system for an ill-differentiated vernacular. Even while they were open to idiolectal variations, the grammars favoured spoken over the written versions, and thus effectively preferred the Perso-Arabic style spoken in the majority of the Northern hinterland. They focused on presenting rather than analysing data, adopted an informal attitude towards the structural description of a language, were non-prescriptive, and featured socio-cultural guides for commercial visitors.

Following in the spirit of the early colonial commercial grammars, George Hadley's *Grammatical Remarks on the Practical and Vulgar Dialect of the Indostan Language* (1772) had become a popular grammar and dictionary among British men in India, and had gone into seven editions. By the third edition, the word 'current' replaced 'vulgar', and the edition's role as an easy guide to getting the idiom right stressed by including 'familiar phrases and dialogues'. Though Hadley first devoted thirty pages to the grammar, the preface was over double its size, with an even bigger bilingual dictionary bookending it. The vernacular was seen as a 'corrupt dialect' of the troops under his command. Yet, Hadley did note that there was a latent grammatic principle (at least the possibility of it) derived from a multitude of invading influences. 'The language here treated of,' he wrote, 'is a jargon of Tartar, Arabic, Persian, Bengal's Nagree, and Portugeze'.⁶² Hindustani's family resemblance to its more powerful parents was expressed in an analogy featuring French and English: 'The Arabic is the parent of the Persic, and the Persian court and language effect the Eastern nations, as France and its language influence the Western'.⁶³

Hadley's own stated intention was to balance practical teaching of idiomatic usage with a reform of this 'barren dialect' by 'wresting' it into a system that 'make[s] it correspond with

⁶² George Hadley, *A Compendious Grammar*, 3rd edn, (London: J. Sewell, 1796), p. iv.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

grammatical rules, instead of making proper allowances for irregularities'.⁶⁴ This grammar, though more arbitrarily selective than systematic, was significant in that it was the first modelled after a grammar of the English language.⁶⁵ John Ferguson's *A Grammar of the Hindustan Language* (1773) was largely a derivative work, displaying many similarities with Hadley's grammar and Schultz's rendering of the very first Dutch Hindustani grammar of Ketelaar.⁶⁶ The presence of these unacknowledged similarities was, as Bhatia's assessment notes, not blatant plagiarism but suggestive of the fact that the influence of early grammars on successive works had begun to emerge.⁶⁷ In one notable continuity with Hadley, Ferguson was keen for Hindustani to shed allegiance to Persian by abandoning the Perso-Arabic script, the use of which he saw as tantamount to slavery.⁶⁸

Participants in the tentative, unacknowledged tradition of colonial vernacular grammars, Hadley and Ferguson were also united in their view that Hindustani needed to be more independent from Persian. If Hadley had insisted on this by locating Hindustani's origins in military and commercial jargon, Ferguson had made a case for changing the Perso-Arabic script system. Gilchrist's grammar went several steps further. He made a point of demonstrating Hindustani's independence from the regime of both Persian and Sanskrit, and also posited that it was a sophisticated language admitting of structure, consistency and a variety of registers. In that, it could be the language both of military command and of polite conversation; of trade and of poetry; of the lower judiciary and of philosophical/civil disputations. It could be written in Perso-Arabic or Nagari script, but would preferably be transliterated in Roman alphabet under an 'orthoepigraphical' system proposed by himself. While this all-encompassing scope for Hindustani was ideologically kindred with the conciliatory orientalism such as that of Hastings, Gilchrist was also more shrewd in assessing his market, and more guarded in its assessment of Indians. As Steadman-Jones

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. vii.

⁶⁵ Bhatia, *The Hindi Grammatical Tradition*, p. 77.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 77.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 78.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

has suggested, the presentation of Hindustani as an orderly language may have had something to do with the ‘paranoiac’ anxiety that speaking in a language of the colonised took self-representation out of British hands and made them vulnerable. This outcome was more likely if the language remained irregular and chaotic, and hence difficult to master. In presenting Hindustani as orderly, Gilchrist may well have been allaying the fears of his countrymen and potential customers, apart from carefully distinguishing himself in a language-pedagogy market.⁶⁹

Gilchrist’s construction of Hindustani also suggested that his ideas were in dialogue with contemporary Anglophone linguistics in Britain as well as the comparative philology influential in India. Though the idea that language was an object to be described by scientists and historians had taken root in the early nineteenth century, language study in Britain had retained its focus on social and rhetorical concerns.⁷⁰ Gilchrist’s self-fashioning as a serious linguist appealed to both these modalities. But though his early works paid homages to William Jones, his later works more keenly expressed their variation from a Jonesian paradigm.⁷¹ In his orthoepigraphical proposal of 1820, Gilchrist made a careful differentiation rather than an absolute distinction between his system and Jones’s; in a footnote to the introduction, he wrote about his ‘favourite notion’ of proceeding....

⁶⁹ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, pp. 125-26.

⁷⁰ Tony Crowley has argued against the notion that language study in Britain turned descriptive and positivist in the nineteenth century, and that language came to be imagined as a ‘universal’ object to be studied by scientists and historians. Language study in Britain remained significantly concerned with the social and rhetorical concerns of eighteenth-century philology; the so-called objectification of language commonly seen as the intellectual legacy of nineteenth-century British linguistics was a ‘discursive construction that served particular social and rhetorical purposes’; Crowley, pp. 11-17 (p. 11). See also Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, pp. 125-26.

⁷¹ Rita Raley, ‘A Teleology of Letters; or, From a “Common Source” to a Common Language’, *Romantic Circles Praxis Series* (November 2000), par. 1-19 (par. 3), <<https://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/containment/raley/raley.html>> [accessed 24 Sept 2014].

... from the utile to the dulce, in which last may be comprehended persian, arabic, sunskrit, with every other branch of local attainments, as each may become in its turn a useful, lucrative, or pleasant pursuit to any sojourner in the east.⁷²

Implying that his way was the 'utile' to the Jonesian 'dulce', Gilchrist presented the two pursuits as complementary but separate.

Presenting himself as a pragmatic linguist in a scientific vein and writing with a rhetorician's flourish, he posed his grammatical scholarship 'as showmanship'.⁷³ In comparing Hindustani and English, and historicising their respective development, he imitated comparative philology's gesture. This was a move contrarian to the dominant currents of British linguistics, which, as noted in the *Introduction*, was not significantly influenced by Jonesian comparative philology until the mid-nineteenth century.⁷⁴ Gilchrist was, however, in consonance with Anglophone linguistics by incorporating a specific type of focus on the history of the English language. More specifically, as Steadman-Jones has shown, he channelled the type of argumentation by appeal to a theory of origins that was used by Robert Lowth in his 1762 grammar for English, which explained strange English usage by citing its Anglo-Saxon origins.⁷⁵ Gilchrist attempted to do the same to 'minimise the sense of strangeness' around a particular Hindustani usage by invoking its roots in 'Hinduwee' presented as the subcontinental equivalent of Anglo-Saxon.⁷⁶ From his contemporary philologist Horne Tooke's work, he borrowed the notion that all language arose from 'primitive entities that were homogenous in character', a belief that led Tooke to derive etymologies for modern English forms from Anglo-Saxon nouns and verbs in *The*

⁷² John Gilchrist, *The Hindee-Roman Orthoepigraphical Ultimatum or a systematic, discriminative view of Oriental and Occidental visible Sounds, on fixed and practical principles for acquiring the ... pronunciation of many Oriental languages; exemplified in one hundred popular anecdotes, ... and proverbs of the Hindoostanee story teller* (London: Black, Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen, 1820), p. xv.

⁷³ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, p. 126

⁷⁴ See Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780-1860* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), pp. 44-72.

⁷⁵ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, p. 121.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

Diversions of Purley (1786–1805).⁷⁷ His formulation of the Indian linguistic context (and especially the idea of promoting Hindustani as a ‘conciliating’ national language) was also influenced by Scottish rhetorician George Campbell’s work, especially *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, which had contributed to the eighteenth-century debates about British identity in the wake of the union of England and Scotland in 1707.⁷⁸

However, Gilchrist showed a conveniently selective understanding of these and other engagements with currents in Anglophone linguistics. He often cited what could be considered contradictory grammatical paradigms by ignoring points of conflict altogether.⁷⁹ For instance, as Steadman-Jones demonstrates, though Tooke and Lowth had differentiated approaches to Anglo-Saxon and to linguistics in general, Gilchrist nevertheless was open to their combined influence insofar as they offered useful resources to his own argument.⁸⁰ Among other things, both had a structural and functional similarity that dovetailed with Gilchrist’s own plan for Hindustani: in the context of the English language, they ‘resort to history to explain the ‘true’ nature of language in the present, uncovering systematicity in places where it initially seems lacking’.⁸¹

Gilchrist’s rhetoric in support of Hindustani was thus constructed in the shadow of William Jones’ comparative paradigm, filtered through contrarian or consonant engagements with his contemporary Anglophone linguistics in Britain, influenced by a rhetoric of linguistic unity of a nation, undertook sophisticated variations on the commercial logic of early colonial grammars in India, and appeased the conciliatory modality of the East India Company’s orientalism.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 124.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 123, 124.

⁸⁰ See Ibid. 122-25 for an account of the linguistic programmes of Lowth, Tooke, and others cited by Gilchrist.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 125.

A Kinship of Vernaculars: Affinities between Hindustani and English

Gilchrist's comparisons served an assertion that Hindustani was a valuable language that had long, and unwisely, been ignored. Invoking the antagonists to Hindustani's progress, he presented himself as its lone champion. The 'dreary gloom in the history of Hindoostanee' between the years 1742 and 1785 was attributed to the misdirected popular opinion established by Hadley's and Ferguson's *'things termed grammars'*.⁸² Gilchrist rued that the absence of native grammars of Hindustani had gone largely unremarked in British circles. 'Among us', he wrote, 'many are too giddy to refute this unnatural conception, or to remember that it is not long since the English was stigmatized with being equally barren'.⁸³ Allied in this chastisement, English and Hindustani had each encountered dismissive and even disdainful attitudes among their own community of users. Elsewhere, Gilchrist added nuance to this comparison to make a case for linguistic intervention: 'the same prejudices which have hitherto retarded due to cultivation of our mother tongue, operated long, and do so now against the acquisition of Hindustanee on grammatical principles not only among the bigoted natives of India, but among our more enlightened countrymen'.⁸⁴ As the English precedent had shown, Gilchrist urged his enlightened British readers to note, the cultivation of a tongue was the proven foil to the prejudicial forces that had perpetuated its neglect.

An affinity between the qualities of the literary repertoires of an English past and extant Hindustani served to illustrate his linguistic method as well as to defend its limitations stemming from the inadequacies of its object. Gilchrist summoned a memory of the literary penury of English in the past to justify using less 'interesting' Hindustani literary examples to illustrate its grammatical principles:

⁸² Gilchrist, *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee*, p. v.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

⁸⁴ J.B. Gilchrist, *General East India Guide and Vade Mecum by late Captain Williamson. Being a Digest of the work of the late Capt. Williamson, with ... improvements and additions* (London: Kingsbury, Parburg & Allen, 1825).

My ideas of Hindoostanee grammar are always supported by quotations from the best writers in that language, whose compositions I must confess are not so interesting as I could wish for the scholars sake, as well as my own, but we ought candidly to look back to that era of English itself, when it could not exhibit more engaging productions, than the Hindoostanee can now.⁸⁵

The stated disappointment in Hindustani's literary culture was at odds with other illustrative elements in Gilchrist's texts, which liberally invoked eighteenth-century poets from North India, and appeared to admire the virtuosity of works in several dialects ranging from the 'high' to the 'vulgar'.⁸⁶ As Steadman-Jones points out, Gilchrist seemed to have drawn the metalanguage for these styles from Western rhetoric as it recalled the 'grand', 'plain', and 'middle' styles discussed by Cicero and others.⁸⁷ Writing in the fashion of a rhetorician, Gilchrist peppered a long section on prosody with more positively inclined comparisons. The '*Rekhtu*', identified as the metre and measure of 'several odes, elegies, and larger poems', was described as resembling 'our common *heroick rhyme*';⁸⁸ the Hindu God Krishna ('Krishoon', for Gilchrist) was called the 'Indian Apollo' for being the featured muse of several poetic traditions;⁸⁹ 'affectations' such as extra words were seen to resemble 'our *o, ye, me, Sir, & c'*' and dismissed as features that 'cramped [their] muse'.⁹⁰

Though his judgements featured both a fascination with vernacular literary expression as well as an apology for its limits, merely by using literary examples in grammars and dictionaries had Gilchrist distinguished his style from other 'things called grammars'. His

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. xxxix.

⁸⁶ Gilchrist had identified three styles -- the 'high court' or Persian, a middle or 'genuine Hindoostanee', and 'the vulgar' or Hinduwee; See *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xli. His own preference was for the 'middle' style

⁸⁷ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, p. 37

⁸⁸ John Borthwick Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language: Or, Part Third of Volume First, of a System of Hindoostanee Philology* (Calcutta: Chronicle Press, 1796), p. 269.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 272.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 280.

desire to be feted as a proponent of a pragmatic approach to orientalism was best exemplified in his statements from a flamboyant later work called the *The Oriental Green Bag!!*. Here he characterised his efforts as ‘my *radical labours*, or a plain, practical, rational highway to oriental literature, on which simplicity, consistency, facility, and utility take every step together, led by thought and reflection’.⁹¹ His early works had more pointedly advocated learning Hindustani by reading aloud and translating ‘authentic’ works. Judging by the proclivity of his own texts, the most popular (or at least the most representative) of ‘modern’ Hindustani poets was Mirza Muhammad Rafi Souda (1713-1781). Gilchrist had transliterated one of Souda’s ‘odes’ into his proposed Romanised epigraphical system,⁹² and translated it into English.⁹³ In the following translated stanza, he put forward an intriguing justification for using a peculiar image (‘snow balls’ for bosom):

Not a bud where the lily just peers do I see
 So charms its admirer above;
 As the muslin receding can fascinate me,
 To gaze on thy snow balls of love.⁹⁴

Eager to ‘imitate’ rather than just ‘paraphrase’, Gilchrist had claimed poetic license as follows:

As our poets talk of snowy bosoms, alluding to colour only, I have ventured to preserve this, and at the same time add two other qualities no less acceptable by a metaphor, which in a mere paraphrase I am not very solicitous to render oriental; being more than anxious

⁹¹ J.B. Gilchrist, *The Oriental Green Bag!! Or a Complete Sketch of Edwards Alter in the Royal Exchequer, Containing a full Account of the Battle with the Books between a Belle and a Dragon: by a radical admirer of the great Sir William Jones’s civil, religious, and political creed, against whom informations have recently been lodged for the Treasonable Offence and heinous crime of deep-rooted Hostility to Corruption and Despotism, in every Shape and Form; on the sacred oath of Peeping Tom at Coventry* (London: J. B. Gilchrist, 1820), p. 68.

⁹² Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

to imitate what Souda would have written, had he been a Briton, than to preserve what he now tells his country.⁹⁵

To convey this imitation successfully, Gilchrist had momentarily imagined an unusual transcultural displacement in which Souda was a British poet, and a Hindustani idiom neatly transported to an English one with the carefully selected metaphor as its vehicle. It was also significant that Gilchrist's literary translation aimed to make Hindustani familiar to the Briton rather than to fix its use in Souda's own language community. Whatever the explanatory potential of this one-way metaphorical traffic, the clumsiness of his experiment in translation was not lost on Gilchrist. He was aware that his own reverse translations -- renditions of Shakespeare's soliloquies of Cardinal Wolsey and Hamlet into Hindustani -- did little to showcase the spirit both of Shakespeare's language or of Hindustani. Gilchrist urged learners not to base their judgement of the literary merits of Hindustani entirely on the translations:

From the evident inferiority and flatness of the translations, the reader will at once see how difficult it often is to preserve the beauty and spirit of the original, and may this reconcile the insipidity of many examples throughout the present work from the Hindoostanee in English, with considerable elegance and merit in the former language.⁹⁶

This encounter with the limits of literary translation too was used as a language-lesson: if the flatness of Gilchrist's Hindustani translations could mangle even Shakespeare's evident 'beauty and spirit', the insipid-seeming English translations from Hindustani originals could well occlude the 'elegance and merit' of the latter.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 283.

Seeking equivalence in analogy, howsoever awkwardly, was consonant with one of Gilchrist's pedagogical principles: learning a foreign language/culture not by mimicking, but by imagining being alike. He wrote:

Art may teach us to mimick the people of Asia, while Nature alone will qualify us to speak like them: and it is my opinion we never should attempt an acquisition in a foreign language that we neither attend to, nor perhaps understand, properly in our own.⁹⁷

Attempting to acquire the language of India, the British would do well to sound natural in the mirror of their own language. Lest this be dismissed by impatient learners as too complicated a task, Gilchrist appeared to promise convenience by making a claim about a phonetic kinship between Latin/Scottish and 'oriental tongues'. He recommended that learners develop an ear for language by reading aloud the poems and tales appended to the grammar and dictionary, to catch deviations from 'that broad full, sonorous, Latin and Scottish pronunciation, which is admirably adapted to the Hindoostanee, and other oriental tongues'.⁹⁸

One of Gilchrist's most ambitious (an ultimately unsuccessful) proposals was to render Hindustani in a Roman transliteration scheme developed by him. The grammar compared this decision to a precedent followed by English lexicographers:

To facilitate the acquisition of the Hindoostanee language, therefore, and to preserve the uniformity requisite in a Dictionary, it became as incumbent on me to apply the foregoing letters even to Hinduwee words, as our lexicographers at home find it necessary to exhibit

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

⁹⁸ Gilchrist, *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee*, p. xliii.

the component parts of their several languages, whether Grecian, Latin, Celtic, or Saxon, in one uniform way, by the Roman....⁹⁹

He was quick to echo a time when English was similarly orphaned:

The Hindoostanee, which, like the English, has no appropriate character, unless we choose to consider the Nagree in it on a fitting with the old Saxon or German letters among ourselves, and the Persi-Arabic as the Roman, now so generally introduced, to the exclusion of the other from our mother tongue.¹⁰⁰

The Roman script, he implied, had indeed displaced ‘other forms of our mother tongue’, but the same displacement had also been effected by writing Hindustani in the Persian alphabet:

Seeing the classical Hindoostanee writers employ the Persian alphabet, with all its existing or fancied disqualifications, in the whole of their poetical performances, why should not we do the same, without farther ceremony, when we are sensible that the Saxon letters, the most appropriate natural English symbols, have irrevocably given way to the Roman character.¹⁰¹

The Roman and Persian characters were figured as artificial usurpers of natural native symbols. Yet Gilchrist invoked the lesson drawn from English’s historical development in the Roman character to persuade his patrons that Hindustani too could be like English. The preface to a collection of fables called the *Hindee Story Teller* contained a proposal for alphabet reform, which compared different script systems applied to Hindustani:

⁹⁹ Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ John Borthwick Gilchrist, *Hindoostanee philology: comprising a dictionary, English and Hindoostanee, with a grammatical introduction: to which is prefixed a copper-plate, exhibiting a comparative view of the roman and oriental characters used in the Hindoostanee language. Vol. 1.* (London: Kingsbury, Parbury and Allen, 1825), p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Gilchrist, *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xlii.

The Hindustanee Alphabet Reformed, or an abstract comparative sketch of the Hinduwee, Frasee, Urubee, & Roman Alphabets blended together and accommodated to the Hindoostanee, for the use of such Persian scholars as may wish to learn the Nagree, or to extend this Reformed Scheme to the Persian Tongue, and at the same time attain the Popular language of Hindoostan, by the shortest, and for them the most pleasant path to an acquisition so necessary and useful to every Resident in India, who has any connection or transactions with its various Inhabitants in a Domestic, Civil, Commercial, Political, or Military capacity.¹⁰²

This was an appeal addressed to a wide cross-section: Persian scholars hoping to learn Nagari script and to use Roman scheme for Persian; British residents seeking quick familiarity for practical purposes. As was clear from the class of addressees listed above, no appeal to pragmatics was complete without addressing the classical ‘oriental’ languages, which competed for the resources dedicated to colonial language-learning. Here too, Gilchrist made a comparative case for vernaculars to be recognised as complements to classical languages:

As several modern and ancient tongues may be deemed both useful and ornamental to students of liberal education in Europe, the Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, etc., will prove equally so in India; but it should always be recollected that to every person there, the Hindoostanee is no less indispensable than a knowledge of English evidently is to the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.¹⁰³

¹⁰² J.B. Gilchrist, *The Hindee Story Teller, or entertaining expositor of the Roman, Persian, and Nagree characters* ([n.p.], [n.pub], 1802), p. xxvii.

¹⁰³ John Borthwick Gilchrist, *The strangers' East Indian guide to the Hindoostanee; or grand popular language of India, Volume 1*, 2nd edn (London: Black, Parry and Kingsbury, 1808), p. xxx.

Its sophistication and indispensability showcased, Hindustani was also given a genealogy. To do so, Gilchrist told a comparative story of vernacular triumph against classical hegemony. Once systematically rendered, Hindustani could represent a triumph against dominant language systems and of the oppressive elites that fostered this domination. Blaming the insular elitism of a class of Indians for the underdeveloped state of the vernacular, he selected for admonishment a ‘cormorant crew’ of educated castes and classes -- ‘Dewans, Mootsuddies, Sirkars, Nazirs, Pundits, Munshis and a tremendous roll call of harpies’ -- who were said to have a vested interest in maintaining a distance between the ruling class and the masses.¹⁰⁴

In Gilchrist’s narrative, ‘Hinduwee’ was the ancient language of a pre-Islamic India, upon which Muslim invaders had built the superstructure of Hindustani:

Hinduwee, I have treated -- old language of India, which prevailed before the Moosulman invasion; and in fact, now constitutes among them, the basis or ground-work of the Hindoostanee, a comparatively recent superstructure, composed of Arabic and Persian, in which the two last may be considered in the same relation, that Latin and French bear to English: while we may justly treat the Hinduwee of the modern speech or Hindoostanee, as the Saxon of the former.¹⁰⁵

The languages featured in this exposition were involved in a network of equivalence. Hinduwee was the base to the superstructure of Hindustani; Hinduwee and Saxon were both ancient bases for their respective modern counterparts; Arabic, Persian were ‘ruling’ languages like Latin and French. The following diagram, which juxtaposed their historical progression, conveyed the impression that syllogistic inference was at play in this analysis:

¹⁰⁴ Gilchrist, *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xxvi.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. iv.

Saxon - Latin - French - English

Hinduwee-Arabic-Persian-Hindoostanee.¹⁰⁶

The one-to-one mapping that Gilchrist was eager to establish implied that English and Hindustani could be members of the same equivalence class. A further point of similarity, this time to do with the extent of ‘exotic’ and ‘aboriginal’ components, was also rendered diagrammatically:

British. Saxon. Latin. French. Exotick. English.

Aboriginal. Hinduwee. Arabic. Persian. Exotick. Hindoostanee.¹⁰⁷

Gilchrist’s diagram instantiated the linear directionality favoured by the comparative philological method and its doctrine of a common source. This, as Cohn argues, had allowed for ‘things, ideas and institutions’ to be imagined as ‘progressing through stages to some end or goal’.¹⁰⁸ Apart from making a teleology seem ineluctable, the directional logic could also be used to establish ‘regression, decay, and decadence, the movement through time away from some pristine, authentic, original starting point, a golden age in the past’.¹⁰⁹ Yet despite being clothed in the garb of linearity and logic, Gilchrist’s propositions were not altogether logically consistent. In his usage, Hinduwee had denoted the language of ancient India, as well as a group of current North Indian ‘Hindu’ dialects associated with the region of Braj — the ‘arcadia of Hindoostan’.¹¹⁰ In this association, Brajbhasha (and other regional dialects) were rendered archaic even as ‘Hinduwee’ was still current. Thus

¹⁰⁶ J.B. Gilchrist, *The Anti-jargonist, Or a Short Introduction to the Hindoostanee Language, ... Being Partly an Abridgment of The Oriental Linguist, ... By the Author of the Hindoostanee Dictionary* (Calcutta: Ferris & Co., 1800), p. iv.

¹⁰⁷ Gilchrist, *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xxvi.

¹⁰⁸ Cohn, ‘The Command of Language’, p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 11.

described, Hinduwee's equivalence with Saxon was fallacious. As Steadman-Jones points out, Anglo-Saxon had preceded English, and they were never simultaneously living languages.¹¹¹

Gilchrist's elaboration of aboriginal and foreign words in the two languages had accounted for the many minor influences on the linguistic corpus:

In the Hindoostanee, as in English, there are some traces of aboriginal, as well as many exotick words, but these bear no sort of proportion to the whole. It was introduced, and established by the desultory incursion, and influx of conquering armies, at different times, with various effects, and success, till the Moosulmans finally prevailed.¹¹²

The above description constructed a contrast between inconsistent and 'desultory' incursions into aboriginal forms of English and Hindustani, and the encompassing success of more powerful 'conquering armies' of Arabic and Persian, and Latin and French, respectively. The narrative of conquest and colonisation set up therein was reiterated many times in relation to linguistic matters. 'The Moosulmans', Gilchrist wrote, 'established themselves, their letters and religion, with fire and sword in this country, the Naguree was to India, what the Roman alphabet is now to Europe; but it has long ago been superseded as a general character, by the Arabic, and Persian'.¹¹³

A later work rehashed this story into a rather more colourful tale of struggle and triumph of languages 'deluged' and 'obscured' by 'foreign' invaders:

¹¹¹ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, p. 33-34.

¹¹² Gilchrist, *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xx.

¹¹³ Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 4.

This ancient tongue [Hinduwee], under various modifications is to Hindoostan, exactly what the Saxon was to England, before the Norman conquest, while the Hindoostanee is in fact, nothing more than Hinduwee deluged, after repeated successful invasions by the Moosulmans, with Arabic and Persian, bearing the very same relation in almost every respect to its original basis, that the English which sprung from the parent Saxon, obscured by an influx of French and other continental tongues, now does its own source also.¹¹⁴

If this invasion-narrative could be the backdrop to Britain's own usurpations in India after a series of prior breaches, it could also consolidate a narrative of triumph of the oppressed over the powerful.

As the language of art, ceremony, and law, Persian ('the Norman French of British India') was important for 'courtly and diplomattick accomplishment'.¹¹⁵ Sanskrit on the other hand represented divine hegemony; it was 'the Hebrew or Greek of this country'.¹¹⁶ Presenting Hindustani in terms of its enmeshment with the regimes of Persian and Sanskrit allowed Gilchrist to present that its career too could mirror the autonomy of the English language, State and Church. The 'odious badge of slavery' that represented a subservience to the linguistic and political rule of Persian was illustrated by locating the comparison in an 'awful pause' in British history -- the Norman conquest:

Let us here make an awful pause, and look back to England herself in the time of, and long after William the conqueror. Have we then totally forgotten, that the Persian, is to Hindoostan now, what Norman French was to the miserable oppressed English of those dark days, and can we nevertheless continue to encourage, cultivate, and extend among ourselves along with benevolent British laws and regulations, the acquisition of a foreign

¹¹⁴ Gilchrist, *The Anti-jargonist*, p. xx.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xxii, p. xxx.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxxi.

perfectly odious badge of slavery, and subjection to the utter exclusion almost of both local dialects and the intermediate general Hindoostanee language, in which the unsocial Hindoo himself has gone ages ago, more than half way, to meet the haughty Moosulman, and with him form this bond of union at least, between the conquered and the conquerors of India.¹¹⁷

The statement indicated Gilchrist's sycophancy to a vision of British history as one of hard-won autonomy, and to an imperial ideal in which the British displaced their Mughal rivals but sought to maintain their power through 'just' means. Compared with Norman French, Persian was simultaneously appreciated as the regal language of the law *and* vilified for marginalising local languages and language-communities. This type of comparison linked the imperial affiliation and imperious behaviour of dominant languages. The act of promoting the vernacular Hindustani was then an act of exercising justice. Gilchrist put forward a hypothetical anecdote to show how disregarding the vernacular could, quite literally, impede justice:

Let us imagine for a moment that the Magistrates on the British tribunals at home, understand French only, that they despised English as a mere Jargon, beneath their notice and acquisition, farther than to call for claret, a horse, or any other luxury or convenience in it, or at the very utmost to support a few snip snap dialogues, with a porter or a scullion in barbarous English, without being able to comprehend or explain accurately, one sentence in the whole tongue, which they of course never could deem possessed of either internal or external grammar. To preserve the parallel we are to take it for granted, that the whole native officers, and understrappers of such British courts speak English vernacularly, which they are moreover able with sufficient facility and fluency to translate, and thence chatter or write in tolerable, though inelegant French.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. xxvii.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. xxvii-xxviii.

The story then went on to ‘produce an English party of plain common people, who use no other than their mother tongue’, and their bewilderment at the scene.¹¹⁹ This was a picture of mutual miscomprehension: magistrates in English courts understood only French and could speak only broken English, lower-level officials could speak English but only broken French, and the injured party could only manage English. So much stood to be lost in translation despite the best intentions of everyone involved.

Justice was a recurrent motive for Gilchrist’s promotion of Hindustani. ‘Let her [Britain’s] laws and rule of conduct to the native’, he wrote, ‘be humane even to impotency’.¹²⁰ This was a reciprocal sense of justice, with implications for Britain as well: ‘Let us be rigidly just to them, and ourselves also, by constantly recollecting that We are foreign Conquerors’.¹²¹ It was incumbent on British residents of India, Gilchrist appeared to say, to live up to an image of ‘just’ foreign conquerors. The magnanimity was, however, tempered with caution; Gilchrist advised his British audience to remember that all the kindness of their conduct would never ingratiate them with the natives enough to ‘prevent their taking complete advantage of any sinister event that may befall us as a people, whom they will always consider as Aliens in this country’.¹²² Elsewhere he reiterated that the fundamental distrust was also mutual by pointing out his own ‘unalterable and invariable opinion [of Indians] as the most unprincipled race perhaps existing on the face of the earth’.¹²³ Nevertheless, he wrote, ‘I do not mean...to commend injustice or oppression’.¹²⁴ Grammatical enquiry in the spirit of a progressive vision for British rule was summarised as follows:

If the subject now treated of can never arrive at perfection, a spirit of exertion, and enquiry, becomes the more requisite, for its progressive improvement, to the *ne plus ultra*, that may soon be reasonably expected from the united efforts of our indefatigable

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. xxviii.

¹²⁰ Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 299.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 300.

¹²² Ibid., p. 299.

¹²³ Gilchrist, *A Dictionary: English and Hindoostanee*, p. xxviii.

¹²⁴ Gilchrist, *A Grammar of the Hindoostanee Language*, p. 300.

countrymen in this extensive empire; won by their valour, supported by their wisdom, and which will most likely be better managed, and longer preserved by our becoming every day more intimately acquainted with the languages, laws, religion, manners, policy, and interests, of its innumerable and multifarious inhabitants.¹²⁵

The qualities of valour, intellectual curiosity, wisdom, and efficiency were associated with the programmes both of language-learning and the empire.

Gilchrist's address to his readers appealed beyond the domains of colonial pragmatics. One of his pedagogical works addressed to the King's and Company's officers, *The Orienti-Occidental Tuitionary Pioneer to Literary Pursuits* (1816) incorporated 'oriental' tuition into the hyphenated composite of 'orienti-occidental' guidance. The work's extended title was instructive:

The Orienti-Occidental Tuitionary Pioneer to Literary Pursuits, by the King's and Company's Officers of all Ranks, Capacities, and Departments, either as probationers at scholastic establishments, during the early periods of life, their outward voyage to the East, or while actually serving in British India...A Complete Regular Series of Fourteen Reports...earnestly recommending also the general Introduction, and efficient Culture immediately, of Practical Orientalism, simultaneously with Useful Occident Learning at all the Colleges, respectable Institutions, Schools, or Academies, in the United Kingdom,...a brief prospectus of the art of thinking made easy and attractive to Children, by the early and familiar union of theory with colloquial practice, on commensurate premises, in some appropriate examples, lists, &c. besides a Comprehensive Panglossal Diorama for a universal Language and Character...a perfectly new theory of Latin verbs.¹²⁶

He saw himself as having laid the foundations for 'practical' and beneficial Orientalism,

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

¹²⁶ Gilchrist, *The Orienti-Occidental Tuitionary Pioneer*, title page.

which was an ally not just of imperial pragmatics, but of literary pursuits and of ‘useful occident learning’ at schools, colleges, and academies in Britain. The promise of mutual benefits at home and abroad aside, here was also an appeal to a universalism of the sort that had lent comparative philology its distinction. The idea of universal applicability of his Romanised orthoepigraphy for all Asiatic languages had guided many of Gilchrist’s public appeals to patronage.¹²⁷ He invoked for his ‘opulent’ audience a moment in which ‘chirography and typography completely assimilate’ and that ‘one universal character can easily be established for a thousand different languages’.¹²⁸ Hindustani and English, handwriting and print, Oriental and Occidental learning, colloquial practice and theory, children’s schools and adult academies, probationers and serving officials: all were associated within the scope of Gilchrist’s ‘practical’ and ‘beneficial’ pedagogy that began in the ‘orient’ and extended its conciliatory reach outward. If the ‘curious inversion of opticks’ he envisioned was to be realised and Hindustani could intercede in Latin and English debates, his would be the system to host the intervention.

Gilchrist’s selective linguistic and ideological affinities shaped his self-fashioning as a pragmatic universalist through the colonial vernacular, which in turn shaped his account of the development of English as a story of primitive origins, conquest, neglect, penury, and eventual rise. Locating the emergence of the first English grammar amid these coordinates, the next sections plot the selective linguistic and ideological affinities, the imitations and emendations, and the translocal aspirations of William Bullokar’s 1586 works.

¹²⁷ Raley, par. 2. Gilchrist had followed Jones in proposing a universal Romanised orthography for Asiatic languages, but chose a different linguistic object which, Raley writes, ‘resulted in profoundly different professional and scholarly models’. While ‘Jones reads the ‘foreign’ character as an abstruse object of scholastic knowledge whose end is its own increase, Gilchrist reads it as a more easily decodable object of technical, communicable knowledge whose end is not simply functionality, but also economic possibilities both for student and for instructor’ (par. 4).

¹²⁸ Gilchrist, *The Orienti-Occidental Tuitionary Pioneer*, [n.p], cited by Raley, par. 2

Conquest and Possession of early modern English

Representing the ‘early modernity’ of English, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had seen the chaotic production of linguistic knowledge in the absence of academies like there had been in Italy and France.¹²⁹ The period’s impressive fertility has been widely acknowledged, not least in Shakespeare’s celebrated reputation as a neologiser, which is often seen to exemplify much of the creative exuberance of the time.¹³⁰ Despite little institutional regulation, a huge volume of writings on language (manuals on rhetoric, grammars, spelling reforms, and dictionaries) circulated alongside comments on language even in non-linguistic texts. There was, however, a method of sorts to the madness. An urge to allay the anxiety that English was inadequate and provincial with respect to European languages drove much of the rhetoric of language reform. English also had to be presented as the desired ‘common’ language besting other languages and dialects current on the British Isles, while struggling to position itself with respect to the languages in power -- Latin and French. In the words of Blank, the English Renaissance was an age ‘engaged in a struggle for possession of the vernacular, a struggle in which linguistic authority was just as much at issue as linguistic freedom’.¹³¹ At stake, then, was the promotion of English as a ‘language of command’ in the British Isles, in possession of both authority and freedom.

English was not always considered well-formed, adequate, and confident. As Richard Foster Jones’ survey of opinions about the vernacular in England indicates, attitudes of praise began to appear only in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, before which it was seen as a rude and unsystematic language in need of spelling and pronunciation reform. Eloquence, modeled on Latin and Greek rhetoric, remained the stylistic ideal at least until the close of the sixteenth century.¹³² Yet a rhetorical deficiency, according to standards of

¹²⁹ The Accademia della Crusca, established in 1582, had published the first edition of its large 1000-word *Vocabulario* in 1612, which was expanded in 1624. In case of French, two editions of the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie Française* had been published by 1718.

¹³⁰ See, for instance, Norman F. Blake, *Shakespeare’s Language: An Introduction* (London: Macmillan, 1983).

¹³¹ Blank, p. 6.

¹³² Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 6.

Latin eloquence, could also be seen as a virtue in some quarters. A relatively simple repertoire could add to the desirability of English as the language of discourse shaped by print capitalism and the idea of a 'national print-language'.¹³³ The success of the many publications in the market depended upon an engaged reading public, who might prefer a less ornate written language. The discursive shift following the Reformation -- transfer of religious authority to texts and their individual interpretation -- generated a demand for translations and simple English expository works.¹³⁴

The desire to gain adherents necessitated that much of the then-controversial literature of both Catholics and Protestants be written in and translated into the vernacular.¹³⁵ Despite the range of positions about the *way* English could be eloquent and communicative, it did not escape the long shadow of the classical language and tradition. The veneration of eloquent language was not uncommon in Renaissance Europe and had traditionally been associated with classical languages such as Greek and Latin. Studies in linguistic character were usually linked to studies of poetic character; poets were considered the most proficient users of language. The criteria for vernacular success were entirely dependent on the extent to which it could mirror the qualities and enduring corpus of the classical language. Yet this expectation also allowed for a horizon in which a vernacular-classical parity could be envisioned.¹³⁶

This, however, was a very specific kind of parity. The corpus of linguistic texts produced in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England were, as Blank argues, broadly attempts to replace the hegemony of Latin with another dominant language at the expense of other local 'englishes'.¹³⁷ The treatises that attempted to describe a national vernacular were in

¹³³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 224.

¹³⁴ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 33.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹³⁶ Richard Waswo, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance* (New Jersey, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 53.

¹³⁷ Blank, pp. 126-68.

fact, prescriptive in favour of the language of the king and court, and later of the educated classes in and around London.

If Latin was the language of religion and scholarship, the hegemony of French had been established in the wake of the Norman conquest in 1066. French had superseded Latin as the language of judicial record by the twelfth and thirteenth century. Anglo-Norman (a type of French spoken in England) and French itself were the chief vernacular agonists of English and its dialects. While Anglo-Norman had become the language of the ruling class and of a few elite members of society, Latin remained the language of religion and scholarship and had replaced Anglo-Saxon in the 1070s as the official language of the king's administration. Prior to the Norman conquest, and following the Anglo-Saxon settlement in Britain between the fifth and seventh centuries, traditional common law in England had been written in the Germanic vernacular (Old English) after the precedent set by the early seventh century law code attributed to Ethelbert of Kent. Following the Norman conquest, the language of the latest conquerors was used: Anglo-Norman (which developed into Law French) was used for pleadings, while Latin was used in writing. English, in the form of the Chancery Standard, became the official language of government during the early fifteenth-century reign of Henry V. The Chancery standard for written English (used for most official purposes excluding those of the Church and law) had emerged in 1430 and was based on the East-Midlands-influenced speech of London, and was influenced by French and Latin given that the clerks using it were used to transacting in those languages. Despite the gains made by English in infiltrating 'higher' spaces over centuries, asymmetries had persisted. French continued to be used in writing legal tracts and treatises, as it often proved difficult to find English counterparts for French legal terminology.

A late fourteenth-century vernacular efflorescence inaugurated in the works of Chaucer, Langland, Gower, and Wycliffe's Bible had not successfully diminished the status enjoyed

by French. In a landmark attempt to restore English as the language of the law, the Parliament had in 1362 enacted Edward III's Statute of Pleading (later repealed), which decreed that all proceedings of the courts of common law should, thenceforth, be conducted in English. Articulated in Anglo-Norman French according the conventions of the period, the pleading's case against French was on the grounds that it was little understood by the people of the realm:

And then the chancellor said how the prelates, dukes, earls, barons, and all the commons have shown to the king the great misfortunes that have befallen many of the realm because the laws, customs, and statutes of the said realm are not commonly known in the same realm, since they are pleaded, counted, and judged in the French language, which is very much unknown in the said realm, so that the people who plead or are impleaded in the king's courts and the courts of others have no understanding or knowledge of what is said for them or against them by their serjeants and other pleaders.¹³⁸

The argument's appeal was framed as a concern for the common people who were left out of the process of their own justice, an image also deployed by Gilchrist's anecdote of the French-speaking magistrates in English courts, through which he had made a case to replace Persian in Indian courts.¹³⁹

The broad parallels mobilised by Gilchrist's analogies are plain to see: Sanskrit and Arabic like Greek/Hebrew/Latin were languages of scripture, religion, authority, and were also the preferred language groups for antiquarian interest and philological study; Persian like French was the language of the law and elites; Hinduwee, a reductive appellation encompassing several regional dialects extant prior to 'conquests', was matched with Anglo-Saxon; 'Aboriginal' languages were seen to exist prior even to Hinduwee and Saxon,

¹³⁸ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, 6 vols (London, 1783), II, p. 273, trans. and cited by William M. Ormond, 'The Use of English: Language, Law, and Political Culture in Fourteenth-Century England', *Speculum* 78.3 (2003), 750-87 (p. 756).

¹³⁹ See above p. 123-24.

while ‘exotick’ infiltrations were recognised for having made their way into early modern English and Hindustani. In designating Anglo-Saxon as the base for English, Gilchrist had made an implausible comparison with Hinduwee, but had summoned a familiar narrative about the genealogy of English.

Origins and antiquity for sixteenth-century English

The question of antiquity of English had not received much pointed attention until the close of the sixteenth century. It was generally accepted that English originated with the Anglo-Saxon, fell under the influence of the Danes and later the French, and was further enriched by several borrowed words.¹⁴⁰ Foregrounding the primacy of an Anglo-Saxon heritage served the the idea of an autonomous English nationhood. A Germanic-based identity implied distinctness from a Romano-British one, a fact more appealing given than Germanic people had not been conquered by the Romans.¹⁴¹ However, the Anglo-Saxon heritage was not problematised or used as source for orthographic prescriptions or etymology until the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, which saw an increasing antiquarian interest in the Saxon origins of English and in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts.¹⁴²

Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles* held that Saxons introduced to an English nation ‘a hard and rough kinde of speech;’ George Puttenham in 1589 talked about ‘our naturall and primitue language of the *Saxon English*,’ Richard Carew in 1602 described Saxon as ‘our naturall language’.¹⁴³

An interesting manifestation of a desire to establish Germanic origins of the nation was the positive evaluation of monosyllables, which were considered a distinguishing feature of Germanic languages. Since it was widely regarded that monosyllables came largely from the

¹⁴⁰ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 214.

¹⁴¹ Blake, *A History of the English Language*, p. 201.

¹⁴² Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, pp. 214-19; Blake, *A History of the English Language*, p. 201.

¹⁴³ Raphael Holinshed, *The firste [laste] volume of the chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande conteyning the description and chronicles of England, from the first inhabiting vnto the conquest* (London: John Hunne, 1577), sig. 5^r; George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poiesie* (1589), repr. in *English Reprints*, ed. by Edward Arber (London: Bloomsbury, 1869), p. 82; Richard Carew, *The Survey of Cornwall* (London: John Iaggard, 1602), sig. 57^v.

Saxon element in the English language, advocacy of a monosyllabic English was often associated with nationalist pride. George Gascoigne's 1575 statement was an example of this patriotic impetus to embrace Saxon words: 'the most auncient English wordes are of one sillable, so that the more monasyllables that you vse, the truer Englishman you shall seeme, and the lesse you shall smell of the Inkhorne'.¹⁴⁴ Ralph Lever in 1573 had made a case for monosyllabic English on the grounds that it was easily compounded. 'The moste parte of Englyshe wordes', he wrote, 'are shorte, and stande on one sillable a peece. So that two or three of them are ofte times fitly ioyned in one'.¹⁴⁵

If the English language was relatively plastic for its early modern reformers, its genetic imprints too were available for interpretative modification. If Germanophiles saw monosyllables as rightly Anglo-Saxon and therefore desirable, others were dismissive and saw them as bottlenecks to the achievement of metrical fluency. This antagonism was reflected in the debate between rhyme and quantitative verse, the former being more accepting of the shorter-syllabled Saxon elements in English. George Chapman's preface to the translation of Homer (1610), for instance, attributed the beauty of English rhyme to monosyllables: 'Our Monosyllables, so kindly fall | And meete, opposde in rime, as they did kisse'.¹⁴⁶ A terse Anglo-Saxon's separateness from Latin allowed some, like the Puritans, to project for English language and people a 'plainspeaking' identity performed by a simpler, monosyllabic English free of the 'rhetoric and bombast' of Latin.¹⁴⁷

Political exigency, pedagogical imperatives, and a standard for English

A lineage of conquest was interlinked with the story of origins, and was often incorporated to tell a story of triumph. Mulcaster's Peroration to the Reader in *Elementarie* (1586) painted

¹⁴⁴ George Gascoigne, *Certayne Notes of Instruction in English Verse* (1575), repr. in *English Reprints*, ed. by Edward Arber (London: Alex Murray, 1868), p. 35.

¹⁴⁵ Ralph Lever, *The arte of reason, rightly termed, wicraft teaching a perfect way to argue and dispute* (London: H Bynemann, 1573), sig. v^r-vi^v.

¹⁴⁶ George Chapman, *Homer: The Iliad, Volume 1*, ed. by Allardice Nicoll, Bollinger Series 41 (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 11.

¹⁴⁷ Blake, *Shakespeare's Language*, p. 202.

a picture in which the language and the nation shared a narrative of conquest and transformation. Historicising the hold of Latin in England, he wrote: ‘The Romane autoritie first planted the latin among vs here, by force of their conquest, the use thereof for matters of learning, doth cause it to continew, tho the conquest be expired (p. 253)’. Mulcaster’s words appeared to convey that this was a phantom hold, and exhorted the English to reclaim their linguistic territory by imagining themselves akin to Classical Spartans. ‘Our English tung’, he emphasised, ‘is our own, our Sparta must be spunged, by the inhabitants that haue it (p. 256)’. Samuel Daniel’s statement a few decades later turned the fact of invasion and conquest into a bold testimony of England’s resilient adaptability: ‘notwithstanding the former Conquest by the *Danes*, and now this by the *Norman* (the solid bodie of the Kingdome, still consisted of the *English*) and the accession of strange people, was but as riuers to the Ocean, that changed not it, but were changed into it’.¹⁴⁸

Though Gilchrist’s analogies had alluded to this triumphant autonomy of English, the attitudes towards Latin and French remained contingent on political currents throughout the sixteenth- and seventeenth centuries. During the civil wars between 1642 and 1651, for instance, the use of Latin in the universities and French in the law courts was denounced by radicals such as the William Dell, Samuel How, and the Digger leader Gerrard Winstanley. These oppositions mainly critiqued the use of foreign languages by professionals to mystify and dominate ordinary people.¹⁴⁹ Antipathy towards foreign, especially French, attitudes reduced in the period following the Restoration of Charles II in 1660. The Académie Française was considered a model worth emulating if the aim was to create and disseminate a centralised standard.

Yet there also existed a prominent anti-French faction among the political elites, which favoured promoting a type of conventional politesse as the benchmark of desirable

¹⁴⁸ Samuel Daniel, *The collection of the historie of England* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1618), p. 37.

¹⁴⁹ Burke, *Languages and Communities*, p. 17.

Englishness.¹⁵⁰ The post-Restoration ‘standard’, legislated by elite social consensus, was no longer the language of the royal court but that used in London by ‘gentlemen’.¹⁵¹

Developing through inconsistent consensus without academic regulation, swayed by the forces of print capitalism and political winds, the effective ‘standard’ language-object was the one most widely taught, learnt, and emulated. As such, it was dependent on social position and represented cultural capital. Only those who had correct usage could use it more correctly; the often self-proclaimed administrators of language came from a ‘polite’ class or aspired to do so by courting the right kind of validation and patronage.¹⁵² Language pedagogy was the domain in which most arguments for vernacular standardisation were staged.

Language pedagogy in early modern England itself was by no means a homogenous domain. The rhetoric of works often displayed negotiations between ‘learned’ and ‘unlearned’ users, and the paradigms they represented. The ‘unlearned’ was a ubiquitous addressee of sixteenth century language reform, to whom many were eager to hand the ‘linguistic keys to learning’.¹⁵³ The popularity of epithets such as ‘unlatined’ and ‘unlettered’ suggested that this demarcation was based on a knowledge of Latin and of educational paradigms. Yet writings often contained apologies for writing in English. It was as if a deviation from a ‘learned’ paradigm was itself a shortcoming, and apologetic announcements could have been ‘a precaution against a possible reprimand from the learned’.¹⁵⁴ William Bullokar’s address to his ‘Countrie’ in the *Booke at Large* (1580) was no exception: ‘so that I trust (al things considered) the learned wil content themselues to thinke well heereof, and giue cause to the vnlearned, to make their entrie into learning hereby’.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ Blake, *A History of the English Language*, p. 237.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁵² Ibid., pp. 240-42.

¹⁵³ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 34.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁵⁵ William Bullokar, *The Amendement of Ortographie for English Speech* (London: Henrie Denham, 1580), sig. B1v.

This pedagogical programme to facilitate the education of the unlearned addressed its appeal to the learned members of the social readership. John Hart in 1569 dedicated his treatise on spelling reform for ‘the profite of the multitude’, for whom the work would be a ‘windowe whereby is light giuen to descerne betwixt perfection and barbarousnesse’.¹⁵⁶ Yet if the stated purport of language reform was to foster the upward cultural mobility of the multitude, it was also involved in fashioning obedient subjects of the nation. Thomas Paynell, for instance, in the preface to *The Conspiracie of Lucius Catiline* (1541) had justified his translation of a work by Constantius Felicius to teach the ‘unlearned’ that ‘rebellion against kings does not pay’.¹⁵⁷ Emphasising the need to eliminate improper forms of writing, Hart’s *Orthographie* presented the impolitic consequences of inconsistency, and likened reforming spelling to governing a commonwealth: ‘[f]or such an abused and vicious writing, bringeth confusion and uncertaintie in the reading, and therefore is iustly to be refused, and the vicious parts therof cut away, as are the ydle or offensive members, in a politicke common welth’.¹⁵⁸

Consistent writing served to customise a multitude into a politic uniformity, even if it that entailed a violent exile of ‘idle and offensive’ members of a language or populace. Some, like Edmund Coote, held that the generalised propensity to misspell itself arose from the imitation of the wrong kind of speech: the ‘barbarous speech of your contrey people’.¹⁵⁹ Similarly framing standardisation as a problem of politic dialect-selection, Alexander Gill in 1619 asserted that ‘writing will have to conform not to the pronunciation of ploughmen, working-girls, or river-men, but to that used by learned and refined men in their speech and writing’.¹⁶⁰ Grammatical treatises before Bullokar’s too reflected the dominance of the ‘latined’ and the ‘learned’ paradigm. Latin was the desired end of any ‘learned’ linguistic

¹⁵⁶ John Hart, *An orthographie conteyning the due order and reason, howe to write or paint thimage of mannes voice, most like to the life or nature* (London: William Seres, 1569), sig. 2^r.

¹⁵⁷ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 37.

¹⁵⁸ Hart, sig. 12^r.

¹⁵⁹ Edmund Coote, *The English Schoole-maister* (1596), repr. in *English Linguistics 1500-1800: A Collection of Facsimile Reprints*, ed. by R. C. Alston (Menston: Scholar Press, 1970), p. 21. Further references to this edition of Coote’s *The English Schoole-maister* are given after quotations in the text.

¹⁶⁰ Alexander Gill, *Logonomia Anglica* (1619): *part 2*, trans. by Robin C. Alston, ed. by Bror Danielsson and Arvid Gabrielson, *Stockholm Studies in English* 27 (Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiksell, 1972), p. 87.

instruction. Ascham's method, for instance, was to translate from Latin into English and then from English back into Latin. This, Blake notes, encouraged pupils to recognise differences between the two languages but did not necessarily encourage the assumption that English could be as good as Latin.¹⁶¹

Producing grammars for English was not a priority through most of the sixteenth century. Bullokar's *A Bref Grammar for English* (1586) was the first grammar of English ever to be published, but went virtually unnoticed in its time. Though it derived most of its structure from William Lily's Latin grammar and contained too many inconsistencies, it set the stage for English to emerge as a language worthy of independent grammatical representation. Its foundational significance, not just for the discourse of English vernacular grammars but for English cultural identity itself, can be assessed by locating him in intersecting trajectories of texts and events in which a topos of progression of the English language takes shape. If one trajectory tracks the fate of English's incursions into the domains of more cultivated languages as manifest in grammatical texts circulating in England, another linked path sees it making inroads into quotidian domains beyond national shores.

Bullokar's traditions: Vernacular input in pedagogical grammars

A progression of sorts can be discerned in the shifting shape of vernacular-classical bilingualism in grammars of early modern England: If English was initially just the metalanguage for learning Latin, English rules were increasingly seen as complementary to Latin rules, until Latin itself could emerge as the metalanguage for learning English. Most grammars of English published between 1500 and 1700 were written in Latin. Only four English grammars appeared in the sixteenth century, compared to thirty-two in the seventeenth, and over 200 in the eighteenth century. The early grammars aimed to be

¹⁶¹ Blake, *A History of the English Language*, p. 200.

descriptive, and did not contain too many endorsements of correct and incorrect usage.¹⁶² Vernacular assertions continued to exist within Latin grammars before monolingual vernacular grammars arrived on the scene. If Old English manuscripts projected a vernacular-classical parity of sorts, Latin reinforced itself after the Norman invasion when French and Anglo-Norman became the vernacular agonists of English. French and English also made co-extensive inroads into vocational/professional language learning, and the influence of vernacular grammatical traditions from the Continent allowed non-professional classes to partake in rhetorical training. Together, these changes tell the story of widening circle of language use and instruction, in which lines between classical and vernacular worlds were increasingly blurred even though the vernacular itself did not decisively subvert the classical hegemony.

Before monolingual grammars for English made an appearance in the late sixteenth century, vernacular presence in traditional (Latin) grammars was registered in two main ways: English as a medium for the study of Latin as a second language; and through grammars of English written in Latin.¹⁶³ The Latin grammars using English were aimed at producing Latin users from English speakers. As Hedwig Gwosdek points out in her introduction to an edition of William Lily's Grammar, the evidence of extant Latin grammar manuals using English can only give us a limited picture of the classrooms in which they were used.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the prolific range of such grammars, and the different strategies of learning they appear to incorporate, suggests that learning grammar

¹⁶² Terttu Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p. 16.

¹⁶³ Bilingual parsing and imitation was by no means unusual or unique to grammatical texts. Since Christian intellectual culture was concerned mainly with apposite exegesis of Scripture and other spiritual texts, and Latin was nearly always studied as a foreign language, vernacular imitation was manifest in the glossing tradition and hermeneutic style of medieval manuscripts. Imitation of source text was an important component of linguistics based on traditional grammar. See Gabriele Knappe, 'The Rhetorical Aspect of Grammar Teaching in Anglo-Saxon England', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, 17.1 (1999), 1-34 (p. 22).

¹⁶⁴ Hedwig Gwosdek, introduction to *Lily's Grammar of Latin in English: An Introduction of the Eycht Partes of Speche, and the Construction of the Same*, ed. by Hedwig Gwosdek (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-146 (p. 30).

was considered very important. A consequent need to find the best teaching practices to enable easy learning would have caused Latin to be taught in a vernacular medium.

Despite its secondary status, the vernacular would have made merited incidental grammatical attention since it was so often used to understand and teach classical structures.¹⁶⁵ An Anglo-Saxon grammar manuscript, ascribed to the Benedictine monk Aelfric of Eynsham and called *Excerptiones de arte grammatical anglie* (998 AD), was the first work of Latin grammar rendered in English -- and the first grammar extant in any European vernacular -- which was also partially designed to describe the state of the vernacular itself.¹⁶⁶ This textbook contained Latin definitions, examples, and quotations translated into English alongside linguistic terminology in Old English created from loan-words. Aelfric's grammar had projected a parity of sorts between the vernacular Old English and Latin by containing separate prefaces in each language. Both prefaces were keen to note that the text could be used to understand both Latin *and* Old English.¹⁶⁷

Though it was expressly a grammar of Latin and instances of explicit contrast were few, Aelfric had commented on the structural similarity between English and Latin, noting on two separate occasions that the former too had eight parts of speech.¹⁶⁸ The bilingual exposition worked by paraphrasing definitions, explanations, and examples along with further commentaries in Old English. Examples of grammatical rules were rendered in old English, and used domestic imagery such as spinning wool, working in a smithy, or fishing.¹⁶⁹ The *Glossary* was a Latin-Old English vocabulary appended to the *Grammar*, which listed all words which had an English equivalent. The overwhelming number of Latin words deemed the more beautiful by Aelfric suggested that Latin was still given pride

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

of place as a more accomplished language.¹⁷⁰ In contrast, the *Colloquy*, written in Latin with glosses in Old English, provided sample classroom dialogues dealing with daily business of agricultural life.¹⁷¹ These features appeared to further a suggestion that Latin and Old English lived in hermetic yet reciprocal domains: If Aelfric's programme demonstrated that Latin could also be significant as a spoken language, it also highlighted the didactic significance of vernacular lifeworlds and linguistics by mining them for language lessons.

Though Anglo-Norman became the language of the ruling class and of a few elite members of society after the Norman invasion, Latin remained the language of religion and scholarship and replaced Anglo-Saxon in the 1070s as the official language of the king's administration. French replaced Latin as the language of judicial record, even though laws were written in Anglo-Norman or Latin, and current business conducted in Anglo-Norman. The changing parity between Latin, English, and French was indicated in school grammar manuals from the fourteenth century, in which Latin rules were increasingly demonstrated by referring to French, and French explained through Latin rules.¹⁷²

The more patriotically-minded subsequent accounts saw the late fourteenth century as the period when English made significant gains against Norman hegemony. Marking the progress of English in the centuries since the Conquest, Camden in his *Remaines*, noted the significance of the fourteenth century: 'Edward the Third', he wrote, 'enlarged [Englishmen] first from that bondage: since which time our language hath risen by little...'¹⁷³ The persistent popularity of this view is to be seen in Basil Cottle's characterisation of the fourteenth-century 'triumph' of the English language as a moment of redemption after the 'unhappy and almost incredible story' of its decline after 1066: '[f]or anyone who speaks English, the most exciting thing about the period [1350-1400] is

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid., pp. 41-44; Blake, *A History of the English Language*, pp. 105-31.

¹⁷³ Camden, (see Carew, 'The Excellency of the English Tongue', above), p. 35.

not the drums and trappings of the futile war with France, or the sorry strife of peasants, or the divisions of religious sectaries, but the redemption of our language'.¹⁷⁴

However, the rhetoric of linguistic nationalism in the fourteenth century had been at best only a 'sporadic feature of government rhetoric' which tended to coincide with moments of national crises such as the war with France in 1295 and in the mid-1340s.¹⁷⁵ If 'English' was a multivalent signifier representing too many variations to identify as one language, it was also recognised, as William Ormrod explains, 'as possessing a kind of transcendent unity through its opposition, not merely linguistically but also politically, to French'.¹⁷⁶ A uniform notion of a singular English identity coalesced contingently in response to anti-French patriotic sentiment in this period, even as it thrived ambiguously without a coherent written or legal standard being promoted as a meaningful replacement to law French.

Asymmetries between the vernaculars continued to persist owing to the continued use of French to write legal tracts and treatises, and the difficulties in finding English counterparts for French legal terminology. That French remained the currency for professional mobility is indicated in the fact that it was taught at Oxford between the 1380s until about the mid-fifteenth century as part of a vocational programme designed to train for a career as a clerk, secretary, manager, or an administrator at a household or court.¹⁷⁷ Schoolmaster John of Cornwall's English grammar *Speculum Grammaticale* (1346) represented an early significant attempt to reclaim English as the primary medium of instruction.¹⁷⁸ The grammar used English, not French, as a medium of learning Latin morphology and syntax, and introduced new English equivalents for a number of Latin verb forms and sample sentences.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Basil Cottle, *The Triumph of English, 1350-1400* (London: Blandford Press, 1969), p. 15.

¹⁷⁵ Andrea Ruddick, *English Identity and Political Culture in the Fourteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 163.

¹⁷⁶ Ormrod, p. 753.

¹⁷⁷ Gwosdek, p. 45.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Cornwall's influential treatise represented, as Rita Copeland has argued, a 'concession to a new condition of education in provincial grammar school foundations', which indicated that elementary education had begun developing a more practical orientation.¹⁸⁰ It was only in the years after the introduction of the printing press into England in 1476, and curricular changes in grammar schools influenced by Continental humanism in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, that a resurgence of classical standards emerged in grammar books.¹⁸¹

At the cusp of its 'early modernity', the vernacular itself had not merited a monolingual grammar of its own despite the fact that 'vernacular' worlds had been making inroads into the discourse and function of grammars. The bilingual grammar of Latin (in English) produced by William Lily in 1542 represented a rare instance of institutional regulation by way of royal decree, and would catalyse the career of English monolingual grammars at the turn of the sixteenth century.¹⁸² Fashioning himself as a Renaissance humanist, Lily had translated works from the Italian, written occasional Latin verse, and produced what was to become the most influential grammar of Latin in English. The grammar that appeared in circulation by 1542 was a composite of three shorter works. As set out in the title for the 1548 edition, Lily's pedagogical programme reflected the contemporary position of English in the hierarchy of languages, and its rising political heft. The work was described as 'A shorte introduction of grammar generally to be used in the kynges maiesties dominions, for the bryngynge up of all those that entende to atteyne the knowledge of the Latine tongue'. The grammar, and English itself, was now linked with the exercise of the king's majesty.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Rita Copeland, 'Vernacular Translation and Instruction in Grammar in Fifteenth-Century England', in *Papers in the History of Linguistics: Proceedings of the Third International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences (ICHoLS III), August 1984*, (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1987), 143-56 (p. 146).

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Grammarian and schoolmaster Lily was in 1510 commissioned to be the first master of the St Paul's school in London by its patron John Colet, who intended it to be a centre of humanist-inspired teaching in England; R. D. Smith, 'Lily, William (1468?-1522/3)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Jan 2008 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16665>> [accessed 21 April 2017].

¹⁸³ Henry VIII's 1543 decree had cemented the grammar's canonical identity. For over 350 years, Lily's grammar would be the only one authorised for use in English schools after continuing to received royal endorsements from Edward VI in 1547 and Elizabeth I in 1559.

The grammar's commitment to the fashioning of a distinctive post-Reformation Englishness is discernible in the structure of Book II, which contained the actual grammatical text. Book II carried the Royal Proclamation by Henry VIII along with an address to the Reader, parts of speech, godly lessons for children; concords of Latin speech, a treatise *Carmen de moribus* on good behavior; and Erasmus' *Christiani Hominis Institutum* on Christian education.¹⁸⁴ These elements exemplified the interpenetrations and exclusions between the domains of English and Latin. If elements of Latin grammar, practices for translation, and memorisable phrases were rendered in English, texts for moral and religious instruction were left untranslated from the Latin. This was a text through and in which the English king staged his identity as the chief overseer of all instruction. Calling himself the supreme head of all schoolmasters and grammarians of his realm, Henry VIII's proclamation presented himself as the sign under which all diversities could identify as one. At stake, however, was not the standardisation of English but the attainment of 'the rudiments of the latine toung'.¹⁸⁵ While the document announced the significance of a text for an international language produced on English territory by an English grammarian, it did not propose an international significance for the English language itself.

Bullokar's moment: England beyond its borders in the 1580s

International parameters increasingly entered the reckoning of English cultural identity as the sixteenth century progressed, exerting their force on attitudes to the English language at home. The 1580s had been a significant decade for English international identity. Though transformative currents of the time may not have translated immediately or consistently into cultural effects, it was true that compelling gains in navigational knowhow,

¹⁸⁴ Gwosdek, p. 82.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 150.

trade, diplomacy, privateering, and a Europe-wide colonial rivalry were altering the English sense of the world and informing its aspirations. Implicated in this sense of the world were near and distant neighbours: those England sought to control such as Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; those with whom it entered into cultural or ideological contests (such as the Holy Roman Empire, Italy, Spain, and France); those with whom it traded (the Ottomans, the Barbary coast, East Indies, and Russia); and its colonial rivals (the Dutch states, Portugal, Spain, and France). The 1580s was also to be a decade of firsts: Francis Drake completed his circumnavigation (the first by an Englishman) in 1580, a feat Thomas Cavendish undertook to emulate in 1586. Haklyut's travel accounts of *Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America* was published in 1582. Walter Raleigh in 1595 traveled up the Orinoco river in search of the fabled city of El Dorado. Merchant James Lancaster in 1591 set off on the first English voyages to the East Indies, and in 1600 the English East India Company was granted a Royal charter to trade in the East Indies. Elsewhere, Humphrey Gilbert had claimed Newfoundland for England in 1583; a failed colonial settlement was set up in the North American Roanoke colony in 1585 and in 1587.

Closer home, successful colonisation of Ireland had taken place with the Munster plantations in the 1580s. English mercantile interests in lands and cultures further ashore undertaken by joint stock trading companies were given diplomatic impetus. The Company of Merchant Adventurers to New Lands (later known as the Muscovy Company) had received Royal Charter in 1555 to trade with Russia and Persia; and The Eastland or North Sea Company was chartered in 1579 to trade in Scandinavia and the Baltic region. Trade in the Barbary coast, the Mediterranean region, and with the Ottoman Empire, thrived in the wake of events set in motion in the 1580s, beginning with Elizabeth I's charter of trade with the Ottoman Sultan Murad III. The Turkey Company was established in 1581, and amalgamated in 1592 with the Venice Company to form the Levant Company. In 1585, the Barbary Company was established. Regardless of how the significance of these events was

assayed in their time, new referents from travel, trade, and transformations were bound to have inflected the repertoire of Englishness in unprecedented ways. Even though Bullokar's research and ideas did not in themselves herald a cultural transformation for English, there was evidence, even in his tentative rhetoric, that it was to this transforming cosmopolitan world that the vernacular language-object of his grammar aspired to belong.

'Conferable in Grammar-art': Cosmopolitan Ambition for English

In his *Pamphlet of Grammar* (1586), or rather too be said his abbreviation of his *Grammar for English*, extracted out of his *Grammar at Larg*, Bullokar claimed that his book was a part of larger grammatical treatise, but no evidence of the same has ever been found suggesting that this was perhaps a project left unfinished. Another version of the same was titled *Bref Grammar for English*. The works contained a statement about phonology, orthography, and an address to the reader, before laying out a description of the English language in eight parts of speech, syntax, and prosody. While he may have intended this to be a watershed moment for the development of the vernacular, this appeared not to have happened. Bullokar had spent several years of his life devising a reformed orthography for English, and spent considerable effort in laying the ground for his ultimately unsuccessful proposals.¹⁸⁶

In 1580, he published a pamphlet called *A Short Introduction or Guiding to Print, Write, and Reade English Speech* and solicited comments about his argument from a select group of people. In the same year in London, he set up posters advertising his reformed alphabet, and in 1583, printed and distributed twenty articles in his new orthographic system.¹⁸⁷ The *Bref Grammar* in 1586 (along with the proposed dictionary that did not materialise) also

¹⁸⁶ Foster Jones records that the inconsistent and complicated diacritical marks that typified his orthography were dismissed in its time as overly complicated. See Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 153.

¹⁸⁷ Vivian Salmon, 'Bullokar, William (c. 1531–1609), spelling reformer and grammarian', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., September 2004 (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3926>> [accessed 30 Nov 2017]

showcased his own orthographical system, suggesting that his intention was no less than to formulate a singular, complete linguistic system for English. Notwithstanding this ambition, the grammar went virtually unnoticed and was disregarded as a poor copy of Lily's grammar. The few grammars of English that followed Bullokar's were written in Latin.¹⁸⁸ However, the very fact that the term grammar was used for a work describing English represented an attitudinal shift in which a grammar could be seen as an analytical structure applicable to any language, and not just as a historically insular art associated with a classical language.

Bullokar's simple assertion was that English could be rendered grammatically and taught systematically. He made his case by presenting the advantages of learning English, and by proposing that a grammatical study of it would bring benefits to a wide range of readers. His own rhetoric played it safe, only tentatively projecting any suggestion of parity between English and Latin. We should not presume, he seemed to insist, that a popular grammar of English need represent a capitulation of the sway of Latin. Instead, in laying out the aims for his grammar, he appealed to the practical value of a systematic English, in which some of its perceived inferiority could be imagined as a positive quality. Bullokar enthusiastically promoted the very brevity of English grammar as a virtue, a point that would be reiterated in Richard Carew's *The Excellency of the English Tongue* (1595), which celebrated that English needed a 'very short grammar'.¹⁸⁹ Bullokar's rhetoric aimed for a fine balance between promoting English's simplicity and sophistication. Its relative simplicity was proposed as a virtue: since English has 'short rul' and is 'soon learned'; yet 'having sufficient rulz thaer-in too mak the way much aezier for the learning of any other langag unknown before too the learnor'.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ The next grammar in the vernacular, Ben Jonson's *The English Grammar*, was published only in 1640.

¹⁸⁹ Carew, *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, p. 46.

¹⁹⁰ William Bullokar, *Pamphlet for Grammar* (1586), repr. in *The Works of William Bullokar: vol. 2*, ed. by J. R. Turner, Leeds Texts and Monographs (The University of Leeds, School of English, 1980), title page.

The title page set up three broad aims of his proposal to systematise a grammar for English, in which the term ‘ease’ and its cognates were predominant. The abbreviated version of the promised *Grammar at larg*, he writes, is ‘sufficient for the spedi learning how too parc English Spe’ch for the perfecter writing thaerof’.¹⁹¹ Second, learning English, he claimed, would make it easier to learn grammars for other languages -- for ‘eazier entrance intoo the secretz of Grammar for other languages’.¹⁹² Implicit here was the suggestion that English (as rendered by his grammar) possessed something of a universally applicable structure. That English had the potential to unify a wider community of languages was suggested by the third aim: ‘the Spedier vnderstanding of other languages ruled or not ruled by Grammar’. English, then, could be used to learn Latin and other erudite languages as well as unsophisticated ones. This quality was evaluated in terms of its profitability to foreigners, as well as to an ‘Englysh nation’ that ‘dezyreth too learn any strang langag: and very-aid-ful too the strangor too learn english perfectly and speedily’.¹⁹³

The more flamboyant title page of the *Booke at Large* (1580) had signposted the grammar through the following statement:

...the same author hath also framed a ruled Grammar, to be imprinted heereafter, for the same speech, to no small commoditie of the English Nation, not only to come to easie, speedie, and perfect vse of our owne language, but also to their easie, speedie, and readie entrance into the secretes of other Languages, and easie, speedie pathway to all Straungers, to vse our Language, heeretofore very hard vnto them, to no small profite and credite to this our Nation, and stay there vnto in the weightiest causes.¹⁹⁴

Ease, speed, and perfection were the key selling points of the grammar. Despite its specific pedagogical situation, the grammar addressed an interesting set of implied readers. It hoped

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ William Bullokar, *Booke at Large for the Amendment of Orthographie for English Speech* (London: Henri Dunham, 1580), repr. in *The English Experience*, no. 24 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum; New York: De Capo Press, 1968), title page.

to benefit not the school pupil, but locals and strangers. The addressee was a composite figure, and a cosmopolitan user of language. The multivalent exchanges implied between English and other ‘strange’ languages presupposed that there was or could be an international multilingual community, and that English should be deemed worthy of its fellowship.

In positing English as a common meeting ground for languages, Bullokar did not take recourse to an abstract, prelapsarian sense of unity. His was a claim to universal applicability in an international arena in which national identities were getting entrenched and eager to claim the instrumental superiority of their languages through acts of one-upmanship. Even in the implied suggestion that English could be a potential replacement for Latin, it was Latin’s status as an international *lingua franca* being alluded to and not its innate classical superiority. English, simply put, was sufficiently like Latin, yet easier to learn. The advantage of a finely-balanced affinity and distinction made English suitable for learning any language whatsoever, whether ruled or unruled. English, then, was being presented as a useful tool to make profit in zones of international contact, exchange, and even control over other ‘strange languages’. That Latin continued to be the medium for the English grammars produced after Bullokar does not contradict this conjecture. It suggests that the intended learners of English were European foreigners, and bilingualism was becoming increasingly profitable in the ‘Europeanising’ world in which they circulated.¹⁹⁵

Bullokar fashioned himself as an international man of experience in the verse address to the reader. Telling the story of how he came to his linguistic vocation, he invoked the testimony of his travels as an army man, which first gave him occasion to look at his language anew. This autobiographical tangent came to the following conclusion: ‘And by my trauel English tryd | a perfect ruled tung, | conferable in Grammar-art, | with any ruled

¹⁹⁵ Notably, John Wallis’ *Grammatica Linguae Anglicae* (1653) addressed native speakers and foreigners and claimed that a mastery of English would simplify trade relations, and gives the importance of English to scientific literature, especially theology. See John Wallis, *Grammar of the English Language*, trans. by J. A. Kemp (London: Longman, 1972).

long.¹⁹⁶ Evaluated in comparison with any long-ruling (and rule-bound) tongue, English, he concluded was found worthy of being given a grammar. Despite the relative simplicity of his aims and the all too neat transposition of Latin categories to English, Bullokar was not quite unaware of the divergence of the two. In that, he represented a liminal moment in the vernacular grammatical tradition in England. On the one hand, he fit into a grammatical tradition traced back to Aelfric and down to Lily, in which the vernacular intervened in the description of the classical but retained its techniques of description and framework. On the other, he displayed awareness that the two structures diverged and that fitting English to another's structure was a violence of sorts. This was but a passing acknowledgment, which was not pursued, at least not in the extant abbreviated pamphlet. He wrote: 'should be wrongd if you it ty/vntoo a strang tongs grac'.¹⁹⁷ Any divergences were merely to be integrated within the Latin framework. Yet in Bullokar's fresh reckoning, English could at the very least feel justified in claiming solidarity with other established languages: the word 'confer' implying comparison and a bestowal, but also a coming-together or a consultation.

Gilchrist, Bullokar, and translocal significance

When Gilchrist and Bullokar compiled their respective grammars, both Hindustani and English were objects under construction in linguistic works and pedagogical systems. Both carved out their domains amid the fluctuating definitions and opinions of their times. They promoted undervalued vernaculars on the grounds of their utility in practical and profitable domains beyond their immediate speech communities. Inquiring into Gilchrist's analogy between Hindustani and English gave us purchase on the vicissitudes of his nineteenth-century context and its uses of a narrative of the development of English. In turn, revisiting the development of early modern English through elements of this nineteenth-century analogy drawn in support of a 'practical orientalism' allowed us to capture the period's texts

¹⁹⁶ Bullokar, *Pamphlet for Grammar*, sig.B^r.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

and events in a trajectory that enabled the first English grammar to make a utilitarian case for studying English as a translocal language.

As we saw, Gilchrist's topos of English triumph was expedient, and perhaps therefore simplistic. The progress of English -- in the domains of politics, pedagogy, and public opinion -- was however slow and unsteady, characterised by reversals and discontinuities. The discourse of practical pedagogy itself was subject to reversals and emendations; its modes, and the place of the English language in them, came into and out of prominence through the centuries that informed Bullokar's moment. Vernacular assertions in Latin-focused grammars too were similarly discontinuous. Assertions of national pride and cohesion referred to the 'king's English', to an idea of being united under the figure of a sovereign who was, among other things, the most valued patron of linguistic projects and the legislator of pedagogical material in his territory. In this background, we read the preface of Bullokar's English grammar as a significantly original part of a text that was otherwise an imitation of an influential Latin language grammar of English. This document staged its complementary separateness from established and influential texts and traditions in the preface that addressed local and foreign readers, and promised ease of learning any language.

Both Gilchrist and Bullokar in their respective contexts straddled two paradigms of language learning by presenting their practically-minded works as differentiated yet complementary to supposedly higher-order pursuits. Gilchrist's practical orientalism could be a conduit to literary pursuits *and* serve the pragmatics of imperial work. Constructed as an object in this matrix, the colonial vernacular was ascribed a precocious local and global reach: Hindustani could be a universal colloquial medium in India and potentially invert philology's 'opticks' by intervening in the milieu of English and Latin. Bullokar's English was a profitable go-between language in a world where multilingual exchanges were the

order of the day. Easily learnt, it was well placed to facilitate the decoding of the secrets of other languages. By making the translocal significant in the vernacular's repertoire, we can see the rhetoric of Bullokar and Gilchrist creating a space within the discourse of vernacular modernity in which vernaculars could imagine striving beyond their perceived local limitations by taking on cosmopolitan identities. While these early grammars only imagined translocal futures, the set of dictionaries to which the next chapter turns negotiated the realities of the translocal traffic of new, strange words and their referents.

CHAPTER 3

**A New World of Words:
Lexicographic Anxieties in Early modern England and colonial India**

Language has always been the companion of empire.

-- Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramatica Castellana*, 1492¹

For our own parts, we employe the borrowed ware so far to our advantage that we raise a profit of new words from the same stock which yet in their own Countrey are not merchantable.

-- Richard Carew, *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, 1595²

To whatever perfection our late circumnavigators may have reduced their charts, they owe no inconsiderable obligations to the Columbusses of former times; and the above philological Argonauts have answered the same ends in a great measure, and merit the thanks of the public, for their attempts.

-- Henry P. Forster, *A Vocabulary in Two Parts, Bongalee and English*, 1799³

The year of publication of Nebrija's grammar, the first formal grammar for any vernacular in Europe, was also that of Columbus's first voyage to America and the year in which Spain would regain its stronghold in the Iberian Peninsula by defeating the Moors at Granada.

These coincident events trace a motif that would animate narratives of empires:

negotiations between old orders and new, between the native and the foreign. Mercantile networks of early modern seafaring Europeans, to which Nebrija had allied his philology, were also important for the performance of an English linguistic identity increasingly allied to its emergent imperial destiny in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Proposals for the first English dictionaries addressed the supposed penury of English vis-à-vis continental vernaculars, the foreign borrowings and coinages in its lexical stock, and the anxiety that its porous borders may allowed excessive infiltration. If an English enriched

¹ Antonio de Nebrija, *Gramatica de la Lengua Castellana*, ed. by Ig. Gonzalez-Llubera (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), p. 3, cited in Richard Helgerson, 'Writing Empire and Nation', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature (1500-1600)*, ed. by Arthur Kinney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 310-329 (p. 311).

² Carew, *The Excellency of the English Tongue*, p. 48.

³ H. P. Forster, *A Vocabulary in Two Parts, Bongalee and English, and Vice Versa*, Vol. 1 (Calcutta: Ferris & company, 1799), p. ix.

with borrowings was lauded by some like Richard Carew, not all types of foreign inflows and new words were seen in a positive light.

A few centuries after such dilemmas had faded from prominence and England had come decisively into an imperial role, Henry P. Forster, a British merchant in Bengal, invoked Nebrija's sentiment in its homage to the philological argonauts in service of the British Empire. The philological argonauts in the worlds of early English as well as colonial dictionaries were also linguistic entrepreneurs engaged in modulating the voice and remit of their products in response to new inflections to their contexts brought about by 'new' encounters. If early English dictionaries were desirous of registering copiousness, they also worried about legislating inflow. If colonial-era dictionaries sought to facilitate a high degree of comprehension of Indian culture, they also worried about the consequences of miscomprehension and assimilation. In the thematic context of encounters between the old and the new, the extant and the unfamiliar, this chapter reads in parallel the anxieties at work in lexicographic prefaces from the two periods and the rhetoric summoned to appease them.

The early English texts I read negotiate three levels of encounters: with newness in their local corpus, with cultural rivals on the Continent, and with new worlds beyond Europe. The requirements posed by such encounters shapes the lexicographic works that develop to meet them. At the same time, they straddle old and new expectations: of precursors and coteries, elite and non-elite patrons, foreign and local markets for language learning. Colonial-era works come with their own adaptations of traditional roles of dictionaries as they negotiate the rising complexity of encounters in the colony.

The following section explains the basis for comparing these disparate forms of lexicographic works before attending to each separately.

Lexicographic texts and Typology

Given that dictionaries have traditionally emerged in response to historically-specific needs, it is often difficult to find a ‘standard, agreed-upon taxonomy’ for them.⁴ In his *Manual of Lexicography* (1971), Ladislav Zgusta classifies dictionaries on the basis of whether they are big or small, linguistic or encyclopedic, synchronic or diachronic, general or restricted, scholastic or practical, monolingual or bilingual.⁵ Sidney Landau’s classification in *Dictionaries: The Art and Craft of Lexicography* (2001) is based on a wider set of criteria that includes the manner of financing, age of users, complexity, means of access, and the primary language of the market.⁶ The texts selected for comparison in this chapter fall into different categories. Some are ostensibly monolingual while others are bilingual or polyglot, each of which traditionally have had different intentions, purposes, and principles of organisation.

The basic purpose shared by most bilingual dictionaries, according to Zgusta, is to seek as high degree of equivalence as possible, ‘to coordinate with the lexical units of one those lexical units of another language which are equivalent in their lexical meaning’.⁷

Monolingual works are typically seen as more detailed, having ‘fuller definitions than bilingual works’, which are seen as more specialised and relatively restrictive.⁸ Yet dictionaries, as Zgusta cautions, can be difficult to classify because ‘the selective restrictions of dictionaries can be based on very different principles and on different combinations of principles’.⁹ Depending on the contingent purpose they have meant to serve, both bilingual and monolingual lexicographic works have frequently taken on elements of other kinds of expository works, often turning more selective and prescriptive than stated in their intentions. This is especially instructive for works featured in this chapter, i.e., those

⁴ Landau, p. 6.

⁵ Ladislav Zgusta, *Manual of Lexicography* (Prague: Academia, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1971), p. 7, pp. 198-217.

⁶ Landau, pp. 8, 10-13.

⁷ Zgusta, p. 294.

⁸ Landau, p. 7.

⁹ Zgusta, p. 209.

engaging with linguistic cultures that do not have a recorded standard form, or when the source and target cultures are in need of major mutual comprehension across many hierarchies and registers. A dictionary, Zgusta shows, can take on an encyclopedic character if it deals with a language which does not as yet have standard national form.¹⁰ Compilers of bilingual dictionaries for ‘anisomorphic’ languages (showing intra- or extra-linguistic differences that do not easily map on to one another) often describe the lexical unit of the source language ‘by an explanation which is not dissimilar to the definition of a monolingual dictionary but is worded in the target language.’¹¹ Monolingual and bilingual dictionaries can both serve a restrictive purpose ‘either for general orientation in a group of languages, or for cross-cultural comparisons more explicitly.’¹²

Monolingual dictionaries can be restrictive in another way when they are of the ‘prohibitive or prescriptive type’ commonly to be seen ‘when the norm of the standard language is being constituted, reconstituted or simply changed...

...and above all when there is puristic movement in the society or even a situation characterised by diglossia, many prohibitive and generally prescriptive dictionaries are published, with the two aspects combined.¹³

Philological, ethnolinguistic, and ‘onomasiologically productive’, or ‘quasi-normative’ bilingual dictionaries of standard languages that have not yet been fully established also, Zgusta notes, take upon themselves some descriptive tasks of monolingual works.¹⁴

In the face of such overlaps in functions, what may be considered representative features (such as the relative self-containment of monolingual dictionaries or the calculated directionality of bilingual ones) can be treated as guiding principles for dictionary makers

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 216.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 295.

¹² Ibid., p. 298.

¹³ Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 304-5.

rather than as strict contra-distinctions between types of dictionaries. Thus, Landau concedes that his own typology, like most others, is only ‘a convenient way to highlight significant differences among dictionaries’.¹⁵ As a caveat to his own categorisation, Zgusta holds that the lexicographer’s intention is perhaps the most important dimension of the typology of the bilingual dictionaries, especially with respect to ‘whether it is compiled as an aid to the comprehension or to the description of the source language, or as an aid to the generation of text in the target language’.¹⁶

It is further noteworthy that the purported mono- or bilinguality of several of the works discussed in the present chapter is not a straightforward matter for context-specific reasons. The works widely considered to be the first monolingual English dictionaries were lexicons of hard words circulating in the English language. According to an influential account, these had the following immediate precursors: fifteenth-century glossaries of English and classical languages appended to scholarly manuscripts; printed bilingual lexicons of major vernaculars popular in the sixteenth century; and mass produced polyglot language guides for commercial use.¹⁷ However, following Ian Lancashire, it is possible to argue that all English dictionaries produced until later in the seventeenth century were effectively bilingual ‘either in mapping a non-English language to English (that is, translation) or in mapping hard, often Latinate English, so-called ‘inkhorn’ terms, to easier common English (a function of synonyms)’.¹⁸ Renaissance words, Lancashire notes, had no fixed lexical definitions in early dictionaries: ‘Dictionaries tended to explain words either by giving other signs corresponding to them, whether in English (synonyms) or in another language (translations), or by describing the realia they pointed to.’¹⁹ The lexicographer defined words by other words, commented on their usage, and contextualised them in

¹⁵ Landau, p. 8.

¹⁶ Zgusta, pp. 299-300.

¹⁷ Gabriele Stein’s work has offered this influential account of the history of English lexicography. See, for instance, *The English Dictionary before Candrey* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985); ‘The Emergence of Lexicology in Renaissance English Dictionaries,’ in *Words and Dictionaries from the British Isles in Historical Perspective*, ed by John Considine and Giovanni Iammartino (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007) pp. 25-38.

¹⁸ Ian Lancashire, introduction to the *The Early Modern English Dictionaries Database (EMEDD)* [online].

University of Toronto, October 1999. Available from: <<http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~ian/emedd.html>>

¹⁹ Ibid.

illustrative phrases. Thus, dictionaries like John Florio's English-Italian *A Worlde of Words* (1598) and *Queen Anna's New World of Words* (1611), positioned themselves (and their compilers) as literal guides to the world.

Like many early modern texts whose genre-boundaries were typically fluid, dictionaries too were works that were read rather than merely consulted and served many functions.²⁰

Characterised by eloquent prefaces and idiosyncratically wide-ranging entries, they, John Considine writes, 'told stories, and they persuaded their readers to adopt beliefs and perform actions'.²¹ The rhetorical attention given to the character of Englishness, for instance, revealed the inexorable links between the political, linguistic, and self-fashioning functions of a writing where more was always at stake than linguistic description alone. In Thomas Elyot's 1538 Latin-English *Dictionary* -- the first English book to have 'Dictionary' as its title -- prefatory praise of the author as a humanist lexicographer from England entering classical domains was enmeshed with paeans to Henry VIII and cautions to potential plagiarists.²² Exhorting learned Englishmen to compile an English-language dictionary, Richard Mulcaster in 1582 painted a patriotic picture in which the mother tongue was a companion to imperial expansion as well as domestic cohesion. If polyglot dictionaries popular in the Continent through the sixteenth century validated the interchangeability of ideas from one language to another with what Considine has called 'irenic implications',²³ early seventeenth-century dictionaries seeking to make 'hard words' common among women and unskilled persons were less conciliatory in their diatribes

²⁰ John Considine, 'Narrative and Persuasion in Early Modern Dictionaries and Phrasebooks', in *The Review of English Studies* (52. 206: 2001), 195-206; D.T. Starnes, 'Literary Features of Renaissance Dictionaries', in *Studies in Philology* (37.1: 1940), 26-50. Starnes has drawn attention to the many literary features of early modern dictionaries, which strongly indicated that their self-professed remit extended beyond presenting succinct lexical meaning. For instance, reprints of a popular English-Latin lexicon *A Short Dictionarie for Yonge Beginners* (first published in 1556) added literary rather than linguistic features. A statement on the title-page of the 1586 issue, showed that the text had been augmented by over six hundred 'rythmicall verses' many of which were 'proverbial'. A 1602 enlarged edition added epigrams, histories, and 'Poeticall Fictions'. Similar assertions concerning the value of dictionaries to the readers of poetry, fables, mythology, profane and sacred history, and the scriptures are found in several other dictionaries of the period (p. 28). Such dictionaries more broadly aimed to provide input for their readers' imaginations, their self- and world-making articulations.

²¹ Considine, 'Narrative and Persuasion', p. 195. This work was the first attempt at a large-scale dictionary of English with classical, as opposed to medieval, Latin.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²³ *Ibid.*

against the use of foreign, archaic, or neologisms that could contaminate the authority of the King's English.

The selection of colonial-era dictionaries alongside which I cross-read early modern works were different in significant ways. Technical glossaries and those of Anglo-Indian words focused on specialist forms of language and words used by the British in India. Many of them catalogued an increasingly insular category of administrative terminology used by a coterie of proficient users. Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell's 1886 *Hobson-Jobson* was a glossary of 'Anglo-Indian' terms that defied easy classification given the whimsy of its definitions drawn from miscellaneous quarters including popular culture and slang. To the extent that it gave names to often idiosyncratic concepts from the lifeworld of a class of British people living in India, it can be considered, to borrow Zgusta's descriptor, 'onomasiologically productive', and thus a guide to a world of its own.²⁴ Bilingual works between the English and Hindustani languages, on the other hand, navigated what were first encountered as two anisomorphic linguistic cultures. They had relatively clear primary roles given their general-purpose usefulness to the colonial enterprise. All of these works served various pedagogic, functional, as well as self-descriptive needs of the British in India.

Yet their pronouncements contained hints of the functions attributed by Zgusta to 'ethnolinguistic' or 'quasi-normative' bilingual dictionaries for languages considered non-standard; these works, he writes, 'take upon themselves some tasks which but for different circumstances would belong to monolingual dictionaries, in the first line the description either of the source language or even of the target language'.²⁵ George Hadley's 1772 work explained words from the 'jargon' called moors, a resurrection of which as the 'grand popular language' was one of the key selling points of Gilchrist's self-avowedly intrepid project. S. W. Fallon's lyrical prefatory descriptions in 1886 were of Hindustani described as a 'national speech' dense with folk and feminine elements. H.H. Wilson's preface to a

²⁴ Zgusta, p. 304.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-5.

glossary of revenue terms used in British India opened by identifying his source language as that of East India Company's documents and correspondence, which, he noted, was full of confusing terms adopted from the vernacular languages of the country.²⁶ In that, this corpus of British-Indian usage was treated as a jargon of English, containing 'hard words' that had to be explained to befuddled British addressees both in India and Britain.

Correspondingly, we can see the *Hobson-Jobson* as an instance of British compilers having turned their ethnolinguistic gaze on a foreignised version of themselves. The prefaces of all these works too had strong elements of narrative and persuasion.

Stepping out of strictly genre-based inquiries to focus on the communicative aspects of dictionaries allows us, as Heming Yong and Jing Peng have proposed, to view the bilingual dictionary as a 'system of intercultural communication between the compiler and the user'.²⁷ This approach allows us to take into account that dictionary-making more broadly 'is essentially a socio-cultural behavior and dictionary use is by nature socio-psychological'.²⁸ Thus, the lexicographic work can be approached from 'three different but interdependent standpoints, i.e., from the position of compiler, from the position of user, and from the position of context'.²⁹ Guided by the imaginative repertoire of compilers in early modern Europe, Considine has pursued the question of why many lexicographers saw their task as heroic, and positioned themselves as saviours of heritage. His account of early modern dictionaries in Europe is interested in the imaginative interactions between their makers and readers, in 'the kinds of anxiety and pride and imagination and love that inform dictionaries'.³⁰ If we approach the dictionary discourse in early modern England and colonial India in the spirit of such standpoints rooted in communicative and imaginative acts, the typological identity ascribed to these works (by their compilers and users,

²⁶ Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms*, p. i.

²⁷ Heming Yong and Jing Peng, *Bilingual Lexicography from a Communicative Perspective*, Vol. 9 *Terminology and Lexicography Research and Practice*, ed. by Marie-Claude L'Homme (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007), p. 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁰ John Considine, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 4-5.

institutions or commentators) becomes interesting for what it can tell us about the possible choices, anxieties, and imperatives faced by the lexicographers as well as about the socio-cultural contract between writer, reader, and context implied in their works. Attending to prescriptions, addressees, and purported functions as revealed by dictionary prefaces in these disparate contexts gives purchase on the ways in which lexicographers traversed various political, commercial, and social realities in both periods.

In what follows, a locus of themes derived from a reading of works from early modern England directs the parallel reading of colonial-era dictionaries. The foregrounded themes are the lexicographers' perception of themselves, their patrons and projects, their key addressees, and the cultural identities of their source or target languages. The cross-reading interprets lexicographic self-fashioning in the face of the conditions that call for dictionaries and with respect to the fate of the primary addressees, classes, and languages, registers or dialects valorised or disregarded. More broadly, it pursues the ways in which the dictionary discourse discloses the anxieties of assimilation and infiltration in the face of increasing traffic of 'new' words and referents.

English lexicography in the shadow of 'others'

In his preface to the seminal *Dictionary of English Language* in 1755, Samuel Johnson had insisted that his work had not been carried out 'under the shelter of academick bowers.'³¹ Johnson's eagerness to establish his dictionary as a single-author feat achieved without academic support betrayed an anxiety of belatedness with respect to Continental academies and their widely-respected dictionaries. As Considine's analysis of Johnson's dictionary discourse reveals, the *Vocabulario* (produced in 1612 and expanded in 1624) of the Italian *Accademia della Crusca* and the two editions of the French *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* had been key interlocutors for Johnson, who had sent copies of his dictionary to them

³¹ Samuel Johnson, *The Dictionary of the English Language*, 3rd edn (Dublin: W. G. Jones, 1768), p. c2.

immediately upon its publication.³² Johnson's rhetorical display of individual enterprise was mirrored in the glorious praise showered upon it by David Garrick's *Upon Samuel Johnson's Dictionary* (1755):

Talk of war with a Briton, he'll boldly advance
 That one English soldier will beat ten of France.
 Would we alter the boast from the sword to the pen,
 The odds are still greater, still greater our men.
 In the deep mines of science though Frenchmen may toil,
 Can their strength be compared to Locke, Newton and Boyle?
 Let them rally their heroes, send forth all their powers,
 Their verse-men and prose-men, then match 'em with ours.
 First Milton and Shakespeare, like gods in the fight,
 Have put their whole drama and epic to flight;
 In satires, epistles and odes would they cope,
 Their numbers retreat before Dryden and Pope;
 And Johnson, well-armed, like a hero of yore,
 Has beat forty French and will beat forty more.³³

Imagining Johnson as a soldier who had exchanged his sword for a pen, Garrick's praise exemplified much of the spirit of the age in which lexicography too participated in an international contest, and the lexicographer was a hero. Though sixteenth- and seventeenth-century precursors of the modern English dictionary did not share Johnson's confidence about their own language, an eye upon the international arena and heroic ambitions were very much a part of the early modern lexicographer's remit. Anxieties of belatedness with respect to the Continent were rampant even in the sixteenth century. Yet

³² For an account of Johnson's relationship to the dictionaries of Accademia della Crusca and the Académie Française, see John Considine, *Academy Dictionaries: 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 129-33.

³³ David Garrick, *The Poetical Works of David Garrick: vol. 2* (London: George Kearsley, 1785), p. 506, cited by Considine, *Academy Dictionaries*, p. 132.

the first monolingual dictionaries appeared only in the first quarter of the seventeenth century, and had much more domestic ambitions.³⁴

Just as the pedagogical grammars encountered in the previous chapters had claimed to bridge the gap between the learned and the ‘unlatined’, the first monolingual English dictionaries were addressed to the ‘unskilled’, women, and tradesmen. They drew liberally from glossaries appended to pedagogical works of the late sixteenth century, and claimed to want to make ‘hard’ (often foreign words) words at home in the English spoken by common folk. Read as an important transitional precursor to the monolingual dictionaries of the seventeenth century, John Florio’s bilingual dictionaries made manifest the negotiations between the native and the foreign, between the normative and the subversive, between the literary and the commonplace. Florio’s self-presentation in the prefaces also testified to the multicultural ethos of urban English society, and anticipated Johnson’s own self-fashioning as an intrepid single-author lexicographer taking on armies of ‘academic’ legislators.

Meanwhile, in another non-academic theatre, English increasingly made its mark in polyglot vocabularies printed as aids to tradesmen on the Continent, testifying to the international significance of English merchants and of English as a practical language worth knowing beyond its shores. Barely featured in early sixteenth-century works, English became a prominent language -- and English merchants the occasional dedicatees -- of Continental polyglot dictionaries after the 1550s. New words and things were making their way back to the island from abroad, adding to the repertoire of English. Also adding to the stock of words were the creative antics of neologisers, who enlivened the corpus of English with varying degree of success.

³⁴ William Bullokar and Richard Mulcaster had made proposals for English-only dictionaries in *Booke at Large* (1580), and *Elementarie* (1582) respectively. Bullokar’s dictionary never materialised, while Mulcaster’s was only a list of 8000 words without definitions. For an assessment of a variety of reasons -- including publisher monopolies and systems of patronage -- that could have accounted for the complete absence of printed monolingual dictionaries in Tudor England, see Ian Lancashire, ‘Why did Tudor England have no monolingual English dictionary?’, in *Webs of Words: New Studies in Historical Lexicology*, ed. by John Considine (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 8-23.

Borrowings most enriched the English lexicon in the years between 1530 and 1660, peaking in the decades on the either side of 1600.³⁵ Prolific literary, technical, intellectual, and mercantile activity registered new words and the extended semantic range of extant words. Many of the borrowings and neologisms tended to congregate within certain domains, making them appear inaccessible and ‘hard’ for general use or for everyday speech. Latin and Greek loans provided elements of specialised vocabulary for intellectual and professional disciplines such as science and medicine. French loans expressed cultural and political contact and had often to do with food and warfare. Italian, French, and Spanish also contributed in a similar manner. Dutch contributed maritime vocabulary given the significance of cross-Channel trade. Arabic reached through Spanish and Portuguese, and the New World made a few incursions.³⁶ Oral borrowings from living languages also appeared in many forms given that a standard rendition was not available for languages without a written character.³⁷

New derivatives were common, and foreign words were anglicised using affixes and prefixes from Germanic and Latinate schemes. Words were also recruited across disciplines. Various forms of speech could also ‘lexicalise’ phrases, for instance in the case of phrasal nouns such as ‘man-of-war’, or back formations from nouns such as ‘to cobble’ from ‘cobble’.³⁸ New words were coined for their utilitarian value, and also to satisfy the stylistic ideal of *copia* considered the hallmark of literary language.³⁹ While some debated the ideological impact of unbridled ‘inkhornisme’ which caused unregulated immigration of new and maverick words into the reserve of English, others capitalised on the demand for words by producing glossaries that would make new and strange words accessible to whole

³⁵ Blake, *A History of the English Language*, p. 228. The *Chronological English Dictionary* (CED) indicates that the English lexis saw its most rapid growth between 1570 and 1630.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

³⁷ A case in point was the word ‘raccoon’ borrowed from the Powhatan dialect of Algonquian, which appeared in a narrative by John Smith in 1608 in two variant forms -- ‘rahaugcums’ and ‘raugroughcums’; Terttu Nevalainen, ‘Early Modern English Lexis and Semantics’, in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, 6 vols, ed. by Roger Lass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992-2001) III (2000), pp. 332–458 (p. 361).

³⁸ Blake, *A History of the English Language*, pp. 229-30.

³⁹ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, pp. 68-141.

new classes of people. The works reflected the impulse to record the rapidly changing world of words, to expand the English corpus of words, to prescribe its usage, and to register an internationally-recognised national character in which a surfeit of strange words would not be seen as an utter disadvantage.

Words Enfranchised: The tables of Richard Mulcaster and Edmund Coote

Giving an account of the state of the language since ‘Henry VIII’s time’, Camden in 1605 wrote:

[...]the vernacular hath been beautified and enriched out of other good tongues, partly by enfranchising and endenizing strange words, partly by refining and mollifying olde words, partly by implanting new wordes with artificiall composition...so that our tongue is (and I doubt not but hath beene) as copious, pithie, and significant as any other tongue in Europe.⁴⁰

This representation of the lexical activity of English was noteworthy for the parenthetical qualification which expressed an abiding faith in the state of an English past. That English ‘had been’ as copious, pithy, and significant as any European tongue despite being heavily derivative was a retroactive expression of pride. Towards the close of the sixteenth century, any expression of pride in English had to defend it against the charge that it was inadequate. Mulcaster’s pedagogical work *Elementarie* (1582), which also contained the earliest proposals for a monolingual dictionary, was one work that mounted such a defense of English: ‘I loue Rome but London better, I fauor Italie, but England more, I honor the Latin, but I worship the English (p. 254).’⁴¹ This statement exemplified the overall tenor of the work, which defended English against the charge that it had little of native merit while

⁴⁰ Camden, p. 20.

⁴¹The *Elementarie*’s wordlist was not quite a dictionary. Mulcaster merely provided a general table of words without exposition, which was preceded by a section on instructions for its use and arguments about why it was necessary.

also upholding the significance of other (contemporary or classical) languages as sources and models for it. Reforming English was not, Mulcaster insisted, a renunciation of Latin or Greek:

For if I had them [Latin and Greek] not in great admiration, bycause I know their valew, I would not think it to be anie honor for my cuntrie tung to resemble their grace (p. 254).

This broadly conciliatory stance was also to be seen in the ‘Peroration to the reader’, which anticipated the inclusive gesture of hard word dictionaries by spelling out an aim to cater to the learned and ignorant alike: ‘Wherefor to content both, by contemning neither...seing my desire is, as to profit the ignorant, so to please the cunning’ (p. 253). This declaration aimed to bring together two paradigms of learning -- for utility and for pleasure -- within a single pedagogical venture. This reconciliation served the promotion of the English language hitherto dismissed by the unlearned as a ‘thing of difficultie’, and by the learned for whom it offered ‘no delite’ (p. 253).

Mulcaster insisted that ‘No one tung is more fine then other naturallie’, and called on the need for the ‘industrie of the speaker’ fostered by the ‘occasion offered by the kinde of gouernment wherein he liveth’ (p. 253). The model to emulate was the city of Athens, whose people enriched their knowledge ‘bred within Grece, and borrowed from without’ creating a language that was now ‘a common mean’ across Europe (p. 253). He foresaw a similar horizon for English if only it could be perfected in use. This was eminently possible even if English was currently uncounth since ‘so was it in Latin, as so is it in ech language’ (p. 255). Even in Mulcaster’s explanation of Latin’s privileged position, it is possible to discern international aspirations for English:

There be two speciall considerations, which kepe the Latin, & other learned tungs, tho cheflie the Latin, in great countenance among vs, the one thereof is the knowledge, which

is registred in them, the other is the conference, which the learned of Europe, do
commonlie vse by them, both in speaking and writing (p. 253-54).

Once fostered by institutionally-supported reform, it implicitly followed, English too could be a part of the confederacy of the 'learned of Europe' (p. 253). It, then, could be loved and developed without other languages -- especially those from which it had borrowed -- losing favour.

Mulcaster's account of the pathways of foreign words into English painted a picture of scholarship, trade and travel:

The desire of learning enflamed studie, the longing for gain brought in great traffik, the delight to range, did cause men trauell, new occasions brought furth new words, as either more cunning made waie to more terms, or as strange deuises did seke strange deliueries...Hence commeth it that we haue our tung commonlie both stored and enlarged with our neighbours speches, and the old learned tungs (pp. 172-73).

This was a picture of one-way traffic. The attitude of foreigners -- with their 'longing for gain' -- was here contrasted with Englishmen who seek the pleasures of travel or of learning. These men, who 'trauell in tungs', were gently chided for coveting the foreign at the cost of English. They, Mulcaster wrote, 'know the foren exceedinglie well, methink necessitie it self doth call for English, whereby all that gaietie maie be had at home, which makes vs gase so much at the fine Stranger' (p. 255).

Learning English well was seen as conducive to improving the quality of life at home. The 'Peroration' addressing 'the gentle reader and good countrimen' made a vehement case for seeing Nation and Language as being bound in an ineluctable relationship (p. 229). Both English and England were presented as modest and fledgling beings with potential, in need of love and nurture from governments and people at large. The modest ambit of English

matched that of contemporary England itself, which in Mulcaster's reckoning 'was no Empire':

But our state is no Empire to hope to enlarge it by commanding ouer cuntries...tho it be neither large in possession, nor in present hope of great encrease, yet where it rules, it can make good lawes, and as fit for our state, as the biggest can for theirs, and oftimes better to (p. 256).

A judicious ability to make good laws mitigated much of the inferiority of a small state that did not yet command the seas. Even though English 'stretceth no further then this iland of ours...it raigneth there, and it serves vs there...Tho it go not beyond sea, it will serue on this side' (p. 256). The limited currency of English beyond its shores did not, he argued, prevent it from being regal at home.

Though the events of the coming decades would disprove his cautious estimate, Mulcaster's vision for England and the English language bore intimations of imperial ambition. The wording of the following comparison of English with 'subtle' Greek and 'stately' Latin decidedly linked linguistic with imperial character:

[English] will strain with the strongest, & stretch to the furthest, for either gouernment if we were conquerers, or for cunning, if we were treasurers, not anie whit behind either the subtile Greke for couching close, or the Statelie Latin for spreiding fair (p. 259).

Mulcaster desired for English both domestic cohesion and international dispersion, mirroring the States (and stateliness) of Greek and Latin. He proffered a vision of a literate, learned England as a force to be reckoned with in a cosmopolitan stage of languages. He wrote:

And why maie not the English wits, if they will bend their wills...be in time sought to, by foren students for increase of their knowledge, as our soil is sought to at this same time, by foren merchants, for encrease of their welth? (p. 259).

Edmund Coote's pedagogical work *The English Schoole-maister* (1596), which has been seen as the immediate predecessor of the monolingual dictionary and main source of Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall*, contained the preliminary dictionary of the kind Mulcaster had hoped for.⁴² While much of the book was geared to facilitate education in schools, an appended table of 1500 words sought a wider audience of the 'vnskilfull' who 'may easily both vnderstand any hard English words...and also be made able to vs the same aptly themselues (title page).' The desire to offer his work as a self-help manual was repeated in the general directions to the reader, which now included men and women of a professional class:

I am now therefore to direct my speech vnto the vnskilfull, which desire to make vse of it for their owne priuate benefit: And vnto such men and women of women of trades (as Taylors, Weauers, Shop-keepers, Seamsters, and such other) as haue vndertaken the charge of teaching others (sig. A3^v).

Spelling, pronunciation and typeface were considered in need of serious regulation in the early sixteenth century and Coote's table too sought to contribute to these matters. Even though the table was a small part of the work, it found explicit mention in Coote's concluding address to the reader, which sought favour from two classes of readers: the learned, who he hoped would appreciate his purpose; and the unskillful, who would 'reape the fruit, until oportunitie may serve to reforme it' (p. 94). The table was designed to render difficult words into those commonly used, to present their lineage, and, in the case of some 'usual' words listed without exposition, their 'true writing' (p. 73). Knowing the origin of

⁴² De Witt T. Starnes, Gertrude E. Noyes and Gabriele Stein, *The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson*, Studies in the History of the Language Sciences (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1991), p. 12.

words was also meant to aid the reader in identifying their place within a hierarchy of use.

Coote wrote:

Thou must know the cause of the difference of the letter, al written with the Romain, as in (*abba*) are words taken from the Latine or other learned languages, these with the Italike letter as (*abandon*) are French words made English: those with the English letter [i.e. black typeset], are meere English, or from some other vulgar tongue. The word adioyned vnto it is euer in English, and is the interpreter of it in a more familiar English word... And understand further, that all words, that haue in them (y), or (ph) together, or begin with (chr) (where (h) is neuer pronounced) or end in (isme) are all Greeke words... (p. 73).

The hardest words circulating in English fell into one of the three categories: (a) learned words (from Latin, Greek, and implicitly Arabic, to which the sample word -- *abba* (father) -- belongs); (b) words assimilated into English from French, not quite a common vernacular unlike (c) a 'meere' English, grouped with other vulgar tongues. Though Coote was elsewhere disdainful of rustic speech on the grounds that imitating it led to misspelling, he did not see English as an entirely lost cause.⁴³ The English language was redeemed by its capacity to 'coyne [words] after our fashion', by transforming word endings received from Greek and Latin or changing the shape of French imports (p. 73). This was a modest redemption for what was essentially an inadequate tongue, in which foreign influences could at best be recognised and transformed.

Justifying foreign borrowings, Mulcaster had drawn up an image of combat, of enemy words being pillaged at war, 'Is it a stranger? but no Turk. & tho it were an enemies word, yet good is worth the getting, tho it be from your fo, as well by speche of writers, as by spoill of soldiers' (p. 269). Here, words from foes were as valuable as those from allies. A foreign word, 'yielded and transformed is no more foren, tho of foren race, the propertie

⁴³ In the second book of the *English Schoole-maister*, Coote calls rustic speech barbaric and implies that it is not amenable to systematic writing: 'I know not what can easily deceiue you in writing, vnlesse it be by imitating the barbarous speech of your cuntrye people' (pp. 186-87).

altered (p. 269).’ A foreign word could be acquired once surrendered by foes or granted by allies. Yet its place in the domestic repertoire depended on the extent to which it could be transformed. Though he himself only provided a table of 8000 words without definition, Mulcaster’s proposed ‘perfit English dictionarie’ would contain ‘all the wirts which we vse in our English tung, whether naturall or incorporate, out of all professions, as well learned as not.... (p. 166).’

The so-called enfranchised words -- borrowed as opposed to natural -- were an important component of Mulcaster’s preliminary inventory, which he called a ‘commoditie to confirm rules, to perfit proportion, to discouer enfranchisements, to supply all wants, to help ignorance, and to ease knowledge’ (p. 164). Knowledge of the provenance and pathways of words contained in a dictionary, could, he argued, solve the problem of wanton neologising. ‘We should,’ he wrote, ‘then know what we both write and speak: we should then discern the depth of their conceits, which either coined our own words, or incorporated the foren’ (p. 169). Finally, a dictionary was desired because other nations were making them: ‘The Italian, the Frenche, the Spanish, at this daie vse the like, naie theie go further, and make particular dictionaries euen to particular books’ (p. 169).

Italian, French and Spanish vernacular standardisation had indeed flourished with institutional support of the ‘academies’: societies of learned men. The Accademia della Crusca in Italy was founded in 1582. In the fifteenth century, an academy could refer to a university or a private humanist school, but also more generally to a coterie of individuals with a shared interest in literature and ideas.⁴⁴ Itself formed in rivalry with the Accademia Fiorentina (founded in 1540, and considered all too pedantic), the Crusicans’ emblem depicting a sifter separating the wheat from the bran (the word ‘crusca’ meant ‘bran’ in Italian) conveyed that its editorial mission was to sift out a pure/good language from a polluted mix. The Académie Française was officially established in 1635 by Cardinal

⁴⁴ Considine, *Academy Dictionaries*, p. 14.

Richelieu, but had had its origins in an informal literary group deriving from the Parisian salons during the late 1620s and early 1630s. The Real Academia Española was founded in 1713 and modelled after the Italian and the French academies, to fix the Castilian language. It published its first dictionary in six volumes over the period 1726–1739, and its first grammar in 1771. The French and Spanish academies too were ‘belated’ compared to the Italian.⁴⁵

However, no academy was ever successfully established in England despite plans for something resembling an academy dictionary being floated between 1660 and 1744 by several eminent men of letters like Robert Hooke, John Evelyn, Ambrose Phillips, and Alexander Pope.⁴⁶ As noted above, Johnson too appeared ultimately reluctant to undermine his projection of lexicography as a single-author undertaking, despite having courted recognition from the Cruscan and French academies. However, English negotiations with foreign languages did not happen merely in dialogue with academies. John Florio’s bilingual English-Italian dictionaries (1598, 1611) offered for both English and Italian expansive vistas that were often left out by an academy-sanctioned world of words, and mirrored the ways in which foreign incursions increasingly defined a cosmopolitan Englishness.

⁴⁵ It has been suggested that the reason Italian had been studied in Italy more programmatically than other European languages had been in their respective home states was because of the way in which the language question manifested in the intellectual discourse of early modern Italy. The choice of prestige vernacular dialect in other European nations had been largely a matter of consensus. In France, the language of the seat of the government in Paris became the standard, while the Castilian of the royal court at Toledo was the standard Spanish vernacular before the capital moved to Madrid in 1561. The choice of the language of the Chancery as the standard for English was supported by the presence of the print industry and Westminster in London. Similarly, standard German came from the language of the chancelleries in the High German dialect areas and of Luther’s influential Bible translation. In contrast, Italian national identity did not have a single administrative centre or a widely distributed Bible translation which could offer a standard. See Considine, *Academy Dictionaries*, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁶ For an account of unsuccessful plans floated for an English academy dictionary, see *Ibid.*, pp. 100-06.

Dialogues: John Florio's world of Italian-English words, polyglot parleys in Continental guidebooks

Published in 1598, Florio's bilingual *A Worlde of Words* was revised and enlarged in 1611 as *Queen Anna's New World of Words*. The intervening years had brought about big changes in the stock of words in English society. New avenues of trade determined which languages could be seen as worth learning, and by whom. A thriving merchant class was making its presence felt in the flourishing trade with the Levant in the seventeenth century.⁴⁷ Italian was the most widely understood European language in many trading ports of the near East. English merchants set up factories in Italian cities and competed in a market hitherto monopolised by the Italians. International banking too was dominated by Italians. These relationships had implications for the language-learning market. No longer merely a 'gentleman's exercise', Italian was a useful language to learn even for traveling English merchants. The commercial utility of knowing Italian was increasingly foregrounded in mid-seventeenth century bilingual language helps. Giovanni Torriano's *The Italian Tutor or A New And Most Compleat Italian Grammar* (1640), for instance, was dedicated to the 'company of Turkey Marchants' and stated: '[t]his is a book which is intended for the good of all the English Nation, but especially you who are in a continuall commerce with most parts of Italy, as well as Turkey, where the Italian Tongue is all in all'.⁴⁸

The situation had been somewhat different a few decades earlier. Florio's dedicatory address in the language-learning dialogues *First Fruites* (1578) revealed the distinct demographic composition of Italian-English travellers when he proffered the book's usefulness (in the Italian dedication) to 'all gentlemen who want to learn Italian and all

⁴⁷ Sporadic Anglo-Turkish trading activity continued despite an official cessation of trade between the 1550s and 1570s. Trade was systematised and encouraged by Elizabeth's treaty with the Ottoman Empire in 1580, the founding of the joint-stock Levant Company in 1581, and the renewing of its charter in 1592; See T. S. Willan, 'Some Aspects of English Trade with the Levant in the Sixteenth Century', *The English Historical Review*, 70.276 (1955), pp. 399–410.

⁴⁸ Louis B. Wright, 'Language Helps for the Elizabethan Tradesman', *Journal of English and German Philology*, 30 (1931), 335–47 (p. 345).

merchants who want to learn English (sig. iii^v).⁴⁹ The speaker from a sample dialogue had the interlocutor know that English was worthless beyond Dover:

It is a language that wyl do you good in England, but passe Douer, it is woorth nothing.

Is it not vsed then in other countreyes?

No sir, with whom wyl you that they speake?

With English marchants (sig. 50^r).

Another dialogue warned that English would be seriously impoverished if loanwords from other languages were to be withdrawn: If ‘every language had its owne words again, there woulde be a fewe remaine for English men, and euery day they adde (sig. 51^v)’. *A Worlde of Wordes* published twenty years later reflected a dramatic change of tone, due in no small part to the primary dedicatee, the Queen herself. The dedication to the 1598 dictionary now praised English for being sweet and copious:

If in these ranked the English out-number the Italian, congratulate the copie and varietie of our sweete-mother toong, which under this most Excellent well-speaking Princesse or Ladie of the world in all languages is growne as farre beyond that of former times (sig. A5^r).⁵⁰

The qualities of English that made for a favourable comparison with Italian had been presented as an accretion over the years it had been patronised by the Italophile Queen. This attitude was unsurprising not least because Florio’s works were addressed chiefly to an Italophile aristocratic circle, whose patronage he was able to cultivate with reasonable success for a number of years.

⁴⁹ John Florio, *Florio his Firste Fruites which yeelde familiar speech, merie prouerbes, wittie sentences, and golden sayings. Also a perfect induction to the Italian, and English tongues, as in the table appeareth* (London: Thomas Dawson for Thomas Woodcocke, 1578), translated and cited in Wright, p. 344. Further references to this edition of Florio’s *Firste Fruites* are given after quotations in the text.

⁵⁰ John Florio, *A Worlde of Wordes, or Most Copious and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English* (London: A. Hatfield for L. Blount, 1598). Further references to this edition of Florio’s *A Worlde of Wordes* are given after the quotations in the text.

The 1598 dictionary was a notable achievement given its large corpus of 46,000 Italian and English entries, which bested all earlier attempts in Italian-English lexicography. William Thomas' 1550 grammar had contained the only other contemporary Italian-English dictionary, a list of some 8000 words seen necessary for the better understanding of 'Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante'.⁵¹ Given the stock of words included in Florio's dictionary, his implied readership was more diverse. It could be colloquial as well as cultivated, crack a bawdy joke or two, and understand technical terms from a variety of disciplines. A cursory look at the types of words included in the dictionary locates it in an urbane, multicultural world where people, ideas and things circulated energetically. Erotically charged words and phrases rarely encountered in polite circles found a place alongside entries relating to food, fashion, and maritime life. Lists of words from key cities of Renaissance Europe, entries for animals from India, and words for shoes and swords from Turkey pulled more distant worlds into the cultural orbit of the urbane Elizabethan.

Florio's enterprise, though projected as the definitive insider's account into Italian by a naturalised Englishman, appeared far removed from the debates about Italian standard languages underway in the activities of the Crusca academy, which was to publish its standard vocabulary a year after Florio's 1611 edition. The *Vocabulario* of the Crusicans had a limited repertoire than Florio's dictionary. For one, the *Vocabulario* was not a dictionary of all Italian but of the Tuscan topolect as used in Florentine literature of the fourteenth century.⁵² Normative in its prescriptions, it was illustrated with quotations from canonical literary authors (pre-eminently Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio), and thus had more in common with William Thomas' 1550 glossary than with Florio's more diverse collection. The *Vocabulario* was more consistent about noting the morphology and textual location of the word, while Florio's sources were far more catholic. Florio's 1611 *Queen Anna's World of Wordes* had 74000 entries, while the 1612 *Vocabulario* had 28000. He drew from several texts by authors as diverse as Pietro Aretino, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Giordano Bruno. *The*

⁵¹ Hermann W. Haller, *John Florio: A Worlde of Wordes* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. ix, xv.

⁵² Considine, *Academy Dictionaries*, p. 9.

World of Wordes would have helped Elizabethan readers to follow the lexicon of Pietro Aretino's ribald *Ragionamenti* (1534-36), whose English translations appeared only later in the seventeenth century.⁵³ Many of the sexual terms and euphemisms of Aretino defined by Florio's dictionary were not registered at all in the Cruscan vocabulary.⁵⁴

A range of attitudes to Italian people, language and culture were to be found in early modern England. Chaucer's appropriation and translation of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio had introduced those authors to English culture.⁵⁵ The Tudors and their courtiers were known to be fascinated with Italian culture. However, there also persisted what Pfister has called a 'class-bound divided attitude' towards foreigners in general.⁵⁶ England, particularly London, had been home to several immigrants from the Continent fleeing religious conflict or persecution. The number of foreigners ('aliens') in London had risen from 4700 in 1567 to 5650 in 1583. An influx of foreigners into the space and life of London made it a multicultural society and brought in trade, but also resulted in xenophobic attitudes among the general public who saw them as a cultural or economic threat. A dialogue in Florio's *Firste Fruites* had noted the disparate attitudes towards foreigners among English people, stating: 'I wil tel you the truth, the Nobilitie is very curteous, but the comons are discorteous, & especially toward strangers, the which thing doth displeas me (sig. 10^v).'⁷ Another set of dialogues expressed disappointment in the fact that English children were not taught many languages by their parents who were ill-mannered toward foreigners:

Toward whom are they yl manered?

Toward Strangers: and fewe of these Englishmen delight to haue their chyldren learne diuers languages, whiche displeaseth me (sig. 51^r).

⁵³ Michael Wyatt, *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England: A Cultural Politics of Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 231.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-35.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁵⁶ Manfred Pfister, 'Inglese Italianato-Italiano Anglizzato: John Florio', in *Renaissance Go-Betweens: Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* (see Höfele and von Koppenfels, above), pp. 32-54 (p. 38).

However, English courtiers' fascination with Italianate culture was also a cause for discomfort in more intellectual circles, typified by Roger Ascham's diatribe in *The Scholemaster* (1570) which denounced Italianate fashion, and likened the seductions of Italy to those of the Odyssean Circe. Italy, like Circe, Ascham said makes 'of a plaine Englishman, a right Italian. And at length to hell, or to some hellish place, is he likely to go from whence is hard returning (sig. 24^r-25^v).'⁵⁷ Ascham idealised a Roman past while lamenting its fall in contemporary times:

[..]because, tyme was, whan Italie and Rome, haue bene, to the greate good of vs that now liue, the best breeders and bringers vp, of the worthiest men, not onelie for wise speakinge, but also for well doing, in all Ciuill affaires, that euer was in the worlde. But now, that tyme is gone, and though the place remayne, yet the olde and present maners, do differ as farre, as blacke and white, as vertue and vice (sig. 23^r-24^v).

An all-encompassing discomfort with Italy and Italianness was woven into the design of English identity in some quarters. As Pfister summarises, 'a broad coalition of Puritan and patriotic intellectuals promoted emphatic notions of Englishness and warned of the dangers of contamination with Italian idolatory and despotism (Catholicism), policy and atheism (Machiavelli), vice and perversion (Aretino)'.⁵⁸ Florio's dictionary was significant in the way it mediated the cultural construction of Englishness with respect to the foreignness represented by Italy.

The prefatory matter to the 1598 *World of Wordes* staged a protean performance, speaking to different audiences in separate registers and central metaphors.⁵⁹ In a suitably fawning

⁵⁷ Roger Ascham, *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children, to vnderstand, write, and speake, the Latin tong but specially purposed for the priuate brynging vp of youth in ientlemen and noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as haue forgot the Latin tonge* (London: Iohn Day, 1570). Further references to this edition of Ascham's *Scholemaster* given after quotations in the text.

⁵⁸ Pfister, 'Inglese Italianato', p. 39.

⁵⁹ As David Frantz points out, Florio's rhetoric courted reading publics from a range of social classes and dramatised this interaction in prefaces to works. The 1598 dictionary with its two very different prefaces were, then, 'both a less and a more real forum for negotiation than the stage.' See David Frantz, 'Negotiating Florio's A Worlde of Wordes', *Dictionaries: Journal of the Dictionary Society of North America*, 18.1 (1997), 1-32, (p.

dedication to two Earls and a Countess at the Tudor court, Florio fashioned himself as a parent presenting a newborn for christening. He involved the two languages in a metaphor of parity by likening a knowledge of Italian to ambidexterity:

An Italian turn may serue the turne. Lame are we in Platoes censure, if we be not ambidexters, using both handes alike. Right-hand, or left-hand as Peeres with mutuall paritie without disparagement may it please your Honors to join hand in hand... (sig. A3^r).

Florio's desire to display the depth, width, and moment of his scholarship was evident in the way he compared the difficulty of his task to that of Italian heavyweights like Dante, Castiglione and Aretino, and expressed his desire to complicate the differing 'Dialects and Idiomes...besides the Florentine' (sig. A4ⁿ), which was almost exclusively focused upon by the Cruscans.

The above statements were also indicative of the agonism between different paradigms of what a 'standard' language should be, especially in the case of Italian. While the Cruscans favoured limiting and legislating the stock of words, Florio appeared unabashedly to expand its corpus. If they addressed a sophisticated reader, Florio was keen to court popular appeal. To the dedicatees, Florio presented himself as an erudite man of the world with a lively awareness of linguistic nuances that even 'naturall Italians' (sig. A4ⁿ) do not always possess. It is another matter that there was no evidence of him ever having set foot on Italian soil.

The genteel style of the dedication shared space with crowd-pleasing vituperation: the address to the reader played up the stereotype of the marauding Turk to describe critics with 'words like swords of Turkes, that striue which shall diue deepest into a Christian lying

29.) Pfister extends the performative dimension of Florio's dictionaries to his entire oeuvre of bilingual works. The works participate in the construction of a cultural Englishness defined against, and on a par with, Italianness and are, as such, 'scripted performances of intercultural exchanges'; Pfister, 'Inglese Italianato', pp. 39-41.

bound before them' (sig. A5^v). In the lengthy prefatory address, Florio appeared an intrepid adventurer in the choppy seas of language reform and the publishing business, railing against plagiarist-pirates in 'our paper-sea' (sig. A5^v) and taking delight in coining creative invective against nameless critics that are once seen as the Scylla and Charybdis that had waylaid him on his Odyssey. This time, he aligned his labours with other Elizabethan compilers of bilingual dictionaries of Latin and Greek such as Thomas Elyot, Bishop Cooper, Thomas Thomas, who are all seen as 'sea-faring men' launching forth into a 'deepe, and dangerous Sea' (sig. B1^r). Yet these other works were like mere 'passage boates' to the 'unwieldie' vessel that he had singlehandedly steered across stormy seas. He drew up the scale and significance of his endeavour in a detailed, striking image:

[...]but they [the members of the Cruscan academy] had this advantage of me, that they were many to steere a passage-boate; I was but one to turne and winde the sailes, to vse the oare, to sit at sterne, to pricke my carde, to watch vpon the vpper decke, boate-swaine, pilot, mate, and master, all offices in one, and that in a more unruly, more unweildie, and more roome-some vessel, then the biggest hulke on Thames [...] and that in a sea more divers, mor dangerous, more stormie, and more comfortlesse then any Ocean (sig. B1^r).

The image of him singlehandedly sailing an unwieldy Thames river 'hulke' upon the open sea dramatised his lexicographic labours, a sentiment that would be echoed in Johnson's single-author enterprise and the rhetoric of its praise. However, Florio considerably softened this defensive stance by 1611's *Queen Anna's New World of Words*, by which time he was in the employ of the Queen as a groom of her privy chamber, tutor, and secretary.⁶⁰ The prefatory material to the 1611 edition consisted only of two letters to the Queen (in English and Italian), and several verses written in many languages -- records of the Stuart court's multilingualism. The use of 'New World' in the title appeared to be advised given that England's 'discoveries' of Scotia and Virginia found mention in the preface. Queen Anna was figured as a 'Minerua' for her 'trauellers mind': 'Colombus at command of

⁶⁰ Haller, *John Florio*, p. xvi.

glorious Isabella, it hath (at home) discovered neere half a new world: and therefor as of olde some called Scotia of Scota, and others lately Virginia, of Queenes your Maiesties predecessors'.⁶¹

If the Minerva comparison harked back to mythical antiquity, those with Isabella and more recently Elizabeth's forays into North America imparted to England an international contemporaneity and imperial heft. Florio's dictionaries, as indeed his entire oeuvre, mediated a range of realities. He courted patrons and common readers, negotiated the vagaries of publishing, contributed to the idea of English as a vernacular equal to the mighty Italian all in a broadly ambivalent environment which was at once wanton and prudent, Italophilic and xenophobic, desirous of the cultural fruits of Renaissance humanism with profits from trade. Florio's self-fashioning as an Italianate-Englishman at court was a canny performance, sustained through a careful balance between the English and the international. The in-between genres that were Florio's forte (language-learning dialogues, translations and bilingual dictionaries), were 'crucial for shaping a supranational European sense of Renaissance Humanism and aligning Tudor and Stuart England with it.'⁶² In a translation of Montaigne published in 1603, he famously substituted 'the Cornish, the Welsh, or Irish' for 'les Baseques et les Troglodytes'. This gesture of cultural translation, Pfister suggests, 'did much to turn him into an Elizabethan', while his 'frequent lapses into Italian and his attempts to smuggle French words into English simultaneously maintained the effect of the foreign'.⁶³

If Florio's rhetoric helped construct an idea of cosmopolitan Englishness in which the foreign and English imbibed each other in acts of cultural translations, English had become progressively more eminent as a mercantile lingua franca in foreign lands as suggested by the evidence of polyglot dictionaries printed in Europe. English merchants trading in

⁶¹ John Florio, 'Queen Anna's New World of Words, Etc'. (1611) repr. in *English Linguistics 1500-1800: A Collection of Facsimile Reprints: Issue 105*, ed. by R. C. Alston (Menston: Scholar Press, 1968), sig. A2v.

⁶² Pfister, 'Ingelese Italianato,' p. 44.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

Europe had had access to language-helps in the earlier part of the sixteenth century through polyglot dialogue books published in France and Flanders.⁶⁴ The 1511 polyglot vocabulary of Noel de Barlement, published in Antwerp, continued to be popular till well into the sixteenth century. English was only added to its list of languages (Flemish, French, Latin, and Spanish) after 1556.⁶⁵ In fact, as Gabriele Stein's survey of the career of polyglot printed dictionaries in Europe indicates, English gradually came into importance and became significant in the list of featured languages by the mid sixteenth century.⁶⁶ A French grammar produced in Antwerp in 1557 was the first dedicated to English merchants. In 1563, a French-English dialogue book, written in English, was published in Antwerp, was intended for the use of 'Marchands, Facteurs, Apprentifs, and others of the English nation', and continued in circulation for the next eighty years.⁶⁷ While the 1563 edition projected the English nation as 'neding the ffrench language', the subtitle of the 1641 edition published in Rouen presupposed parity between the two by offering to teach 'Frenshe and Englishe together'.⁶⁸ Trade in the East catalysed the importance of learning languages of the Orient, and London began to assert itself as a language-learning centre by the early seventeenth century. As Louis Wright notes in his survey of language helps for Continental tradesmen, seventeenth-century London's educational attractions included its many professors of languages, typified in George Buck's list mentioned in *The Third Vniversitie of England* (1615): 'the Persian, the Morisco, and the Turkish, and the Muscovian Language, and also the Sclauonian tongue.'⁶⁹ Londoners even looked beyond the Continent and compiled well-received dictionaries of Arabic, translated Danish glossaries, and dialogue books of Malayan languages.⁷⁰

⁶⁴ Wright, p. 341.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 341.

⁶⁶ Gabriele Stein, 'The Emerging Role of English in the Dictionaries of Renaissance Europe', *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 9 (1990), 31–62.

⁶⁷ Wright, p. 341.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 346.

⁷⁰ For an account of William Bedwell's *The Arabian Trudgman* (1615) and Augustus Spalding's Malay phrasebook (1614), see Wright, pp. 345–47.

But this was not a one-way exchange. These languages too found osmotic pathways into English and entered the stock of ‘hard’ words in circulation. The expression ‘hard words’ could be traced to Coote’s subtitle and table, but also to appendices to other significant printed works of the sixteenth century.⁷¹ Glossaries of hard words were the first monolingual dictionaries in English and were pitched as self-helps for a non-learned readership including women and the ‘unskilled’. The dictionary makers were also united by the provinciality of their social world. The sparse biographical information available about these early lexicographers made clear that they lived and worked outside London, were not educated in big universities, and did not receive patronage of prominent courtiers or gentry. Yet their works were printed in London and met with varying degrees of commercial success.⁷² These lexicographers of ‘hard words’ fashioned themselves as amateur curators of strange words. Their lists borrowed heavily from bilingual classical dictionaries, extant glossaries in popular schoolbooks of the late sixteenth century, each other, and also from other contemporary works. Despite claiming to be expository, they were implicitly prescriptive and recorded in their prefatory attitudes a steady turn towards a cautious cosmopolitanism: strange words could survive in, and indeed be welcomed into English once they had been assimilated and made usual.

⁷¹As Juergen Schaefer has explained, the term ‘hard words’ denoted any kind of word -- including neologisms, foreign words, and archaisms -- which were not commonly understood. He argues that Elizabethan and Jacobean writers did possess resources of words and definitions despite the fact that the first monolingual dictionaries were produced only after 1604. Traditions of interlinear English glosses in Latin and French texts, Latin-English vocabularies, and *nominales* for the education of schoolboys had continued from Anglo-Saxon times down to the sixteenth century in the form of *Vulgaria* and *Vocabula* of schoolmasters, and the foreign language-learning manuals of the late sixteenth century. Explanatory glosses appended to various types of specialist works -- medical treatises and editions of Chaucer, for instance -- were also significant sources of the so-called hard words in the years leading up to the first dictionaries in Jacobean England. For an account of the miscellaneous identified sources of English hard word dictionaries see Starnes, Noyes and Stein; Juergen Schaefer, ‘The Hard Word Dictionaries: A Re-Assessment’, *Leeds Studies in English*, 4 (1970), 31–48.

⁷²Robert Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall* (1603) ran into four editions (till 1617), while John Bullokar’s *English Expositor* (1616) went through nineteen editions until 1775, and Henry Cockeram’s more compendious *English Dictionarie* (1623) to twelve editions in until 1670; Starnes, Noyes and Stein, pp. xxii–xxvi.

'Hard words' made usual: Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall*

Robert Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* derived its basic outline and most of its contents from several sources: Coote's 1596 *The School-Maister*, 'Thomas Thomas's *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (1587?), and from several contemporary translations most notably the 1599 medical treatise called *Boock of Physicke* -- a translation from Latin by a Dutch man known as A.M. of Oswald Gabelkhouer's Latin original, which was published in Netherlands and had a list of hard words appended to its English edition.⁷³ The long title introduced the work as a multifaceted, self-help document:

A Table Alphabeticall, conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French. &c. With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other vnskilfull persons. Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, which they shall heare or read in Scriptures, Sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly Themselves.⁷⁴

As the list of the advertised features made clear, the text intended to participate in some key linguistic projects of the time: spelling reform, pedagogy, etymology, foreign borrowings, neologisms, and the selection of desirable register for a variety of uses. He signaled an affinity with the pedagogical tradition by directing the work's usefulness to children who 'may be prepared for the vnderstanding of a great number of Latine words: which also will bring much delight & iudgement to others, by the vse of this little worke.'

⁷³ Starnes, Noyes, and Stein, pp. 17-18; Kusujiro Miyoshi, 'Cawdrey's Table Alphabeticall (1604) Reconsidered: Its Driving Force for Early English Lexicography', in *Adventuring in Dictionaries: New Studies in the History of Lexicography*, ed. by John Considine (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), pp. 14-22 (p.15); Schaefer, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁴ Robert Cawdrey, *A Table Alphabeticall conteyning and teaching the true writing, and vnderstanding of hard vsuall English wordes, borrowed from the Hebrew, Greeke, Latine, or French, &c. With the interpretation thereof by plaine English words, gathered for the benefit & helpe of ladies, gentlenomen, or any other vnskilfull persons. Whereby they may the more easilie and better vnderstand many hard English wordes, vvhich they shall beare or read in scriptures, sermons, or elsewhere, and also be made able to vse the same aptly themselues* (London: I.R. for Edmund Weauer, 1604), sig. A3r. Further references to Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* are given after quotations in the text.

Finally, foreigners themselves were addressed: ‘By this Table (right Honourable & Worshipfull) strangers that blame our tongue of difficultie, and vncertaintie may heereby plainly see, & better vnderstand those things, which they haue thought hard’ (sig. A3^r). Cawdrey’s self-proclaimed task had to make difficult words commonly understood and accessible to marginal groups of people; hard words themselves were presented as potentially usable. However, the address to the reader made clear Cawdrey’s disapproval of these words. The address was a long chastisement of neologisms and strange words. While the mother tongue was presented literally as the language spoken by mothers and valorised as the mark of domesticated national character, any ‘outlandish’ infiltration of it was couched as a seditious criminal act of ‘counterfeyting’ the ‘Kings English’:

Some men seek so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mothers language, so that if some of their mothers were aliue, they were not able to tell, or vnderstand what they say, and yet these fine English Clearks, will say they speak in their mother tongue; but one might well charge them, for counterfeyting the Kings English (sig. A3^r).

In using these descriptors, Cawdrey echoed arguments from the so-called inkhorn controversy about the Elizabethan tendency to coin new words and use Latinate and foreign vocabulary. His address to the reader repeated almost verbatim Thomas Wilson’s position on the use of borrowed words for vain eloquence rather than out of necessity. In *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553), Wilson wrote:

Among all other lessons this should first be learned, that wee neuer affect any straunge ynkhorne termes, but to speak as is commonly receiued: neither seeking to be ouer fine, nor yet liuing ouer-carelesse vsing our speeche as most men doe, and ordering our wittes as the fewest haue done. Some seeke so far for outlandish English, that they forget altogether their mother’s tongue. And I dare sweare this, if some of their mother’s were aliue, they were not able to tell what they say: and yet these fine English clerkes will say, they speake

in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them for counterfeiting the Kings English. Some farre iuorneyed gentleman at their returne home, like as they loue to go in forraine apparel, so thei will powder their talke with ouersea language.⁷⁵

For Wilson, foreign affectations were to be distinguished from the more usefully absorbed vocabulary. Here were fears that the mother tongue could, because of an insidious infection of strange words, become a stranger to itself. Cawdrey too railed against ‘some far iournied gentlemen, at their returne home, like as they loue to go in forraine apparrell, so they will powder their talke with ouer-sea language’ (sig. A4^r). Using Wilson’s words again, he took issue with foreign words and archaisms in English, and set the pragmatics of plain oratory against those of poetry:

Another chops in with English Italianated, and applyeth the Italian phrase to our English speaking, the which is, as if an Orator, that professeth to vtter his minde in plaine Latine, would needs speake Poetrie, & far fetched colours of strange antiquitie (sig. A4^r).

As long as poetry looked to antiquity for sources, it limited its communicability in the present. Foreign words and strange archaisms were merely ornaments that hid the virtues of plain English. ‘Do we not speak’, Cawdrey asked, ‘because we would haue other to vnderstand vs?’ (sig. A4^v)’

While many who objected to neologisms directed their disdain towards elite and affected gentlemen, they were not quite in favour of levelling the field by ensuring widespread access to new words. Paula Blank cites the evidence of a letter by a patronage-seeking ‘Lincolnshireman’ cited or perhaps composed by Wilson to illustrate that affectations were often abused to seek social or financial gain, often by people unqualified to understand them. The letter said:

⁷⁵ Thomas Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique for the vse of all suche as are studious of eloquence, sette forth in English* (London: Richardus Graftonus, 1553), sig. 86^r.

You knowe my literature, you knowe the pastorall promocion, I obtestate your clemencie, to invigilate thus muche for me, accordyng to my confidence, and as you know my condigne merites, for suche a compendious livyng.⁷⁶

The unwieldy sentences and exaggerations gave the impression that the letter might be parodic. The very language of the patronage-seeker's petition, Blank notes, 'advertises his failure, mocks his unworthiness to 'gain' the living he seeks.'⁷⁷ It would appear that for Wilson and many others, the ultimate object of ridicule was a class of provincial people who were incapable of understanding neologistic language but still strove to gain from it. This, among other examples, indicated that even the most anti-elitist tirades against English affectations did not exactly 'recommend distributing the new 'wealth' of words indiscriminately,' but were concerned mainly with poorly-executed and ill-spent counterfeits.⁷⁸

It is also possible to see literary malapropisms as an involuntary parody of this anxious tendency of neologise. Though the word itself was a neologism derived from the character of Mrs Malaprop in Richard Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), the comic literary effect of malapropism had been extant in writings from much earlier. In 1577, Henry Peacham repurposed Quintillian's figure of speech -- the cacozelon -- to refer to malapropism; Shakespeare's Mistress Quickly and Dogberry were two early modern cacozelons.⁷⁹ There was even a distinct form of discourse devoted to experimentalism, known as 'fustian'.⁸⁰ Cawdrey's diatribe was directed to the potential counterfeiters and promoters of

⁷⁶ Wilson, *The arte of rhetorique*, sig. 87^r.

⁷⁷ Blank, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ There was relatively little consensus about the use of latinate derivations in the early seventeenth century, and ambivalence about their correctness. If an early modern cacozelon could be a creative experimenter, a malaprop was definitely incorrect. For a discussion see Sylvia Adamson, 'Literary Language', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language*, ed. by Roger Lass, 6 vols, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992-2001) III (2000), pp. 539-653 (p. 575).

⁸⁰ In contrast to Cawdrey's disdain towards neologisers registered in his dictionary-preface of 1604, Henry Cockeram's 1623 dictionary included 'fustian' terms, signaling that such lexical experimentation was increasingly accepted and practiced. The word, and another linked term 'bombast' (which referred to

‘fustian’ terms. For the motely group of unskilled listed in his title, he himself was to be the redistributing purveyor of lexical bounty. Cawdrey recommended maintaining a single register of plain speech embellished only with ‘commonly received’ words:

Therefore, either wee must make a difference of English, & say, some is learned English, & other some is rude English, or the one is Court talke, the other is Country-speech, or els we must of necessitie banish all affected Rhetorique, and vse altogether one manner of language. Those therefore that will auoyde this follie, and acquaint themselues with the plainest & best kind of speech, must seeke from time to time such words as are commonlie receiued, and such as properly may expresse in plaine manner, the whole conceit of their mind (sig. A4^v).

Plainness itself was a qualified register, as indicated by the criteria of use Cawdrey set out: Words should be ‘proper vnto the tongue wherein we speake,’ should be clearly understood, and be ‘apt and meete most properly to set out the matter’ (sig. A4^v). Weighty causes deserved ‘graue words’ so that the ‘vehemencie of talke’ could reflect the ‘greatness of the matter’(sig. A4^v). The fourth criteria addressed metaphorical or poetic use: ‘Fourthlie, that words translated, from one signification to another, (called of the Grecians Tropes,) be vsed to beautifie the sentence, as precious stones are set in a ring, to commend the gold’ (sig. A4^v).

Despite its emphasis on apposite self-styling, Cawdrey’s rhetoric itself was ambivalent. It complicated as much as it tried to simplify, and chastised neologisms as much as it tried to normalise them. Moreover, as Juliet Fleming has argued with respect to the place of women in the discourse of the early modern dictionary, Cawdrey’s work was kindred with the mores of conduct literature inasmuch as it tried to legislate the proper way of using

excessive latinisms), were metaphors developed from terms for clothing material, indicating the social significance of self-styling through clothes and words. Bombast was the name for the cotton wool padding used for false enlargement, while fustian was the cotton velvet which imitated the finery of true velvet; Adamson, p. 576.

words.⁸¹ Women were interpellated as ignorant users of hard words, before being conspicuously removed from the list of addressees by 1609. As Fleming argues, addressees like the women and unskilled, created and circumscribed the space within which rules of use could be made, and were then ignored in the discourse itself.⁸² As such, the early English dictionary was ‘marked by an irony that is characteristic of conduct literature in that it functions to exclude from a general franchise precisely those people to whom it is addressed.’⁸³ And indeed, as the evidence of the next two dictionaries indicates, the unskillful addressee courted by Cawdrey was soon to be phased out. Women were eventually removed from the group of addressees after the second edition, published in 1609. The next of the English hard word dictionaries, John Bullokar’s *The English Expositor* (1616), included words from recondite fields and miscellaneous jargon, while maintaining some of the ambivalence exemplified in Cawdrey’s inaugural work. Bullokar’s dictionary did not explicitly address women, but in the letter to the dedicatee, Viscountess Montague, he surrendered the pamphlet to the patron so it may be nurtured and included in the company of ‘studious Gentlewomen.’

Strange and learned words usurped: John Bullokar’s *Expositor*

The English Expositor was distinctive in the way it organised entries according to the professions or disciplines to which they belonged. It advertised words used by learned men from the diverse fields of ‘Logicke, Philosophy, Law, Phsyicke, Astronomie & c. And Diuinitie itself, best known to the seuerall Progerssors thereof.’⁸⁴ This dictionary was also unique in its presentation of archaisms; an instruction to the reader signposted ‘olde’

⁸¹ Fleming, p. 299.

⁸² *Table Alphabetical* was dedicated to five sisters, an idea, Fleming says, borrowed from John Florio’s translation of Montaigne’s *Essais*, which was dedicated to six women in three separate prefaces, and heaped praise on women’s relationship to language as being the purest. Speech was ‘uncoupled’ from writing, implying that women -- gentlewomen at least -- were better suited to speaking the vernacular; Fleming, p. 300.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁸⁴ John Bullokar, *An English Expositor, Etc.* [*An Enlarged Photographic Reprint of the Edition of 1616.*] (Menston: Scolar Press, 1967), sig. A1^r. Further references to this edition of Bullokar’s, *An English Expositor* are given after quotations in the text.

words, described as those ‘onely vsed of some ancient writers, and now growne out of vse’ (sig. A5^r).⁸⁵ In the dedication, Bullokar claimed to have compiled the dictionary for ‘private use’ and kept it from publication for fear of ‘over hard usage’.⁸⁶ The hesitation in his statement reflected the uncertainty about the status and longevity of words in the English corpus, which was still far from fixed. For Bullokar, a physician and failed schoolmaster himself, copiousness derived largely from words drawn from diverse ‘termes of arte’ and made distinctive in professional use by a community of distinctive users. More discursive in intention and appearance than Cawdrey’s dictionary, Bullokar’s work stated its academic intention to teach and interpret hard words through ‘svndry explications, Descriptions and Discourses’ (title-page). His attitude to the widespread borrowings of hard words was much more tolerant than Cawdrey’s, and was suggestive of the anxiety of inadequacy characteristic of the time. Best writers, he wrote, ‘vsurpe strange words’ by necessity since ‘our our speech is not sufficiently furnished with apt termes to expresse all meanings. I suppose withall their desire is that they should also be vnderstood’ (sig. A4^{v-r}).

The spirit of acquisition-by-usurpation animated Bullokar’s inventory, which drew words from distant lands. Herbs and roots from Syria, India, and the West Indies found mention. Exposition of these strange words was often encyclopedic, the variety of their use was backed up by literary sources and, in at least one case, the evidence of a first-person witness. The entry for ‘Aspe’, for instance, noted that it was the name for a venomous snake, and had a role to play in ‘superstitious’ (sig. C2^v) Egyptian lore as well as in story of Cleopatra and Marcus Antonius. A ‘sweet smelling herb’, Casia, was defined through its poetic use in Virgil’s *Eclogues*, followed up with a Latin extract, and a note that the closest English name for it could be ‘Lauender’ (sig. D2^r). While being an occasion for displaying

⁸⁵ There is evidence, Schaefer notes, that Bullokar drew on the 2000-word glossary of ‘old and obscure words of Chaucer’ contained in Thomas Speght’s 1598 and 1602 edition of Chaucer’s works; and on EK’s explanatory notes to *The Shepheardes Calendar* (1579); Schaefer, pp. 36-38.

⁸⁶ This was borne out by the fact that the work was registered with the Stationers’ Register in 1610, and possibly contained material from the dictionary proposed in his father William Bullokar’s 1580 *Booke at Large*; Janet Bately, ‘Bullokar, John (bap. 1574, D. 1627)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., September 2004 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3925>> [accessed 3 August 2016]

the potential of new and ‘hard’ words, the entries also foregrounded the lexicographer as the interlocutor between the world of words and its ever-increasing users. He offered to the reader an account of the provenance of ‘the great store of strange words’ borrowed from Latin, Greek and Hebrew and from ‘forraine vulgar languages round about us’ (sig. A4^f). Like other hard word dictionaries, Bullokar’s too claimed to ‘open the signification of such words to the capacite of the ignorant’ who could then be on par with those that ‘haue bestowed long study in the languages’ (sig. A4^f). Like Mulcaster and Coote, Bullokar also justified the need for new coinages on pragmatic grounds. In its gestures of embracing the newly-minted and retrieving the archaic, *The English Expositor* was characteristic in the way it negotiated the contradictory linguistic attitudes of the time.

It is also perhaps possible to see his personal fortunes mirroring the spirit of his times when ways of belonging were extremely conditional, gaps existed between aspiration and opportunity, and it was important to appear qualified before one’s voice could be authorised. The shadow of persecution had long followed the staunchly Catholic Bullokar and his family, and led him to obtain his medical education in France; Between 1599 and 1604, he had been admonished several times for being an unlicensed schoolmaster.⁸⁷ His ambivalence about publicising his scholarship was expressed in the hesitation, which, as he claimed in the dedication seeking Lady Jane Montague’s patronage, kept him from making public what he had intended for private or limited use. A confused and confusing voice characterised Bullokar’s self-presentation: He mounted a performance of academic rigour even as he called forth evidence of his personal experience; he quoted Latin, often without translating, while ostensibly addressing the ignorant. These confusions reflected that the monolingual English dictionary emerged as an ill-defined, in-between genre straddling two differently-lucrative domains: the licensed world of learned coteries and patrons, and the unregulated market for aspirational ‘unskilled’ consumers which could impart elusive intellectual currency and qualification to the lexicographers.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Coining words in one's own fashion: Henry Cockeram's prescriptions

The intended community of users listed in the extended title for Henry Cockeram's 1623 *The English Dictionarie* reflected that the market for self-help language learning had by then expanded to include 'clarkes, Merchants' and 'Strangers of any Nation', none of whom were now labelled unskilled. The work was the first to use the term 'Dictionarie', and aimed to be the definitive interpreter of hard words found in English at the time. It was addressed to 'Ladies and Gentlewomen, young Schollers, Clarkes, Merchants, as also Strangers of any Nation, to the understanding of the more difficult Authors already printed in our Language, and the more *speedy attaining of an elegant perfection of* the English tongue, both in reading, speaking and writing.'⁸⁸ Here was a more confidently national corpus, embedded as it was in the works of authors printed entirely in English and capable of 'elegant perfection'. Cockeram surpassed his predecessors' ambitions by foregrounding the work's usefulness to foreigners, and presented his dictionary as having concluded and perfected the tradition begun by Cawdrey. Autodidact readers were the ultimate court of appeal and had a hierarchy of their own. Cockeram wrote in the 'Premonition to the Reader': 'the *understanding* Readers will not, the *ignorant* cannot, and the *malicious* dare not, but acknowledge that what any before me in this kinde have begin, I have not onely fully finished, but thoroughly perfected' (sig. A3^v). The plain and easy alphabetical arrangement would help enhance the 'capacity of the meanest' of readers (sig. A3^v).

Cockeram was not, however, merely an objective keeper of record. He selected words, prescribed their usage, and aired judgement about their elegance. Book one selected the 'choisest' words in current use and renders them into 'common sense' (sig. A3^v). Like Cawdrey, Cockeram attempted to explain hard words through commonsensical usage. Unlike Cawdrey, however, he took a more favourable view of the words 'wherewith our

⁸⁸ Henry Cockeram, *The English Dictionarie* (1623), repr. in *English Linguistics 1500-1800: A Collection of Fascimile Reprints*, ed. by R.C. Alston (Menston: Scolar Press, 1968), title page. Further references to this edition of Cockeram's *The English Dictionarie* are given after quotations in the text.

language is enriched and become so copious' (sig. A3^v). Book Two did the inverse and presented 'exact and ample' words to express 'vulgar words' in a 'more refined and elegant speech' (sig. A3^v). Cockeram's adaptations indicated an intention to reclaim English as a vehicle of sophistication, especially in comparison with its Latin root words. Entries in Book Two were heavily indebted to the English-Latin entries found in John Rider's *Bibliotheca Scholastica* (1589) and its later revisions by Francis Holyoke (in 1606, 1612, 1617).⁸⁹ The so-called 'vulgar' words taken from the English-Latin section in the Rider-Holyoke dictionary were anglicised by Cockeram in his attempt to make them sound 'more refined'. Rider-Holyoke's entry for childishness was changed from 'pueritia, puerilitas' in the 1617 edition to 'puerility' in Cockeram.⁹⁰ Further, he encouraged a knowledge of '*justian termes*' to achieve a 'generality of knowledge' (sig. A4^f).

Implicit prescriptions notwithstanding, Cockeram's entries were more broadly inclusive than its predecessors. The good, bad, and the ridiculous all found a place in a knowledge-matrix potentially accessible to anyone who could read. Echoing bestiaries and lapidaries of the Middle Ages and anticipating modern encyclopaedias, Book Three claimed to be a 'recitall of severall persons, Gods and Goddesses, Giants and Devils, Monsters and Serpents, Birds and Beasts, Rivers, Fishes, Herbs, Stones, Trees, and the like...' (sig. A4^f).⁹¹ A sample entry for a new word from a 'new world' showed the range of knowledge on display in the miscellany. 'Melt', a tree in Mexico, Cockeram explained

...serves for weapons, needle and thred, Sugar, Honey, Sucker, Balme, Wine, Cords, Parchment, Lines, Perfume, and apparell. On the leaves thereof they grave the gests of Kings...they make arrow heads of them and the sap thereof cures the stinging of Serpents, and the burning of the lower part of the stalk, cures the French disease, & c. (sig. K4^f)

⁸⁹ Starnes, Noyes and Stein, pp. 32-33.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Though miscellaneous lore about men, gods, and beasts, as well as biographical sketches of authors were common in the larger Latin-English dictionaries, Cockeram was, as Starnes and Noyes note, the first to introduce it into English lexicography; Starnes, Noyes and Stein, p. 33.

This type of definition went beyond mere information and purported a deeper familiarity with the place of things in their original natural and cultural lifeworlds. That this was only an ostensible familiarity was clear given the evidence of Schaefer's investigation into Cockeram's sources. One of the sources for Cockeram's entries was Joshua Sylvester's translation from the French of *Bartas: His Devine Weekes and workes* -- a didactic poem and history which was published as a complete edition in English in 1605 and had run into five editions by the time of Cockeram's *Dictionarie*.⁹² Among other borrowings, Cockeram's entry for 'Melt' cited above appeared to be a direct paraphrase of the following lines in Sylvester's poem:

There mounts the *Melt*, which serves in *Mexico*
 For weapon, wood, needle, and threed (to sowe)
 Brick, hony, sugar, sucket, balm, and wine
 Parchment, perfume, apparel, cord and line
 [...]

 Sometimes they twine them into equal threds;
 Small ends make needles; greater, arrow-heads:
 His upper sap the sting of Serpents cures:
 His burned stalks, with strong fumosities
 Of piercing vapours, purge the *French* disease.⁹³

These direct borrowings were unacknowledged, even though they did verify Cockeram's claim to have read contemporary authors printed in English. Contrasted with Cawdrey's petulance about 'over-sea knowledge' diminishing the stock of English, Cockeram's inventory presented an enriched English as a cabinet of curiosities. The implied consumer of this dictionary would presumably use such exotic information directly in his travels, savour it for its own sake, encounter it in a tale, or more generally use it to embellish his

⁹² Schaefer, p. 40.

⁹³ Joshua Sylvester, *The Complete Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Blackburn, 1880), I, p. 104, lines 606-2, cited by Schaefer, p. 42.

usage. Thereafter, readers were left with no excuse for not enriching their vocabulary. In Cockeram's own words, readers may no longer 'pretend the defect of any helpe which may informe his discourse or practice' (sig. A3^v). Discourse and practice were equally important in this world of words; the dictionary helped not just to know, but to self-fashion as knowledgeable.

A much more creative role for the lexicographer was being suggested in the prefatory recommendations for Cockeram. In the liminary verses accompanying the first edition, his undertaking was commended using the metaphor of alchemy. Nicholas Smith's acrostic defended Cockeram's effort against potential detractors by saying: 'Could I, oh could I quintessence my skill, | O r with Elixir truly alcumize, | Knowledge with learning should instruct my quill | Effectually to praise thy Muses guise' (sig. A6^f). John Day's summarised his 'rare art' thus: 'pure Gold | Thou hast extracted out of worthlesse mould.' This art, he continues, 'hath taught us all good language: a rude pile of barbarous sillables into a stile | Gentle and smooth thou hast reduc't' (sig. A8^f). As valorised in this figuration, lexicography could be both magical and mundane, a product of hard graft as well as fine discernment. The lexicographer could be pictured as simultaneously poetic, heroic, scholastic and clerical, proffering a useful service to a broad cross-section of people. Another verse by John Ford rendered Cockeram's task even more praiseworthy given the social odds stacked against it:

Born in the West? live there? so far from Court?
 From Oxford, Cambridge, London? Yet report
 (Now in these daies of Eloquence) such change
 Of words? unknown? untaught? 'tis new and strange (sig. A7^v)

In the days of 'fustian' eloquence, Cockeram was praised for having made his mark as a chronicler of the changing world of words 'new and strange'. Indeed, Ford could be saying,

the very fact that he has done so being provincial *is* new and strange. He took the opportunity to mock gallants who waste money on acquiring foreign fashions:

...Let Gallants therefore skip no more from hence
 To Italie, France, Spaine, and with expence
 Waste time and faire estates, to learne new fashions
 Of complement all phrases, smooth temptations
 To glorious beggary: Here let them hand
 This Booke; here Studie, reade, and vnderstand:
 Then Shall they finde varietie at Home,
 As curious as at Paris, or at Rome...(sig. A7^v).

It was interesting that Cockeram's dictionary was here being presented rather like a modish accessory adorning a homespun fashion, offering 'varietie' with the undeniable value of saved travel expenses.

John Webster's verse was more scathing about the fate of variety at Home even as he hoped Cockeram would find success among the general populace:

While Words for paiment passe at Court,
 And whilst loud talke and wrangling make resort
 P'th Terme to Westminster, I doe not dread
 Thy leaves shall scape the Scombri, and be read (sig. A8^r).

Webster's praise also contained a cynical judgement about the fate of works either at court (where praise might end up being the only payment) or in the common market (where incredible uses could be found for them). This curious image -- Cockeram's work 'scaping the Scombri' -- could be, as Charles Forker notes, a reference to a joke used by Horace and other classical writers about bad poetry being used to wrap fish (*scombri* being the Latin

word for mackerel).⁹⁴ Nevertheless, even if it was fated to end up as fish wrappings, the work had reach, readership, and utility. Thomas Spicer's verse said: 'Hard words far fetch'd, he made smooth, before being rough' (sig. A8^v), while Bartholomew Hore's presented a cost-benefit analysis of Cockeram's labour: 'If things farre fetch'd are dearest, most esteem'd | Which by times sweatful houres have been redeem'd' (sig. A8^v). New words were often far-fetched, but also fetched from afar, up for sale in a marketplace inundated with new things. Yet it was the quotidian labours of lexicographers like Cockeram that added a premium to their utilitarian value.

From the earliest instance of its articulation, the desire to expand the corpus of English was linked with judgements about what kind of words should give an abiding character to it. Monolingual dictionaries sought to record as well as to prescribe and abet the adoption of appropriately naturalised English words into common usage. While Mulcaster and Coote offered an apologetic defense of a limited corpus with respect to other Continental tongues, Florio promoted an attitude of ambidexterity befitting an equal cosmopolitan alliance between English and Italian. As the growing English mercantile significance beyond its shores was progressively registered in European polyglot dictionaries, the stage was set for the first monolingual dictionaries to peddle foreign (hard) words to locals. A class of people usually excluded from academic linguistic reform -- the unskilled and women -- featured as the idealised addressees of these dictionaries. Lexicographers fashioned themselves as heroic purveyors of strange words and legislators of usage. Performing the increasing self-assuredness of seventeenth-century English as a national language on an international stage, the dictionary discourse itself recorded the ways non-English words were assimilated and anglicised.

In the imperial contexts of the late eighteenth- and nineteenth centuries, British encounters with Indian words created a distinct dictionary discourse of its own, shaped by familiar

⁹⁴ Charles R. Forker, *Skull Beneath the Skin: The Achievement of John Webster* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1986), p. 160.

gestures of authorial self-fashioning as well as context-specific demands. The following case studies chart the manifestations of the ambivalence regarding assimilation/infiltration, legislation of appropriate use, objects of linguistic reform, and the social classes at the centre of reformist agendas in works designed to enhance British access to a corpus of foreign words that were indispensable currency in the colony.

Indian words in British-Indian English: infiltration, enfranchisement, assimilation

In the dictionaries of British India, the British were foreigners seeking entry into a world of ‘other’ words. Many Indian words had found their way into the English lexicon as technical jargon for use in colonial administration and military, and more broadly as English encountered new referents in colonial life. The British had inherited from the Mughals a legal, revenue, and administrative system including much of its Persian technical vocabulary, which remained in use in the East India Company and Crown’s official records long after English became the language of governance in the 1830s. Peppered with words from Mughal systems, the English used by British in India could be seen as its own jargon, which had not been systematically or satisfactorily explained in the few glossaries there were for it.⁹⁵ T. T. Roberts’ *An Indian Glossary* (1800), published in the same year as the Fort William College was established, offered English explanations for a thousand Indian (mostly Persian) terms that had entered the English lexicon of technical terms used in Indian governance.⁹⁶ Recounting his own motivations for producing a glossary, Roberts wrote of his frustrations as a newcomer seeking information in English sources about India and Indians:

When I perused a newspaper, that source of necessary information, wherein are frequently inserted very interesting accounts of various occurrences, which men search for with

⁹⁵ Javed Majeed, “‘The bad habit’: *Hobson-Jobson*, British Indian glossaries, and intimations of mortality”, in *Henry Sweet Society for the History of Linguistic Ideas Bulletin*, 46.1 (2006), 7-22 (p. 8).

⁹⁶ T. T. Roberts, *An Indian Glossary: Forming an Useful Vade Mecum, extremely serviceable in assisting strangers to acquire with Ease and Quickness the Language of that Country* (London: Murray and Highley, 1800), title page.

avidity; or when I looked into works of the authors, who treated of the manners, customs, trade, culture, & c. of the people [of India], amongst whom it was my present lot to reside, my not understanding a number of the particular terms which were made use of, left me, when I had finished, as much uninformed as before I began.⁹⁷

The chief cause of consternation here was the large number of unfamiliar words in English sources. Such ‘unfamiliar’ words in East India Company documents, and the frustrations they triggered, remained ubiquitous until much later. H.H. Wilson’s preface to his *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms* (1855) noted with disapproval the fact that Company documents had remained ‘thickly studded with terms adopted from the vernacular languages of the country, and commonly inserted without any explanation of their purport’.⁹⁸

Despite their widely different contexts, the glossaries of British-Indian terms in English shared with early modern dictionaries of hard words in English the concern about the matter of access to a changing lexicon. Along with the purported goal of transporting words from one class/category of users to others, they also shared an undercurrent of alarm about the increasing foreign flavour in one’s own tongue, and revealed just how foreign some classes of people could feel in their own language. In both cases, the persistence of unfamiliar and under-explained foreign words in English testified to a state of things in which the ‘standard’ of use often emerged in circulation amid a select coterie of people at ease in using ‘other’ tongues and less invested in being inclusive.

While the glossaries for technical terms demonstrated the anxiety of incomprehension on behalf of a certain category of British official in India who felt excluded from a self-referring group of old-timers, the iconic dictionary of Anglo-Indian terms compiled by Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell in 1886 presented a deeper manifestation of the British

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 1.

⁹⁸ H. H. Wilson, *A Glossary of Judicial and Revenue Terms*, p. i, cited by Majeed, “‘The bad habit’”, p. 8.

anxiety of self-definition in and through India and its words. Called the *Hobson-Jobson* after a corruption by British soldiers of ‘Ya Hasan, Ya Hossein’, the cry by Shia Muslims during the mourning procession at the festival of Muharram, the text sought to record the ‘oriental words’ that had been highly assimilated into the English vernacular.⁹⁹ It was wider in scope than any glossary that preceded it, and defied easy classification given the whimsy of its definitions that drew from popular and high culture, slang, administrative terms, corruptions, puns, mishearings, hybridisations and anglicisations that constituted the language of Anglo-Indian daily life in India. It has been called the most ‘legendary dictionary of British India’,¹⁰⁰ and an ‘auto-ethnographic text’ expressing the defining fears of the British as non-creolised elites in India.¹⁰¹

Hobson-Jobson was an exercise in inconsistent self-fashioning. If Anglo-Indian terms were a distinct colloquial pocket in an Indian world of words, many words from the *Hobson-Jobson* were incorporated into the roughly contemporary *New English Dictionary* and into the corpus of general English.¹⁰² To acknowledge that Anglo-Indian terms constituted a distinct category in an Indian world of words was to hold that the British were assimilated well enough in India to have their own colloquial vocabulary. The wide-ranging dictionary celebrated the linguistic fruits of this assimilation, yet was keen to note its relative superficiality. Introducing his dictionary, Yule wrote:

...it is noteworthy that the additions which have thus accrued to the English language are, from the intellectual standpoint, of no intrinsic value. Nearly all the borrowed words refer to material facts, or to peculiar customs and stages of society...they do not represent new ideas (p. 21).

⁹⁹ Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson Jobson: The Definitive Glossary of British India* (1886), ed. by Kate Teltscher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 23. Further references to this edition of Yule and Burnell’s *Hobson Jobson* including Teltscher’s introduction are given after the quotations in the text.

¹⁰⁰ Salman Rushdie, ‘Hobson-Jobson’, in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (London: Granta, 1992), pp. 81-3 (p. 81).

¹⁰¹ Majeed, “‘The bad habit’”, p. 7.

¹⁰² As Kate Teltscher points out, Henry Yule had been in correspondence with James Murray, the compiler of the *New English Dictionary* that was precursor to the monumental *Oxford English Dictionary* (Yule and Burnell, p. xii).

In this caution could be read a reassurance that the Indian words may have embellished English, but had not quite altered its constituent ‘intellectual’ fabric. Anglo-Indian words, then, represented ‘enfranchised’ spoils of the colonial encounter. As Teltscher’s introduction notes, the lexicon drew substantially from travel writing given that Yule had been involved with the Hakluyt Society and had overseen editions of several works of travel literature (p. xix). John Fryer’s *New Account of East India and Persia* (1698) was cited over 300 times. *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1625), *Travels* of Ibn Battuta (1355), *Voyages* of Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1596), and the *Diary* of William Hedges, first East India Company agent in Bengal (1886) -- the latter two edited by Yule himself -- were other key sources (p. xix). The opening remarks of *Hobson-Jobson* told the story of the mercantile career of immigrant Indian words as they traveled to English markets and took foreign citizenship, or were acquired as spoils of conquest:

Words of Indian origin have been insinuating themselves into English ever since the end of the reign of Elizabeth and the beginning of that of King James, when such terms as calico, chintz, and gingham had already effected a lodgment in English warehouses and shops, and were lying in wait for entrance into English literature. Such outlandish guests grew more frequent 120 years ago, when, soon after the middle of the last century, the numbers of Englishmen in the Indian services, civil and military, expanded with the great acquisition of dominion then made by the Company; and we meet them in vastly greater abundance now (p. 11).

The pejorative descriptors suggested that Indian words were seen as stealthy interlopers, whose presence was only grudgingly admitted. The preface noted how some Indian words like ‘curry, toddy, veranda, cheerot, loot’ (p. 12) had been admitted into ‘full franchise’ while some others had not yet been ‘received into citizenship’ (p. 12). Further, a third category existed of words long assimilated, which ‘originated in the adoption of an Indian word, or the modification of an Indian proper name (p. 12),’ and terms that had become ‘familiar and quotidian’ (p. 12) enough.

Not only was assimilation presented as an unavoidable consequence of the mercantile encounter and its paradigm of exchange, it was also legislated entirely by the British. Indian words had to *be* admitted, were *made* quotidian in British use, *given* the British stamp of approval. Yet another class of words consisted of English words (such as tiffin, buggy, or furlough) obsolete in Europe but revived in the Anglo-Indian lexicon. Yule explained their presence through an instructive analogy:

Within my own earliest memory Spanish dollars were current in England at a specified value if they bore a stamp from the English mint. And similarly, there are certain English words, often obsolete in Europe, which have received in India currency with a special stamp of meaning.... (p. 19).

As if obeying Coote's and Cockeram's exhortation to tentative early modern users of 'hard' English, Yule and Burnell were collecting a stock of words coined in one's own fashion. Yet the compilers appeared to disapprove of the 'bad habit of interlarding English with Hindustani phrases' (p. 18).

Yule's introduction went beyond India in seeking the lineage of Anglo-Indian words. 'The words with which we have to do', he wrote, 'taking the most extensive view of the field, are in fact organic remains deposited under the various currents of external influence that have washed the shores of India during twenty centuries and more' (p. 14). Anglo-Indian colloquialisms 'even if eventually traceable to native sources' had come about through 'a Portuguese medium, and often bear traces of having passed through that alembic' (p. 16). India was configured as a frontier for a series of foreign visitors such as Greeks, Romans, Arabs, 'West-Asiatics', Portuguese and the Dutch. English interaction with Indian words could then be imagined within a wider narrative of foreign encounters, a gesture which could neutralise the singular significance of India itself. Further, as Majeed has argued, this configuration reinforced the status of Anglo-Indians as foreigners in the East, estranged

such that their interaction with Indian languages too was ‘mediated and refracted through the languages of preceding strangers.’¹⁰³ Any reverse assimilation of English into Indian languages too threatened the hierarchy and gradient of power, and was dismissed by calling it ‘Pigeon English’ and ‘vile jargon’ (p. 565) spoken merely by native servants. Such reiterations of the cultural distance between British and Indians, along with contrary demonstration of assimilations, contributed to what Majeed has called the text’s ‘unstable self-image’ and testified to the ambivalence in imperial self-fashioning.¹⁰⁴ Read thus as an ‘autoethnographic’ document, the *Hobson-Jobson* represented a defining anxiety of the British in India, in which a fear of assimilation (and a concomitant loss of identity) vied with a desire to identify with and participate in Indian cultural life.¹⁰⁵ Expressing, as Majeed argues, the particular ‘pathos’ of a specific group of British East India Company officials in decline in the later years of the nineteenth-century, it ‘articulates the forbidden longing of Anglo-Indians to be part of the subcontinent’ in which they were determined to remain as ‘unnative’ as possible.¹⁰⁶

The glossaries of Indian words in British-Indian usage addressed the interactions of Indian words with a subset of the English language as it transformed in the colony. They spoke to a group of British users, and spoke about their dilemmas as new or entrenched participants in this forged linguistic community. Technical glossaries sought to improve access to hard Indian words and make their use seem less rarified and pretentious. *Hobson-Jobson*’s preface modulated the degree of assimilation and distance between the British and British-Indian lexical worlds. Apart from showcasing aspects of British participation in Indian cultural worlds, both negotiated anxieties of belonging tinged with fears either of incomprehension or infiltration.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp. 17-18.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

In the next set of dictionaries under consideration, a general comprehension of the Indian vernacular lexicon was ostensibly at stake. They showcased changes in the British perception of the nature of the Indian vernacular they could most profitably learn. Intertwined with these judgements were the lexicographers' judgements about its community of users as objects of control or reform, and about themselves as agents of the system whose patronage they sought.

Corrupt jargon: The world of 'Moors' in George Hadley's Vocabulary

George Hadley's *Grammatical Remarks on the Practical and Vulgar Dialect of the Indostan Language, Commonly called Moors* (1772) was a popular language-learning manual that contained a bilingual glossary. His work was a commercial success, going into seven editions until 1809, withstanding the popular works of John Gilchrist that were harshly critical of him. Hadley's revisions to the subsequent editions of his dictionary reflected that Hindustani was increasingly being treated seriously. By the third edition, the word 'current' had replaced 'vulgar,' 'jargon' replaced 'language', and the edition's role as an easy guide to idiomatic language was emphasised with the addition of 'familiar phrases and dialogues.'¹⁰⁷

An army officer in the East India Company's Bengal army and an amateur philologist, Hadley had identified Hindustani not as a vulgar version of Persian but as an entirely different language. However, Hadley treated it as a bequest of invading foreigners. He was concerned merely with a specific subset of the 'Indostan language' -- the dialect of Indian troops that he encountered in his immediate experience serving in the army. 'It soon became sensible,' he wrote, 'that it would be impossible to discharge my duty in the manner I could wish, without a knowledge of the language spoken by those whom I was to

¹⁰⁷ George Hadley, *A Compendious Grammar of the Current Corrupt Dialect of the Jargon of Hindostan, (commonly Called Moors): With a Vocabulary, English and Moors, Moors and English. With References Between Words Resembling Each Other in Sound, and Different in Signification; and Literal Translations of the Compound Words and Circumlocutory Expressions for Attaining the Idiom of the Language. To which are Added Familiar Phrases and Dialogues, &c. &c. With Notes Descriptive of Various Customs and Manners of Bengal*, 3rd edn, (London: J. Sewell, 1796). Further references to the third edition of Hadley's *Compendious Grammar* are given after quotations in the text.

command, and experience soon showed me that the corrupt dialect would be more immediately useful in a military capacity' (p. vi-vii). Seeking patronage of the East India Company, Hadley promoted this immediate sphere of use. In an address to Warren Hastings, he stressed the primacy of the military to the State. Hastings' generosity was lauded for having benefitted the 'military establishment, that evinced itself, no less with laudable liberality to Individuals, than political propriety to the State; in a Constitution, which might once be said to carve its subsistence, by the edge of the sword, and breath, thro' the mouths of its cannon' (p. iv). Hadley's praise brought within its purview three ubiquitous pillars of British imperial self-fashioning -- liberality, political propriety, and military might. Moors, the jargon of military command, was thus the most worthwhile for the agents of an empire led by the military establishment.

In identifying Moors as jargon, Hadley was subscribing to the customary eighteenth-century tendency to designate as jargon the various kinds of lingua franca in circulation. William Jones had famously referred to the 'jargon of Indostan' in his 1771 grammar of Persian.¹⁰⁸ Nathaniel Halhed's Bengali grammar published in 1778 also distinguished the 'pure Bengal dialect', derived directly from Sanskrit, from the 'modern jargon of the kingdom'.¹⁰⁹ Even the preface to Johnson's *Dictionary* had mentioned 'the jargon which serves the traffickers on the Mediterranean and Indian coasts.'¹¹⁰ In Johnson's understanding, a jargon was essentially a trading language, used exclusively in a particular zone and for a specific, if limited, function.¹¹¹ As Peter Burke has noted, jargon had been a catch-all term for various kinds of lingua franca, which enabled mutual communication even among different language groups. If Daniel Defoe had called the original 'lingua franca' spoken for trade in the Mediterranean the 'Levant jargon which we called lingua Frank', Diderot had used the term to denote the 'corrupt' language spoken in the

¹⁰⁸ William Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language* (London: W. & T. Richardson, 1771), p. xxii.

¹⁰⁹ Nathaniel B. Halhed, *A Grammar of the Bengal Language*, (Hooghly: [n.pub.], 1778), p. 15.

¹¹⁰ Johnson, sig. C^v.

¹¹¹ Steadman-Jones, *Colonialism and Grammatical Representation*, p. 53. Steadman-Jones suggests that 'jargon' most probably referred to the pidgin varieties of Portuguese spoken throughout Asia in the eighteenth century.

provinces.¹¹² The term jargon was also used to describe private languages of marginal and criminally-inclined groups, specialist trading vocabularies, as well as any mixed use of language -- including, for instance, English peppered with French words. Another sense was derived from its Old French etymology -- the inarticulate warbling of birds.¹¹³ To call a language a jargon in the eighteenth century was, then, to make a broadly pejorative value judgement about its mixed and disordered structure, as well as about its class of users. As the term for the corrupt jargon of a language introduced and consolidated by Islamic invasions, the term Moors was also a palimpsest bearing unacknowledged traces of its origin as the Portuguese term 'Moros' for a Muslim encountered in India, the other of the 'heathen' 'Gentio'.¹¹⁴

Hadley's slim grammar was appended with a large bilingual vocabulary for English and Moors. The work was intended to help Englishmen master the jargon of command with little mediation by 'native informants', even though Hadley's own collaborations with locals were increasingly acknowledged between the first and final editions. Despite the apparently straightforward hierarchy of vernaculars -- that of a Hindustani (or 'Indostan') language, of which Moors was a jargon with its own 'current corrupt dialect' -- Hadley's notion of language was fluid and inconsistent. He appeared to use the term 'language' as a synonym for dialect and jargon; one of his least provisional definitions of language claimed that it *was* jargon: 'The language here treated of is a jargon of Tartar, Arabic, Persian, Bengal's Nagree, and Portugeze' (p. iv). Other inconsistent definitions followed:

The Bengals is the mother tongue of these once opulent, innocent, and happy, tho' now poor, wicked, and miserable people. The Nagrees is a distinct and more ancient dialect of the Bengal, with a character peculiar to itself; and the Portugeuze in the course of their

¹¹² Peter Burke, introduction to *Languages and Jargons: Contributions to a Social History of Language*, ed. by Burke and Roy Porter (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp.1-21 (pp. 3-4).

¹¹³'jargon, n.1.' *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2017, <www.oed.com/view/Entry/100808> [accessed 4 August 2017]

¹¹⁴ Sebastião Rodolfo Dalgado, *Portuguese vocables in Asiatic languages*, trans. by Anthony Xavier Soares, (New Delhi and Madras: Asian Educational Services, 1988), pp. 167-68.

conquests have of necessity introduced their own words for several things which did not exist in the Indies, which accounts for this strange medley of dialects (p. iv).

The corruptions of the language mirrored the fate of the once rich, now hapless people. Keen to disavow Hindustani's sophistication, he summarily dismissed any probability that it could have Persian roots. The presence of Persian-root words in Hindustani was not seen as a sign of derivation, 'any more than the word Philanthropy proves the English to be derived from the Greeks' (p. xii). Like Gilchrist's analogous narrative of origins of Hindustani and English would a few years later, Hadley too used the example of English and French to make claims about Hindustani's localised separateness:

[T]he Persian, and consequently the Arabic, bears the same influence in the Eastern, as French does in the Western world, and pervades every dialect of every language, in a greater or less degree. But this does not prove that the Hindooee is derived from the Arabic or Persian, any more than that English is derived from the French (p. x).

The inconsistency of his opinions was unsurprising since the European discipline of comparative philology was new and hypotheses about the origins of languages were still unsystematic. It was not until 1786 that William Jones' lecture at the third anniversary of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta would present his landmark doctrine of a common root of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Persian, and other Gothic and Celtic languages. However, consistency never seemed to be the point of Hadley's enterprise. In the preface to the third edition, he cautioned that the reader 'is not to expect a work of science in this publication, not any attempt towards etymology or radical research, except when absolutely necessary to explain the true sense of some particular word' (p. vii). Making the world of local words available to foreigners was the work's primary motive. Jones, whose own influential *Grammar of the Persian Language* (1771) was roughly contemporaneous with Hadley's first edition, endorsed the latter's work by comparing it with his own:

This [Hadley's] book is small change of immediate use: mine is bank notes, with which in his pocket one may starve, and not be able to get what one wants. Where one buys mine, you will sell a hundred (p. vii).

If Jones' own learned work on Persian was an investment, Hadley's was disposable currency. The affinity projected by Jones and mined by Hadley implied that the two works, to different degrees, were tokens of the same type. For Hadley, it appeared not to matter that his insistence on Hindustani's separateness from Persian amounted to a dismissal of the doctrine of common source so fundamental to Jones' project. He was happy to accept Jones' endorsement for distinction in a market made more competitive after John Gilchrist's ambitious philological works, which were bigger in size, more exhaustive in content, and that much more expensive. Changes in colonial attitudes to vernaculars and their users, and Hadley's own acumen in the face of such changes, were evident in one significant revision made to the title of the vocabulary appended to the fifth edition. The language, Hadley conceded, was 'erroneously called Moors', which was still 'current corrupt dialect of the jargon of Hindostan.'¹¹⁵ The English-Moors vocabulary in this edition was smaller and now also catalogued compound words. However, a bigger vocabulary did not necessarily mean that the language had risen in his estimation: the preponderance of compounds and circumlocutory sentences in Moors suggested that the language had a 'want of expressive words.'¹¹⁶ The jargon of Indostan was imperfect; it was also not perfectible.

Hadley's inconsistent judgements reflected the state of flux in European attitudes to Indian vernaculars in the years before the doctrine of comparative philology took root, and in the British approaches to the problem of learning the language of command in the early years of the Company rule. They also recorded the implicit hierarchies and biases in the European encounter with 'other' languages and their heteroglossia. Though Hadley did

¹¹⁵ George Hadley, *A Compendious Grammar*, 5th edn, (London: J. Sewell, 1801), p. i.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. iii.

ascribe some complexity to the vernacular by naming it within a layered schematic of language, jargon, dialect, he still saw it as lacking in expressive words and as ‘corrupt’. Gilchrist’s English-Hindustani Dictionary, published a year after Jones’ seminal lecture to the Asiatic Society in which he introduced his doctrine of comparative philology, took it upon itself to impart respectability to the jargon that had been dismissed in different ways by Hadley and Jones.

Fashioning a grand, popular language in John Gilchrist’s Dictionary

The work inaugurating Gilchrist’s linguistic oeuvre participated in the project of displaying the functional range and identity of the vernacular beyond ‘jargon’. Hindustani, he noted, was comparable to ‘the former state of our own tongue, which, long before it had a grammar *visible to the vulgar*, was nevertheless no more a jargon, than the object of our present enquiries.’¹¹⁷ Gilchrist had labelled Hadley’s version of ‘Moors’ as an altogether different version of the proper vernacular, a tongue, ‘viler than English butchered by Negroes in the West, and mangled by Bungalees in the East Indies ... as remote from the proper Hindoostanee, as light is from darkness’ (p. v). Choosing the proper register of Hindustani as the frontrunner to be the lingua franca entailed competing with other dialects/languages being peddled in the language learning market (the ‘corrupt jargon’ of ‘moors’, Persian, and ancient ‘Hinduwee’); with various motives of learning Indian languages (for commanding troops, diplomacy, philological pursuits, or evangelism); and for the East India Company’s financial support. In the preface to his first dictionary, Gilchrist was determined to distinguish Hindustani from other language-complexes, and to present himself as its most reliable curator. The titles of his works increasingly announced their self-proclaimed status as serious scholarship: The 1798 *Dictionary and Grammar*, was revised in 1802 into a new volume titled *The Oriental Linguist*. Another revised volume was

¹¹⁷ John Gilchrist, *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee*, (Calcutta: Stuart & Cooper, 1787), p. vii. Further references to this edition of Gilchrist’s *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee* in this chapter are given after quotations in the text.

published as *The Anti-Jargonist* in 1800, and yet another revised edition in 1810 and 1825 was named *Hindoostanee Philology*.

Gilchrist had arrived in India as an assistant surgeon with the Royal Navy, and later the East India Company's Bengal Army in 1782. By 1794, he had been promoted to surgeon, and had been granted indefinite leave to pursue his philological work. His *Dictionary, English and Hindoostanee, in Which the Words are Marked with Their Distinguishing Initials; as Hinduwee, Arabic, and Persian, Whence the Hindoostanee, or What is Vulgarly, but Improperly Called the Moor Language, is Evidently Formed*, was published in instalments between 1787 and 1790. The dictionary was re-published in 1798 as part of a set that included his 1796 grammar, was appended to *The Oriental Linguist* in 1802, and to *The Anti-Jargonist* in 1800. The opening salvo of Gilchrist's preface to *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee* located his ambitions relative to a purported history of European knowledge about the subcontinent: in the 'writings of the Ancients', and in the 'pages of the Moderns' taken to be inaugurated by Vasco da Gama's landing, and to the 'middle of the present age' (p. i). The British were lauded as the only group among Europeans and past rulers of India to have made such rapid gains in the knowledge of letters and languages. Special praise was reserved for Hastings for having inaugurated the era of oriental literature, in a wrought metaphor explaining the sparkle of India as the jewel in Britain's crown. Gilchrist wrote:

This era of oriental literature dawned with Mr Hastings, was illumined with the radiant spirit of Sir William Jones, sparkled with the diverging rays of the Asiatick Society, and finally was cherished with a softening hand by a sovereign Company of British Merchants, whose trade and possessions in Asia certainly constitute the brightest jewel in the crown of Great Britain (p. i).

The missionaries, who had been responsible for a considerable amount of language pedagogy, were given short shrift through faint praise since he 'had not read any work by them' (p. i). His admiration and loyalties lay firmly with the East India Company:

On the whole it will be found that Hindoostanee, Hinduwee, Bungalee, &c. owe little to the Church, and perhaps less to transitory commerce. Power, permanent power, has been the grand source of information in this, and the other branches of Indian lore. The East India Company have fortunately for science, commanded the means, and seconded the inclination of an eminent Oriental statesman to revive in their collective body, the Medici of Italy, and the Maecenas of Rome, amidst the remote regions of Hindoostan (p. ii).

The East India Company's role as the governing-administrator wielding abiding power was valorised over its identity as a mercantile corporation. The Company and its Governor Generals were likened to historically-revered patrons, and the members of the Asiatic Society were statesmen and scientists. Commerce was transitory, Gilchrist implied, but it was the permanence of statesmanlike power that would ensure cultivation of knowledge.

Gilchrist's appeals to power were intertwined with a colourful self-legitimation narrative. He gave his readers an anecdotal inventory of his toils as well as successes, and more pointedly, of his success as a function of these solitary struggles. The preface drew a picture of a life that had led to his lexicographical vocation, and underscored just how difficult it had been. Fashioning his solitary heroics along the lines of Johnson and the early English lexicographers, Gilchrist offered a dramatic account of his journey through various towns across India, the tyrannies and comforts of Indian weather, and the epiphanies that came to him in moments of struggle. He described his task as 'herculean' (p. vii), and listed his travails during the self-funded period of his research. He recalled how he almost died of a liver infection, experienced loneliness and financial ruin, failed as an Indigo farmer before succeeding in farming and trading sugar and opium (p. ix-xii).

Peppered through the vivid account of such capricious fortunes were sobering lists of various expenses and notes of his many successes in setting a high price for his work or soliciting incremental increases from the Government and potential subscribers. The account was footnoted liberally with official correspondence, and cited evidence of support from no less than three Governor Generals including Lord Cornwallis, who had approved further allocation of grants. He made a case for why he was more suited for liberal patronage than those ‘qualified by interest and partiality alone’ (p. x). As a worthy lexicographer, Gilchrist was a discerning linguist, a skilled traveler, loyal British subject, and a social visionary, who was committed enough to pursue his linguistic passion project at the cost of secure livelihood. Not least, he saw his effort as largely literary, in sharp contrast to the quick-fix endeavours of his contemporaries. ‘The reader may imagine’, he wrote, ‘how happy I became on reflecting, that one bold literary effort might command both emolument, and applause, nor can he wonder at my attempting it’ (p. vii).

Gilchrist acknowledged the contribution of the many native informants with whom he collaborated, noting that he gleaned words used by them to make as comprehensive a vocabulary as possible, even listing instances in which he was disabused of many notions by expert moonshees.¹¹⁸ Yet the picture of his lone struggles included comment on a disappointing lack of assistance from the native speakers of his source language:

This was a new dilemma when I considered that the lexicography of all the European languages was produced by the joint accumulated exertions of many people for some ages together, and that I a solitary individual, whom no one had preceded, must now complete such a system in a foreign tongue, without the smallest help from those even who has used it so long -- the stable of Augeas could not have appeared more terrible to me... (p. viii).

¹¹⁸ Munshis or ‘Moonshees’ were a community of writers and scribes well-versed in Persian language and literature given their traditional role in courtly administration in early eighteenth-century South Asia. They were thus crucial for the British to gain purchase on the elite courtly culture through which to conduct their diplomatic and political business. It has been well established that there was a high degree of reciprocity, dialogue, and consensus-building between the British and the colonised public. See for instance Bayly, *Empire and Information*. Elsewhere, Gilchrist too noted how he was disabused by a Moonshee about the incorrect version of the language called Moors he had been learning, which eventually led him to chastise Hadley’s entire model. See John Gilchrist, *The Oriental Linguist* (Calcutta: Ferris & Greenway, 1798), p. vii.

The record of the indifference of the native speakers served mainly to foreground just how trailblazing Gilchrist's solitary labours had been. This effect was bolstered by another anecdote in which he recalled how puzzled Indians were when asked about a dictionary of their own language. Indians, he recalled, 'answered interrogatively, if it was ever yet known in any country that men had to consult vocabularies and rudiments for their own vernacular speech' (p. vii). Looking for evidence of a modern Hindustani philology by the 'Moosulmans who introduced it' (p. vii), he was presented with the *Khaliq Baree*, a glossary that had been in circulation since the twelfth century.¹¹⁹ Gilchrist's dismissal of the *Khaliq Baree* was on the grounds that it dealt with a limited sample, 'the ancient Hinduwee alone' (p. viii).

For Gilchrist, mischaracterising a language as jargon indicated poor scholarly calibre and lack of discernment that had allowed an improperly-used idiom to pass for a universal dialect. He pointed out that the 'barbarous gabble' (p. v) that had been named by Hadley as the pan-Indian jargon was unintelligible in most regions as it was reserved for bare-bones communication with the British:

The barbarous gabble taught by Hadley, exists no where, but among the dregs of our servants, in their snip snap dialogues with us only; for even they would not degrade themselves by chattering the gibberish of savages, while conversing with, or addressing each other, in the capacity of human beings (p. v).

Hadley was accused of not venturing beyond the immediate and limited sphere of conversations with natives; it was as if, Gilchrist suggested, 'pedlars speech' or 'cant' (p. v) was promoted as the most representative version of a language.

¹¹⁹ The *Khaliq Bari* was a glossary-poem in circulation since the twelfth century, reportedly composed by the poet Amir Khusrau, and used as an instructional aid in learning Persian through the vernacular (equivalent to present-day Hindi-Urdu, but called by different names); See Amaresh Datta, ed., *Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature*, 6 vols, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1987-94), II (1988), p. 1041.

The invective against Hadley's misjudgement also betrayed an underlying suspicion of natives. The native servants, he noted, used the 'barbarous gabble' with a knowingness, reserving it only for 'snip snap' dialogues with British masters. In *The Anti-Jargonist*, Gilchrist conveyed that Indian were 'adepts in the science of circumvention'.¹²⁰ Unlike Hadley, who had dismissively attributed this feature to the lack of expressive words in the vernacular lexis, Gilchrist insisted on the significance of registering the ambiguities in local word meanings. By paying attention to the semantic nuances of words, the British could be prevented, he said, from becoming the 'unconscious abettors of their injustice'.¹²¹ The largest entry in the *Dictionary*, for the verb 'to kill' (p. 483-84), illustrated the sinister consequences of miscomprehension. Noting that the Hindustani verb 'maarna' signified 'to beat' more commonly than 'to kill', he noted how it may, like the verb 'to smite', have a 'very equivocal meaning' (p. 483). Thus, an unthoughtful command could have 'fatal consequences'...

...especially if an *armed Sipahzee* [armed soldier] were inclined to do a rash action, by taking advantage of such an ambiguous command...to which he might perhaps be impelled, either from a malicious intention to ruin his own officer, or from a desire of revenge on the unfortunate victim to his villainy (p. 484).

In this example, the agent of the 'fatal consequence' was the cunning Indian soldier who had capitalised on the deliberate ambiguity of his commander's words to extract a direct or indirect revenge. Gilchrist went on to elaborate the true danger to the British commanding officer: any court hearing for a case such as that above would rely upon the evidence of the literal language of command, and would place the blame on the officer for commissioning such an order in the first place (p. 484). The careless use of words and the folly of miscomprehension had here an ironic consequence; the execution of justice for the native

¹²⁰ John Gilchrist, *The Anti-Jargonist or A Short Introduction to the Hindoostanee Language*, (Calcutta: Ferris & Co., 1800), p. xxi.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. xxiii-xxiv.

became unjust for the British commanding officers, whose prerogative it was to maintain the just character of imperial rule.¹²²

Since an over-reliance on the corrupt jargon of command was thus prone to fatal consequences, there was reason to renounce it altogether. Gilchrist did so by dismissing ‘moors’ as an unmeaning term. Though loosely-defined, the term had not been without meaning or significance. Moors had been used, often pejoratively, to designate non-European others encountered in maritime encounters, conquest, or trade. Unlike the diffuse ‘moors’, Gilchrist’s ‘Hindoostanee’ was a ‘comprehensive conciliating appellation’ like ‘British or European’ (p. xix). It was also the ‘*modern* name of India’ (p. xix) (emphasis in original). British readers were urged to see that Hindustani was best placed to be the universal colloquial medium as it was the most widely understood across a range of classes: ‘the peasant, the artist, the merchant, the priest, the soldier, the gentleman, the courtier, the prince, and the king’ (p. xxi). Replacing the ‘unmeaning’ moors with a term of fixed meaning, the lingua franca was named into being as a ‘national’ language. The *Anti-Jargonist* summarised his viewpoint as follows:

Hindoostan is a compound word, equivalent to *Hindoo*-land or *Negro*-land, and too well known to require any description here. It is inhabited chiefly by Hindoos and Moosulmans; whom we may safely comprise, as well as their language, under the general, conciliating, comprehensive term of Hindoostanee, and which I have adopted for the above and following reasons. This name of the country being modern, as well as the vernacular tongue in question, no other appeared so appropriate as it did to me, when I first engaged in the study and cultivation of the language. That the natives and others call it also *Hindee*, Indian, from *Hind*, the ancient appellation of *India*, cannot be denied; but as this is apt to be confounded with *Hindumee*, *Hindooe*, *Hindvee*, the derivative form from *Hindoo*, I adhere

¹²² Gilchrist had elsewhere painted a picture of the injustice accruing to petitioners who were not proficient in the language of the court, and had argued that court-proceedings conducted in the vernacular were likely to be more just. The argument, which drew an analogy with the hypothetical confusions of English-speaking petitioners appearing before French-speaking magistrates, sympathised with the figure of an uncomprehending Indian native in a Persian-language court in order to suggest that the promotion of the vernacular was linked to the exercise of justice. See above pp. 123-24 in Chapter 2.

to my original opinion, that we should invariably discard all other denominations of the popular speech of the country, including the unmeaning word Moors, and substitute for them *Hindoostanee*, whether the people here constantly do so or not: as they can hardly discriminate sufficiently, to observe the use and propriety of such restrictions, even when pointed out to them.¹²³

This statement presented the act of naming the language as an act of imparting linguistic agency to the people, often against their own unreflective judgement. Through a knowing exposition that demonstrated the rigour of Gilchrist's research, a selected dialect was being given a country-specific name.

Gilchrist's lexical prescriptions claimed a broader ambit of reform, some of which had to do with revising the named identities of language-communities. The dictionary proposed to refer to native inhabitants of North India as 'Hindoo' instead of the then-current 'Gentoo'. The term Gentoo had been in circulation at least since the time of the Portuguese encounter with the Western coast of India, and was widely understood as being an anglicised corruption of the Portuguese word *Gentio*: a heathen, or native. There is evidence that the term was used by the Portuguese to distinguish between an aboriginal, non-Muslim 'Gentoo' and the Muslim 'Moros/Moors'.¹²⁴ This separation was based on an understanding of the region's history by early European colonists in which the Gentile Gentoos were seen as the free aboriginal inhabitants who were conquered by invading Moors or Scythian Tartars.¹²⁵ By the time Gilchrist's was compiling his lexical record, the term had gained institutional traction: The very first digest of social laws of the locals, produced by the British in 1776, was called *A Code of Gentoo Laws, Or, Ordinations of the Pundits*. This was an old Sanskrit legal code, translated by local Brahmin scholars into Persian and then into English by Nathaniel Halhed. Through this text, 'Gentoo' had gained

¹²³ Gilchrist, *The Anti-Jargonist*, pp. iii-iv.

¹²⁴ Dalgado, pp. 167-68.

¹²⁵ See Sushil Srivastava, 'Situating the Gentoo in History: European Perception of Indians in Early Phase of Colonialism', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36.7 (2001), pp. 576-94.

a more concrete semantic association with a Sanskritic, upper-caste Hindu socio-religious identity. In a footnote to his *Dictionary*, Gilchrist announced that the term *Hindoo* should replace ‘Gentoo’ on the basis of his own etymological excavations:

From *Hindoo*, I have traced Gentoo [...] with more reason I believe, than deducing it from *Gentile*; a word, that neither we, nor the Portuguese could well corrupt to *Gentoo*, which not being adopted by the natives at all, can hardly be deemed one of their corruptions. It is deservedly becoming obsolete, by *Hindoo*, assuming on all late occasions its place (p. xviii).

Citing evidence of local use, he framed his role as a historically-astute scholar with stakes in restoring linguistic agency to natives disempowered by the absence of standardisation.

Further, imputing indigenous origins to a word became an act of imparting a vernacular identity that rejected appropriation by mercantile Europeans like the Portuguese, and also sidestepped the Persianate linguistic world of Mughal rulers who had immediately preceded the British. Gilchrist’s reformism was propelled by a purported motive of giving back to the other what was their own. In that, though his works were designed to facilitate British military officers, the oppressed Indian kept oblivious by oppressive learned classes -- ‘the cormorant crew’ of ‘Dewans, Mootsuddies, Sirkars, Nazirs, Pundits, Munshis and a tremendous roll call of harpies’ (p. xxvii) -- was the other implied addressee of his endeavour.

One of the stated objectives of Gilchrist’s work was to minimise the reliance on the native informant. The *Oriental Linguist*, he wrote, ‘in great measure supersedes the necessity of a living instructor or a *Moonshee*, for six months at least, and opens the door to improvement in all the eastern languages, by enabling the scholar to converse with his teacher when he does employ one’.¹²⁶ Though he had expressed contempt for simplistic and unscholarly approaches like Hadley’s, subsequent editions of his works were concessions to the

¹²⁶ Gilchrist, *Oriental Linguist*, p. ii.

continued popularity of a mode of language learning typified by Hadley's commercially successful text. The *Oriental Linguist* was less compendious and claimed to offer the 'rudiments' of a tongue.¹²⁷ Gilchrist grudgingly included language learning dialogues but not without expressing skepticism at their usefulness.¹²⁸ In the preface to *A Dictionary English and Hindoostanee*, he claimed that a knowledge of Hindustani was necessary for 'intercourse with, and dominion over the natives here' (p. ix). This was a wide-ranging enterprise, attempting not just to extend the domain of colonial knowledge beyond words to command troops but to make the language current as the 'most prevalent, useful, conciliating, copious, and expressive of all India' (p. v).

Gilchrist's rhetoric defined the identities of the lexicographer and the lexical world of his source language in terms of a range of differentiations. His own enterprise was measured against other linguists', his version of the proper vernacular corpus against others' slapdash stock, the acumen of his institutional patrons against previous European encounters with Indian words. Scientific, political, pragmatic, and commercial imperatives won over evangelical ones. He sought to take language-learning above mere mastery over 'snip-snap' conversations with the natives in the imperative mood.

The native speakers themselves were met with ambivalence. Though he sought and received the help of native informants, he was reluctant to share credit in the compilation of his first dictionary. Foregrounding his deep engagement with the nuances of the Indian lexical world, Gilchrist could present his own near-native competence as the unique selling point of a work that could reduce dependence on native tutors. If the uneducated masses were kept ignorant by reviled learned classes, the classes serving the British too were shown

¹²⁷ The large subtitle of *The Oriental Linguist* indicates the concessions Gilchrist had to make for the market in which Hadley's work was the bestseller. The subtitle reads: *An Easy and Familiar Introduction to the Popular Language of Hindoostan; [Vulgarly, but improperly called the Moors:] Comprising the Rudiments of that Tongue, with an extensive Vocabulary, English and Hindoostanee and Hindoostanee and English: Accompanied with some Plain and Useful Dialogues, Takes, Poems, &c. To illustrate the construction and facilitate the acquisition of the Language. To which is added, for the accommodation of the Army, The English and Hindoostanee Part of The Articles of War, [From Colonel William Scott's Translation,] With Practical Notes and Observations.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. ix.

to be wily in the way they used circumlocutory language and manipulated the linguistic shortcomings of their commanders. The classificatory urge of his work took on reformist ambitions when he redescribed the vernacular by giving it a universal appellation and one of its communities, a more etymologically grounded name than foreign ascriptions.

Gilchrist's works thus oversaw an expansion in the world of Hindustani words available to the British user. While still primarily a tool of command, the identity of the language in this rendition was no longer reduced to that of jargon, and was conceived of as a *lingua franca* alive beyond the camp of troops.

Folk fascinations and grounds for 'national speech' in S.W. Fallon's Dictionaries

Nearly a century after Gilchrist's dictionary, which set out a vision of Hindustani as a grand popular language for Hindustan, Fallon's dictionaries recorded the change the fortunes of the language and its perception among the British. The *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary with Illustrations from Hindustani Literature and Folk-lore* (1879) and *A New English-Hindustani, with Illustrations from English Literature and Colloquial English Translated into Hindustani* (1883) designed a more inclusive project of parity between the two languages. Fallon's account had acknowledged that Hindustani was both complex and copious, and flourished in spaces hitherto ignored by legislators. The titles of Fallon's bilingual dictionaries announced parity between the literary and the colloquial, from English and Hindustani literary cultures alike. As drawn out in the lengthy preface to the 1879 work, Fallon wanted the dictionary to foreground and nurture dialects, make margins mainstream, involve the idiomatic in the domain of the standard, and thus enhance the corpus and character of the standard itself. Gilchrist's 'grand popular language' was to be inflected with 'living speech'.

Fallon's *New English-Hindustani Dictionary* was published posthumously in 1883; its short preface put together by his wife enumerated some of its unique points. In a move reminiscent of John Bullokar's in *The English Expositor*, which invited 'hard' technical and

literary vocabulary of non-English origins into common English usage, Fallon's preface made a case for the inclusion of technical terms from European arts, science and philosophy. These were 'rendered for the first time in popular Hindustani, in addition to the Arabic and Sanskrit terms'.¹²⁹ English meanings and Hindustani equivalents were arranged in a 'logical order', with the latter in a way that the 'more commonly used or colloquial phrase comes before the less used or pedantic one.'¹³⁰ Apart from the commitment towards the colloquial, a desire for reciprocal infiltration was apparent in the inclusion of 'many thousand' English idioms and proverbs for which Hindustani equivalents (rather than literal translations) were provided. Fallon's pointed incorporation of the idiomatic and nuanced colloquial extended even to European languages; in consonance with the programme of comparative philology, the dictionary promised to illustrate 'Affinities between Sanskrit, Hindi, Persian, and Arabic words, and their equivalents in Anglo-Saxon, English (with its dialects), and other European languages of the Arian group.'¹³¹

The preface to the *New Hindustani-English Dictionary* (1879) contained a more detailed exposition of Fallon's lexicographic philosophy. Fallon often valorised the 'living voice', 'direct impressions on the hearing ear', and 'reflex expressions of speech' as the linguistic object worth fostering.¹³² Ruining a state of affairs that valued writing over speech, and favoured stilted additions from 'dead' classical languages at the cost of the current colloquialisms, Fallon wrote:

¹²⁹ S. W. Fallon, *A New English-Hindustani Dictionary, With Illustrations from English Literature and Colloquial English Translated into Hindustani* (Benaras: Medical Hall Press, 1883), unpaginated preface.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² S. W. Fallon, *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary: With Illustrations from Hindustani Literature and Folk-lore* (Benaras: Medical Hall Press, 1879), pp. ii-iii. Further references to this edition of Fallon's *A New Hindustani-English Dictionary* are given after quotations in the text.

The fossil remains of a long extinct vernacular, with the more recent unassimilated additions from the dead languages, which constitute so large a portion of written Urdu and Hindi, are tame and colourless beside the warmth and glow of the living speech (p. iii).¹³³

Contents of dictionaries were ‘dead leaves’ (p. iii) because they lacked the vitality of the ‘so-called vulgar tongue’ (pp. ii-iii). Through these statements, Fallon had presented that his work was an attempt at revitalising British lexicography in India. His work as a school administrator in and around the Bihar region was cited as a key advantage in bringing him into closer contact with the provincial lifeworld of North India and its linguistic diversity. This perspective from the provinces also implied that he was well placed to acknowledge the conflicts between local dialects and the official language at the ‘Mogul capital’ of Delhi.

Fallon’s preference for provincial dialects served an idea of a ‘national’ idiom that extended beyond city limits and seats of power. Hadley had identified a ‘current corrupt dialect of a jargon’ as the standard vernacular worth learning; Gilchrist had dubbed Hindustani the ‘grand popular language’ while effectively defining it in terms of a strict, class-bound diglossia. Despite their oppositions, both moves were indicative, among other things, of an abiding suspicion of certain subordinate classes among the natives. Fallon’s rhetoric of inclusion reclaimed Hindustani as the ‘paramount dialect of the national speech’ (p. ii):

If the living dialects are the feeders of language, manifestly the paramount dialect of national speech must gain in copiousness, flexibility, and expression, in proportion as it is enriched by contributions from many kindred dialects and the various idioms which spring up continually in every class and occupation (p. ii).

¹³³ By the time Fallon’s dictionary was in circulation, it was widely accepted that ‘Hindi’ and ‘Urdu’ were dialectal variations of ‘Hindustani’. As we have also seen in William Yates’ 1847 usage, Hindi was associated with Hindus of particular regions, the devanagari script, and a more Sanskritised vocabulary; Urdu was seen as used by Muslims, written in a Perso-Arabic script, aligned with a Persianate vocabulary, and a more mannered courtly/literary culture. As codified by Gilchrist, ‘Hindustani’ was a shorthand for Urdu. Fallon himself appeared to use ‘Hindi’ and ‘Hindustani’ interchangeably. On one occasion, Fallon called Hindi and Urdu ‘two phases of a language’ which were together represented as Hindustani (p. vii). Nevertheless, it remained a fact that none of these distinctions were as yet watertight.

The pedantry of 'native literary classes' exasperated Fallon. Taking up for the illiterates, he wrote:

The pure taste for the natural, and true, and simple is especially rare in the native literary class in India who, almost to a man, despise truth to nature as all too tame and common, and the mother tongue as the language of vulgar, illiterate people. Their admiration is for the extravagant and unreal, the foreign and the factitious (p. xx).

Like Gilchrist, Fallon was particularly critical of the 'book-learned Moulvis and Pandits' -- Islamic and Hindu clergymen -- who tended to obfuscate ordinary speech (p. i-ii).

The Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit languages themselves were seen as showy. If Arabic sounds were 'strange', and had 'no meaning' (p. ii), Sanskrit forms were 'dull clod clay' (p. ii), and were only useful for the mannered effects of 'curious Arabic inflexions, flowing Persian compounds, and mystic Sanskrit words of lengthening sound' (p. ii). As such, inflecting speech with words and idioms from these languages was tantamount to the 'gaudiest foreign frippery and fustian' (p. ii) used by the powerful for the 'display and the concealment of their thoughts' (p. ii). Fallon could well be participating in early modern conversations about foreign ornamentation of 'plain' English, expressing distaste for those enchanted with foreign affectations, and censuring elites who used languages to mystify and dominate ordinary people. As a corrective to the hegemony of 'elite' words in the language, Fallon had included etymology and secondary meanings of 'rustic forms now current' (p. i), which were arranged in 'distinct groups in the order of their relation to one another, and to the generic meaning of the root word' (p. i). The preference for simple language for administrative use was couched a judgement against the mystifying affectations set in place by previous foreign rulers (the Mughals). He wrote:

How large a part of our most grievous political blunders and administrative weaknesses may not be set down to the use of so convenient a vehicle for mystification and the affectation of the very opinions and sentiments of their foreign masters of whatever creed or nation, poured into willing ears in the sweet music of their native tongue, in set phrases well conned and learned by rote by the meekest and most diligent of pupils! (p. ii)

Linguistic character was here made to assume much of the blame for the ills of governance. To learn more native colloquial words and involve them in the official register was to support the styling of British rule as politically just and administratively strong, and thus as better than other foreign rulers in India.

Unlike the outright distrust of the native informant expressed in Gilchrist's early works, Fallon's work positioned him as desiring to collaborate, and as a desirable collaborator.¹³⁴ Fallon's sympathetic discourse cast the British as enablers for an overlooked class of Indians oppressed by a small section of their countrymen 'who are able to learn the foreign language of their rulers or the highly Persianised and Arabic-ridden Urdu of the Courts of law, and so to stand between the governing class and the great body of the people' (p. ii). Including the lives of 'all classes and conditions of men' from various parts of the country would enable 'enlightened criticism' (p. vi). His dictionary aimed to be an 'insight into the mind of the people', and a work 'which should faithfully depict the life of the people -- their occupations and pleasures, with their modes of thought and feeling, as reflected in their language and literature' (p. vii). Adding varied and variable dialects to a common mainstream presented the problem of mutual intelligibility and acceptance. Fallon was all too aware of the socio-cultural bottlenecks to standardisation of national speech in this fashion and listed them out:

¹³⁴ The 1879 edition acknowledged in a list the 'important aid of his efficient staff' of several Indians -- munshis and pandits -- from various cities in North India. In the 1833 dictionary, the posthumous work was presented as being authored by Fallon and assisted by Lala Faqir Chand of Delhi, among others.

A phrase or signification which is familiar in one province is sometimes unknown in another. The Mahomedan may not know certain idioms which are current among Hindus. Words which are common to Hindu men and women become not unfrequently the exclusive vocabulary of the women of Mahomedan zanas, their Mahomedan lords preferring to use instead the foreign vocabulary which they brought with them when they imposed their yoke on the country (p. vi).

This statement displayed Fallon's familiarity with provincial ground realities in India, and also betrayed the underlying judgements about invading foreigners and their yoke. The sum of these judgements was that the mother tongue was seen to reside in the vulgar, the illiterate, and with women.¹³⁵

The language of women was treated as an entirely separate category in Fallon's categorisation. 'Common' women were valorised in Fallon the bearers of the best (and most authentic) of a nation's speech.¹³⁶ Fallon wrote: 'the only national speech is that which bears the people's stamp, and in this category the first place must be assigned to the language of women' (p. iii). Fallon deployed the nature-artifice distinction to speak of the simple charms of women's songs, who were the keepers of a 'natural language of emotions,' (p. iii) and in whose speech 'is mirrored the very image of the thoughts and feelings by which humanity is moved, with the burning words which are wrung from the sharper sufferings of the weaker vessel' (p. iii). This sentimental and essentialist notion of femininity became an occasion for ethnographic commentary. Women's language -- 'rekhti' or 'zanani boli' (p. iii) -- was categorised as an altogether separate, third dialect (along with the written, and the rustic) that was most common where 'men and women are both illiterate Hindus of the rural class,' and least where 'men are educated Mahomedan

¹³⁵ Fallon, as Bayly notes, was a lesser-known participant in a wave of what he calls 'neo-orientalists', who were determined to turn European attention to knowledge of the 'little Indias.' This turn towards the local, folkloric, regional and the idiolectal was typified in ventures that tried to promote local artisanal movement, and census-takers who meticulously classified castes and sub-castes into ranks; Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p. 360.

¹³⁶ Cawdrey's *Table Alphabeticall* was dedicated to five sisters, one of whom was also the dedicatee of Bullkar's *The English Expositor*.

residents of towns' (p. iii).¹³⁷ The educated patriarchy was identified exclusively as the 'foreign' Muslim. Defined in opposition to it, the spoken language of women was configured as the most authentically 'native'. Fallon deemed women's language a rich resource for a number of reasons. The 'conservatism of the female instinct' (p. iii) made their language a repository of the most enduring indigenous, and the most naturalised foreign, elements in the language as whole; the traditional seclusion of women made them the 'asylum of the vernacular' (p. iii) free from the 'pedantries of word-makers' (p. iii); and their language was further vitalised by the uncensored wit and ribaldry thought to characterise women's free talk in the seclusions of communal domesticity.¹³⁸

The category of 'women', constructed in relation to their socially-sanctioned domestic spaces, was useful in the way it could contain the impulses of conservatism and playfulness. Imagining the *zenana* (women-only quarters in traditional households) as a space that was risqué and nurturing in equal measure could be seen, after Said, as typifying orientalism's eroticised fascination. This idealised composite of the illiterate, rustic, feminine colonial subject as the 'impressionable and imaginative Oriental,' (p. i) was, for Fallon, best encountered in the rhythms of speech and song. 'The songs composed by women,' Fallon wrote, 'are distinguished by a natural charm and simple pathos which make their way to the hearts of the people... (p. iii). Further, the inclusion of songs and popular poetry in a 'general dictionary of national speech' was necessary for 'the fusion of many dialects into one common language' (p. vii). Thus, Fallon envisaged the national speech at an intersection of the feminine, folkloric, and the literary.

¹³⁷ According to Bayly, Fallon was a notable exception to the broadly sketchy British knowledge about Indian women and the domestic sphere, unlike in colonial Africa where access and knowledge about women and their societal domains were often mobilised for Christianisation or Westernisation. In early nineteenth-century India, women were usually symbols in debates about social reform, which tended to focus on 'regressive' or 'decadent' dimensions of South Asian culture as a whole. It was only by the mid-nineteenth century that commentaries on Indian life involved women as such -- their exclusive communal spaces, banter, gossip, and songs -- in which trend Fallon's popular dictionary was a key participant; Bayly, *Empire and Information*, p. 178, 358.

¹³⁸ His belief that women were the conservators of language was resonant with Cicero's views that women could better retain the pronunciation of their ancestors since they spent their time at home and in relative isolation; Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. by H. Rackham (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library, 1982), p. 37, cited by Fleming, p. 300.

If Fallon's rhetoric appropriated female spaces for a national sentiment that could be creative *and* conservative, it also recruited them as victims of repression in Indian society. Fallon recruited women's seclusion as a symbol of forced repression to justify including 'objectionable quotations' (p. vii) in his dictionary:

There is much to be learnt from many an otherwise objectionable quotation, if one is willing to learn. It is of the greatest importance, for instance, to know to what depths human nature can sink in the vitiated atmosphere of enforced female seclusion (*pardah nashini*), as contrasted with the purity to which men and women rise as social restraints are withdrawn, and they are permitted to breathe the pure air of liberty and indulge in free social intercourse (p. vii).

In this contrast, purity of thought came about due to a discerningly liberal education and social behavior. The notion of female-only spaces, which had earlier fueled Fallon's fascinated conviction that the best of the vernacular had remained conserved therein, was now mobilised to serve an argument about the perils of repression. Arguing that no 'gains to morality' were possible from endorsing a suppression of the cultural/literary products of such 'vitiating' atmospheres, Fallon summoned a telling association of ideas:

It would be more manly, more honest, and more useful to permit the world to realise the fact that, with all the philanthropic and self-denying sacrifices that have been and are now being made, and in spite of legislation and education so called, the people are still in the condition in which their language palpably and unmistakably shows them to be. Mere abstract and general statements of the fact can never convey anything like the vivid impression of the reality which the language supplies.

And it is good that good men should be shocked in order that they may be roused to the amount of well-directed efforts necessary for the successful eradication of the evil with which it is their duty to grapple (p. viii).

Fallon here linked his philosophy of language with appeals to manliness, honesty, goodness, and usefulness as indices of good intellectual practice. This clarified the ideological lineaments of how the work constructed usefulness, reiterated that its central concern was the production of linguistic and social knowledge about the colony. It also reminded that the liberated English gentlemen were the primary addressees of the work. In this move, the specific category of the feminine was absorbed into the more general rhetoric of reform in the colony.

We can read this gesture as evoking what Fleming has characterised as the ‘colonialist discourse’ of early English dictionaries: one that proceeded by the full exhibition of that which was to be effaced or repressed.¹³⁹ The so-called language of women was never registered as a domain that could provide inputs for a standard English, despite the fact that early modern rhetoric often mobilised -- with varying degrees of appreciation -- the idea that a distinct domain of the vernacular existed in female-specific spoken use. As Fleming points out, women were often represented as speaking differently: gossiping, telling old wives tales, using euphuism.¹⁴⁰ The English humanists too had inherited the view that women made the best vernacular speakers from Cicero, who, Fleming writes, ‘had noted with approval that the comparative isolation of women at home allowed them to retain the pronunciation of their ancestors’.¹⁴¹ Thus, Florio’s fawning dedications to his women patrons were, among other things, ‘part of a stance’.¹⁴² In his 1603 dedication to the third book of the English translation of Montaigne’s *Essais* (which was addressed to six aristocratic women), Florio wrote that women were the ‘purest, finest, and clearest speakers’ of all tongues including their mother tongue.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Fleming, p. 295.

¹⁴⁰ A large number of these representations appear by the end of the sixteenth century in miscellaneous writings, plays, and prefaces of rhetorical works. Fleming persuasively contends that such appearances did not necessarily attest to the historical existence of a female-specific usage but were attempts to produce a vernacular that was in need of rules; Fleming, p. 302.

¹⁴¹ Fleming, p. 300.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ John Florio, *The Essayes or Morall, Politike, or Millitarie Discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne... The third booke* (London: Val. Sims for Edward Blount, 1603), sig. Rr2^r

Dubbing French as the language of ladies, he used a metaphor in which a men's and women's usage were separate but complementary, as writing was to speech: 'as if written by men it may have a good garbe, spoken by you it hath a double grace....'¹⁴⁴ Florio's address was to the women of aristocratic classes who were the recipients of his tutelage. The hard word dictionaries clubbed ladies with the unskillful as recipients of instruction about correct usage; here, women were not speakers of an idealised tongue but uncomprehending listeners/readers of strange new words circulating in their domains as sermons, for instance. Though Florio's translation and hard word dictionaries were different types of texts designed to circulate in different classes, both implied that women's use was a distinct subset of language. In these texts, the notion of a 'women's language' had a figurative rather than factual value irrespective of whether they idealised women as the repositories of the pure and the graceful, or contained them within a peripheral class-category that was far from the mainstream standard of correctness.

Women were important readers of early English dictionaries. The works of Cawdrey, Bullokar, Cockeram discussed above were directed in part to women, as was much of Florio's oeuvre. Thomas Blount's *Glossographia* (1656) was the last of the early English dictionaries to mention women as a separate category. When Edward Phillips' *New World of English Words* was published in 1658, no women were included among its dedicatees or addressees. Further, though Cawdrey and Bullokar had expressly dedicated their works to women influential at court, by Cockeram's 1623 work, women were mentioned but not singled out. As James Murray summarises:

It is noticeable that all these references to the needs of women disappear from the later editions, and are wanting in later dictionaries after 1660; whether this was owing to the fact that the less-knowing women had now come upsides with the more-knowing men, or that

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

with the Restoration, female education went out of fashion, and women sank back again into elegant illiteracy, I leave to the historian to discover.¹⁴⁵

The façade of instruction too was quickly abandoned as the rhetoric turned to different avenues of persuasion – the specific needs of merchants and gentlemen in later seventeenth-century works, for instance, and the abstractly nationalist claims such as those set out by Johnson’s 1755 dictionary.

Unlike the ladies and gentlewomen that were courted as addressees and patrons in the early English dictionaries, Fallon did not seek to teach Indian women the best form of the language. Nor was there a meaningful contradistinction drawn between various classes of women. What the two discourses shared was the manner in which the ‘register of gender’, to use Fleming’s phrase, was constructed as a significant and separate linguistic presence only to be subsumed within a more general reformist programme.¹⁴⁶ For Fallon, the world of Indian women revealed the linguistic richness and creativity of the folk world as well as the suppressions and depravity to which liberal education could be a tempering antidote. This rhetoric re-enacted, in the specific culture of colonial lexicography, what early English dictionaries did with the register of women in the structure of their own rhetoric. As the dictionary discourse revealed more clearly its legislative and prescriptive remit, the special status of women was absorbed to foreground other concerns. Encouraging Englishmen to engage more deeply with the ‘vitiating’ specimens of Indian languages, he wrote:

For the rest, whom can these specimens harm? ... Not Englishmen, with their maturer intellects and higher moral and religious education—men who have read the classical literature of the Greeks and Romans, and their own standard English literature—Fielding and Smollett, Pope, Shakespeare, Byron—to say nothing of another class of literature which is always accessible (p. viii).

¹⁴⁵ James Murray, *The Evolution of English Lexicography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900), p. 32, cited by Fleming p. 312.

¹⁴⁶Fleming, p. 313.

Englishmen were reassured that they were immune from being morally tainted given their social, moral, and intellectual distance from such mores.

If the early English dictionaries and proposals recorded encounters of a penurious English with foreign lexical riches, they also were home to an anxiety that these encounters could result in a loss or transformation of qualities they held to be essential to English linguistic character. While they were different in type and function, the nineteenth-century dictionaries addressing the needs of a category of British colonists in India shared similar anxieties. The qualified cosmopolitanism of early modern dictionaries needed to coin words in an English fashion and make of them common currency; lexicons of British Indian technical jargon tended to maintain distance by isolating the hybrid usage to specific roles; treating Anglo-Indian colloquialisms as a category of English words helped mitigate the dilemmas of belonging to a hyphenated identity for a class of British people in India; and even the most comprehensive bilingual English-Hindustani dictionaries didn't relinquish the distrust of native mores and maintained that the character of the English language -- and of its speakers -- itself was insulated from contamination.

The classes deemed marginal in these dictionary discourses had different roles. Unlike their manifestation in early English dictionaries, the unskilled and women in colonial dictionaries were not meant to be taught the best form of the language. When mentioned, they were a vernacular source to be tapped to facilitate a better cultural understanding of the world the dictionaries were documenting for the functional aid of the British. Yet their registers had a similar structural fate in that their ostensibly central presence was sidelined or manipulated by the lexicographers' rhetoric to feed more expedient concerns. This was so in the case of the disappearing category of unskilled and women in English hard word dictionaries, for Hadley's inexpressive user of the corrupt military jargon, for the silent populace of Hindustan in Gilchrist's works, and for the illiterate masses and women in Fallon's dictionaries of national speech. This chapter has illustrated patterns of rhetoric through

which the featured lexicographers strove to enrich, comprehend, and protect context-specific notions of linguistic character in the face of inter- and intracultural lexical traffic.

The next chapter turns to the strategic uses of cultural equivalence when the memorialisation of literary character in history is at stake.

CHAPTER 4

**A ‘Renaissance’ for Hindi and Literary History:
Uses of English early modernity in George Grierson’s *Modern
Vernacular Literature of Hindustan***

And who in time knowes whither we may vent
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores
This gaine of our best glorie shal be sent,
T’enrich vnknowing Nations with our stores?

— Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus: Containing a generall defence of learning*, 1599¹

Apologies for dealing with the Neo-Indian vernaculars are not now so necessary as they
would have been twenty years ago.

— George Abraham Grierson, *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan*, 1889²

Samuel Daniel’s aspiration for an English intellectual legacy involved a far-reaching distribution of English literary wealth to strange, unknowing shores. Whatever circumspection there might have been in this fledgling desire had been entirely mitigated three centuries later in British India; not only had the ‘treasure’ of English reached distant shores, it was proffered as a model and comparandum to standardising native tongues. This chapter attends to ways in which British civil servant George Abraham Grierson’s *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (1889) adapted an early modern English literary legacy to fashion a narrative for nineteenth-century Hindi vernacular modernity. In this story, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England and India were projected as coeval golden ages: Elizabethan and Mughal courts were progressive literary patrons; Indian poets of the time were compared to Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton, and catalogued into a canon. Further, the technologies, institutions, and patronage brought in by the British were said to have brought about a ‘Renaissance’ in the nineteenth-century.

¹ Samuel Daniel, *The poetical works of Mr. Samuel Daniel, author of the English history: to which is prefix’d, Memoirs of his life and writings*, 2 vols (London: Printed for R. Gosling, 1718), II (1718), p. 393.

² George Abraham Grierson, *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1889), p. x. Henceforth *MVLH*. Further references to this edition of *MVLH* are given after quotations in the text.

Grierson's own work sought to retrieve a meticulously-researched heritage for the modern Hindi 'invented' in this colonial Renaissance. I hope to show that these rhetorical uses of early modernity -- as an epoch, and through the trope of 'renaissance' -- enabled the colonial supervision and design of Hindi literary heritage, contained the many 'vernaculars of Hindustan' within one teleological narrative, and offered a tradition and horizon to a vernacular that would subsequently acquire nationalist ambitions. In selecting poetic touchstones based on evaluations that could be mapped on to Western aesthetic ideals -- the most notable of which was the sixteenth-century Brajbhasha and Avadhi poet Tulsidas, dubbed the 'Indian Shakespeare' -- a discourse of Hindi poetry was organised around the politically-expedient projection of British as reformers for a literary culture under decline prior to their dominion. Fashioning the British as the catalysts of an 'Indian Renaissance', Grierson appears to have fulfilled Daniel's yearning.

Before attending specifically to Grierson's uses of the English past in context, it is worth noting that his work recruited a rather idealised understanding of it, used only to the extent that the tropes of the 'golden age' and 'renascence' assisted a narrative of decline and revival. It did not reflect the ideological diversity, chaos, and budding cosmopolitanism of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English preoccupations with their language. However, interesting symmetries are discernible in the anxieties of two languages being groomed for 'modernisation', and being made to seek a suitable heritage, poetic canon and literary character.

Strategic cosmopolitanism and the invention of English literary traditions

Language reform in the early years of print in England was preoccupied above all with eloquence. As noted in the previous chapters, the first monolingual English grammar did not achieve nearly the same popularity as Latin grammars; the first dictionaries did not appear until the early seventeenth century even as treatises on rhetoric were ubiquitous

since the last quarter of the fifteenth century.³ The rhetoric of spelling reformers all too often hinged on the argument that English had to be rendered systematic in preparation for literary sophistication on a par with other languages.⁴ English ‘hard-word’ lexicographers, as we saw in Chapter 3, offered their services to a class of people who might aspire to sound eloquent, erudite, and international. The ‘rudeness’ of English rhymes, especially in contrast with Greek and Latin quantitative verse and the sophistication of Continental literary cultures, was an endemic concern.

The first printed treatise to deal specifically with English poetry, and arguably its first ‘literary history’, William Webbe’s *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586) presented a catalogue of Latin authors as a canon for imitation alongside one of English authors from John Gower to Edmund Spenser. Webbe’s arguments for the creation of a coherent national poetic canon drew upon the premise of Horace’s *Ars Poetica*. Viewing rhyme as obsolete and medieval, he prescribed the use of Latin prosody for English verse.⁵ By the late sixteenth century, English poets were being praised as the widely-acknowledged legislators of the linguistic world, whose acts of beautification had rescued English from eternal barbarism.⁶ The need to have ‘a kingdom of one’s own language’ seemed urgent, and necessitated a Literature that could establish its autonomy in an international arena of models, rivals, and variants. Indeed, as Pascale Casanova has argued, the agonism inherent in the very conception of ‘literary wealth’ emerged in early modern Europe, when national

³ Jones, *The Triumph of the English Language*, p. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-65.

⁵ William Webbe, *William Webbe, Discourse of English Poetrie (1586)*, ed. by Sonia Hernández-Santano, *Critical Texts*, 47 (Cambridge: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2016), pp. 2-9.

⁶ Puttenham in 1589 lauded Sidney and Spenser for having so beautified the English tongue ‘as at this day it will be found our nation is nothing inferior to the French or Italian’, Thomas Nashe claimed in 1592 that poets of our time ‘haued cleansed our language from barbarism, and made the vulgar sort, here in London[...]to aspire to a richer puritie of speach than is communicated with the Comminality of any Nation vnder heauen’, and Francis Meres in 1598 spoke highly of the eloquence of English poets in comparison with Greek and Latin poets; Puttenham, p. 73; *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. by Alexander B. Grosart, 4 vols (London and Aylesbury: Hasell, Watson, and Viney, 1883-84), II (1883), p. 61; Francis Meres, ‘A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets with Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets’, in *Ancient Critical Essays Upon English Poets and Poesy*, ed. by Joseph Haslewood, 4 vols (London: Robert Triphook, 1811-15), II (1815), pp. 147-58.

literatures were founded ‘in complex relations to other nations and other languages’.⁷

English literary selfhood engaged with several ‘others’ -- rival vernacular cultures, regional- and professional- dialects, and classical models -- in a myriad of ways. An ever-increasing ‘international traffic’ was on display not just in dictionaries, but in the literary discourse of early modern English drama (its language, generic conventions, themes, characters), and in the theatrical milieu of cosmopolitan London.⁸ The ‘English’ spoken on the Elizabethan stage emerged in dialogue with other dialects and foreign languages. What could be ‘proper’ English was extended towards ‘what Bakhtin was to call “heteroglossia” and what Renaissance critics called “macaronic” language’.⁹ This macaronic multilingualism of the English stage -- commonly used to locate action, to heighten the comedic affect based on xenophobic stereotypes, or to ascribe accent or register as a mark of a character’s class/profession -- reflected the complex ambivalent attitudes to foreignness prevalent in early modern England. An influx of foreignness was seen either as a creative enrichment or an unfortunate ‘bastardisation endangering cultural identity’.¹⁰ If French was the language of political rivals, it was also that of the Protestant Huguenot refugees in London, and was kindred to English through its Anglo-Norman lineage.¹¹ If Latin was the language of rhetoric or science, and the broad intellectual lingua franca across Europe, it was also the language of ‘formality, deceit, and continental Papism’.¹² Regional (non-London or Southeastern) dialects could sound provincial, rude, and simple, but also represented directness, plain-speaking, and good-natured popularity.

⁷ According to Casanova, the publication of Joachim du Bellay’s *La deffence et Illustration de la langue françoise* (The Defense and Illustration of the French Language, 1549) was the ‘critical moment in the early accumulation of literary wealth’, as it ‘marked the first time that a national literature had been founded in a complex relation to another nation and, through it, another language, one that moreover was dominant and apparently indomitable, namely Latin [...]’; Pascale Casanova, ‘The Invention of Literature’, in *The World Republic of Letters*, trans. by M. B. DeBevoise (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 44-81 (p. 46).

⁸ Pfister, ‘Globalisation in the Globe’, pp. 127-42.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

¹¹ Dirk Delabastita and Ton Hoenselaars, “‘If but as well I other accents borrow that can my speech diffuse’”: Multilingual perspectives on English Renaissance drama’, in *Multilingualism in the drama of Shakespeare and his contemporaries*, ed. by Delabastita and Hoenselaars, special issue of *English Text Construction* 6.1 (2013), 1-16 (p. 8).

¹² *Ibid.*

If drama staged the otherness in early modern English selfhood, and was enriched by the dialogic play of selfhood *and* otherness, the discourse of poetry too negotiated cosmopolitan currents in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English. The debate between rhyme and quantitative verse was an important sign of the anxiety to individuate, and precipitated, as Carlo Ginzburg has argued, a natively English modernity at the turn of the sixteenth century.¹³ Advocating as a desirable literary characteristic what Ascham had derisively called ‘beggarly rhyming’ (sig. 60^r) was an act of asserting a unique selfhood *as* otherness, and could represent an English identity as that of an island-nation separate from, yet connected to the Continent. A reinstatement of the public dignity of rhyme was not a radical assertion of newness brought about by rejecting the past outright or categorically dismissing the influence of ‘others’. Lurking amid the most fervid assertions of autonomy was a strategic cosmopolitanism; ‘outside’ influences, ‘other’ cultures were recruited in making arguments *about* autonomy. When George Puttenham in 1589 made a case for ‘natural poeisie’ by insisting that poetry should retain some sign of ‘nature’ after being ‘amended by Art’, he cited the testimony of ‘marchants and travellers’ who could attest to the presence of ‘vulgar poeisie’ beyond the shores. ‘The American, the Perusine and the very Canniball’, he wrote, ‘do sing and also say their highest and holiest matters in certain riming versicles and not in prose, which proves also that our maner of vulgar Poiesie is more ancient than the artificiall of the Greeks and Latines...’¹⁴ Here was an implicit idea that the very existence of primitive rhyme made English resonate with other ‘savage and strange’ cultures and nations, a projected cultural solidarity with whom could imply aboriginal antiquity for English itself. As an argument against an indiscriminate adoption of quantitative metres, as Ginzburg points out, Puttenham’s comments also undermined commonly held assumptions about the hierarchical primacy of the classical tradition. Comparative evaluations of English poetry, they implied, could reach out beyond Greco-

¹³ Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Selfhood as Otherness: Constructing English Identity in the Elizabethan Age’, in *No Island Is an Island: Four Glances at English Literature in a World Perspective* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), pp. 25-42.

¹⁴ Puttenham, p. 26.

Latinity enabling a cosmopolitan perspective on English literary merit.¹⁵

Against Puttenham's more conciliatory view was Daniel's strident defence of rhyme against quantitative verse. Like Puttenham, Daniel trawled further ashore for an analogy: 'Will not experience confute us, if wee shoulde say the state of China, which never heard of Anapestiques, Trochies, and Tribraques, were grosse, barbarous, und vnciuile?'.¹⁶ As a rebuttal to Thomas Campion's charge in *Observations in the Art of English Poetrie* (1602) against the 'Vulgar and unarteficiall custome of ryming',¹⁷ Daniel's *A Defence of Ryme* (1603) overturned a hierarchy between nature and artifice, custom and rule: 'Custome that is before all Law, Nature that is above all Arte'.¹⁸ For Daniel, the 'natural' and the 'customary' were not in opposition. Campion's and Daniel's positions both shared the desire to be continuous with that which was customary; in contention was the *source* of custom. Daniel pitted other lineages against 'classical' Greco-Latinity: 'All our understandings are not to be built by the square of Greece and Italy', he wrote, 'The *Gothes, Vandals, and Longobards*, whose coming down like an inundation overwhelmed, as they day, all the glory of learning in *Europe*, have yet left us their law and customes, as the originalls of most of the prouinciall constitutions of Christendome'.¹⁹ Choosing between rhyme or quantitative verse, then, involved choosing apposite 'others' to borrow from or emulate. If Campion described quantitative verse as the old custom and rhyme as current fashion,²⁰ Daniel

¹⁵ Ginzburg suggests that the inversion of classical hierarchy implied in French historian Francois Baduin's reflections about the oral transmission of the past may have influenced contemporary defenses of English poetry. Baduin's argument, he shows, was transformed in Puttenham's treatise into a more narrowly pointed attack on Greek and Latin verse. Similarly, Baduin's treatise on law and the discourse of history published in 1561 was one of the possible sources for Philip Sidney's defense of rhyme in his 1583 *Apology for Poetry*. For Ginzburg, Baduin is noteworthy in having taken a broad comparative approach and a decidedly non-Eurocentric attitude to an understanding of history by stating, among other things, that American Indian songs were 'not less noble' examples than ancient Roman *carmina*. In ascribing value to the songs of the so-called barbarians, enemies and aliens in understanding national history, Baduin's approach enabled a cosmopolitan perspective on history itself; Ginzburg, pp. 30-34.

¹⁶ Samuel Daniel, *Poems and A Defence of Ryme*, ed. by Arthur Colby Sprague (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), p. 140.

¹⁷ Edmund Campion, *Observations in the Art of English Poetrie* (1602), repr. in *Campion's Works*, ed. by Percival Vivian (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), pp. 31-56 (p. 31).

¹⁸ Daniel, *A Defence of Ryme*, p. 131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

²⁰ 'Old customes, if they be better, why should they not be recald, as the yet flourishing custome of numerous poesy vsed among the Romanes and Grecians?... [T]he facilitie and popularitie of Rime creates as many Poets as a hot sommer flies', in Campion, p. 36.

inverted the equation to posit rhyme as older and the more pervasively authentic.²¹

As Richard Helgerson notes, the historical ‘accuracy’ of either of these positions was doubtful given that the rhymed verse forms summoned as evidence in Daniel’s defense were themselves French and Italian borrowings. The rhetoric of historicising notwithstanding, the question of accuracy itself was moot. ‘To identify immemorial custom with the sonnet’, Helgerson writes, ‘was to invent history’.²² The question of authentic custom was translated in terms of a confrontation between the Goth and the Greek; in asserting continuity with the Gothic, Daniel rendered the Renaissance medieval.²³ In 1603, the year also James I’s accession, the matter of poetic character too saw a transfer of power, in which rhyme acquired the upper hand.²⁴ French and Italian poetic forms ‘came to stand in for the customary and the unmade, for the purely English’.²⁵ This ‘early nationalist moment’ also legitimised itself by inventing a tradition of a Gothic past ‘to which some of its most recent cultural innovations might be attributed’.²⁶

Inventing a tradition for Hindustan, echoing English early modernity

In a related vein, but in wholly different contexts, invention of history was also at stake in Grierson’s catalogue of modern vernacular literatures of Hindustan. Reclaiming in a patriotic spirit a national literature for a fledgling language was not the apparent motive for

²¹ ‘But yet now, vpon the great discouery of these new measures, threatning to ouerthrow the whole state of Ryme in this kingdom, I must either stand out to defend, or else be forced to forsake my selfe and giue ouer all’, in Daniel, *A Defence of Ryme*, p. 140.

²² Richard Helgerson, ‘Barbarous Tongues: The Ideology of Poetic Form in Renaissance England’, in *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture*, ed. by Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 273–92 (p. 288).

²³ The Gothic origins of rhyme had been noted by Ascham, who worried about its toxic effects on learning. Rude, beggarly rhyming was ‘[B]rought into Italie by Gothes and Hunnes, when all good verses, and all good learning to, were destroyed by them; and after caryed into France and Germanie, and at last receyved into Englande by men of excellent wit indeede, but of small learning, and lesse judgement in that behalfe’ (sig.60^r). William Webbe followed Ascham in deriding this ‘this tinkerly verse which we call rhyme’, which was brought to England by Huns, ‘Gothians, and other barbarous nations who, with the decay of all good learning, brought it into Italy. From thence it came into France, and so to Germany, at last conveyed into England by men indeed of great wisdom and learning, but not considerate nor circumspect in that behalf (Webbe, p. 78)’.

²⁴ Helgerson, ‘Barbarous Tongues’, p. 289.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Grierson's work. Like that of other orientalist connoisseurs of Indian literatures, colonial-era European literary anthologists, and technocratic dilettantes aiding empirical knowledge-gathering about the subcontinent, Grierson's position was that of an outsider looking at, and being fascinated by, an already vibrant and complex literary culture. To produce knowledge about Indian literature was to render it coherent to outsiders in familiar terms. It served the requirements of colonial governance, but also became an occasion for complex self-fashioning.

What presented itself as a descriptive survey of regional literary output was, as we shall see, a highly evaluative document produced by a researcher committed to discovering literary touchstones for a language being nurtured into its own modernity by ministering British rulers. A retroactive literary history for Hindi was invented in the *MVLH*, in which the vicissitudes of literary output were linked to political transfers of power. Despite its colonial context, this can be read as a manifest 'early nationalist moment' insofar as it legitimised a continuous lineage for Hindi literature, in which sixteenth-century vernacular poets were the key legislators of language, sources of custom, and the repository of desirable literary character. Grierson's account implicated a select set of others in a complex relation to this lineage: the Mughal regime and its inconsistent patronage of vernaculars, British and their efficient benevolence, non-courtly spaces of popular religion, other regional vernaculars, the classical Sanskrit, and the 'exotic' Urdu. To present poets as touchstones, Grierson's arguments sought cosmopolitan alliances with other cognate dialects across India and with European poets. Tulsidas as the 'Indian Shakespeare', for instance, was lauded as a poet worthy of global appeal. His credentials as a noble nature poet foregrounded in this account, Tulsidas could also partake in a largely-manufactured contention between 'natural' and 'mannered' poetic styles.

In what follows, I attend to Grierson's comparative design and uses of early modernity, with an eye on the implicit echoes that undergird narratives of Hindi literary

character/history. After contextualising the *MVLH* as a product of its times and as a complement to Grierson's monumental linguistic survey, I unpack the contours of two comparative gestures: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century coevality between England and India, and the nineteenth-century 'renaissance'. Focusing on Grierson's treatment of Tulsidas, I note the cross-section of presuppositions that inform his construction as the Indian Shakespeare. I conclude with a turn to the fate of Grierson's teleology for Hindi literary character in the first Hindi nationalist discourses of modern poetry. While Hindi literary historiography inherited the logic of and biases in Grierson's scheme, experiments in the language of poetry challenged its assumptions despite remaining broadly continuous with it and declared Hindi poetry's modernity through a strategic cosmopolitanism of their own.

Modern vernaculars of Grierson's Hindustan, contexts for literary history

In 1886, Grierson made two presentations at the International Congress of Orientalists at Vienna. The enthusiastic reception of one of these, a paper on medieval vernacular literature of Hindustan that extensively featured Tulsidas, inspired him to compile a survey for the 'entire vernacular literature of Northern India' (p. vii). At the 'Aryan section' of the same conference, he joined another British official in proposing a systematic survey of the languages of India commensurate with the surveys of North American Indian languages being conducted by the government of the United States. Grierson presented his research on the 'Bihari' language, at whose birth he had 'attended' during his tenure as a revenue collector in the Bihar region and the complexities of whose lifeworld had spurred his interest in other Indian languages. He was dismissive of Urdu (the language of the 'Mussalman pedants') and 'Pundit-ridden' Hindi, calling them both 'mere inventions of the closet'.²⁷

²⁷ David Lelyveld, 'The Fate of Hindustani: Colonial Knowledge and the Project of a National Language', in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament*, ed. by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 189-214 (p. 197).

These remarks offer insights into Grierson's intended self-fashioning in the *MVLH*. His historiographical interest in the vernaculars was animated by his dissatisfaction with the limited stock of officially-recognised languages, and a concurrent fascination with 'undiscovered' Indian languages and literatures. The 'vernacular' he sought to embrace was outside the realm of the authoritative (the province of religious pedants or governments), or the entirely provisional (the functional patois of soldiers' camps and marketplaces). Grierson's persuasions for the *MVLH* were directed at expanding the available repertoire of the vernaculars by more 'authentic' sources of literature.

British administrators' engagement with Indian languages had transformed between the beginning and close of the nineteenth century. Earlier grammars and dictionaries such as those of John Gilchrist had done much to elevate the official status of vernacular languages. By 1837, local vernaculars had replaced Persian at lower levels of judicial and revenue administration.²⁸ However, despite varied ideological positions, an education policy of public instruction in English had been in place since 1830. Though English had remained the ultimate authority, official terminologies were standardised into vernaculars for translation into English. Hindustani, the officially recognised vernacular across North India, was here synonymous with Urdu. Its Perso-Arabic script and vocabulary made it a convenient replacement for Persian.²⁹ By 1854, the Fort William College had been dissolved and replaced by a Board of Examiners who oversaw the now-competitive civil service examinations.³⁰ The Rebellion of 1857 and the subsequent transfer of governance directly to the British crown in 1858 had had game-changing repercussions for official attitudes to language. In the wake of the violent uprising, many felt that the relative ignorance of colloquial languages on the part of the British had been responsible for

²⁸ There were local variations in the policy of replacement across various provinces, resulting in the variance in the histories of 'modern' Bengali, Marathi or Tamil, and in the script systems across various Northern provinces. See Alok Rai, *Hindi Nationalism* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2000), pp. 27-29.

²⁹ Lelyveld, pp. 196-97.

³⁰ The Fort William College, established by Governor General Wellesley in 1801 without explicit sanction from the Court of Directors of the East India Company, had earned the displeasure of the directors from its very beginnings. In 1806, another training college was established in Haileybury, England. However, the Fort William College continued to be a centre of language learning; civilians who graduated from Haileybury had the option of taking further training in languages at Fort William until it was formally dissolved in 1854.

consolidating mutual mistrust between the natives and the colonisers. Rounds of consultations on language requirements between the Court of Directors of the East India Company and military departments followed.³¹ In July 1857, the Court of Directors recommended to the Government of India's Military Department in Bengal that no officer should be promoted without having passed an examination in Hindustani. Consultations with the Bombay and Madras presidencies resulted in compulsory Hindustani examinations in the three presidencies.³² Further, in 1888, a change of terminology in the rules for examination in the Bengal, and later Bombay presidencies registered a separation of Hindi and Urdu.³³

Grierson's work was a pioneering colonial-era work of literary historiography for Indian vernaculars.³⁴ It drew from Garcin de Tassy's 1839 French work and Shiv Singh Sengar's 1878 work in Hindi.³⁵ These works were more compendious than historiographical, and did not classify poets or trends in a strictly chronological fashion. They also did not describe literary output within an evaluative framework that assigned beginnings, high-points, and states of decay. Equivalent comprehensive surveys in pre-colonial Indian languages did not exist given that their literary cultures took shape in discursive paradigms vastly different from modern European ones, were often too syncretic and mixed to align themselves with rigidly-defined categories such as 'Hindi' or 'Hindustani', and often remained too comfortably ensconced within localised forms and features to seek wider categorisation.³⁶ Medieval and ancient Sanskrit taxonomies, for instance, made distinctions between revealed or remembered traditions within poetic, historical, scientific, mythological,

³¹ Safadi, p. 78.

³² Ibid., p. 22.

³³ Ibid., p. 27.

³⁴ On the early period of Hindi literary historiography, see Francesca Orsini, 'The Uses of History', in *The Hindi Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002) pp. 175-242; Allison Busch, 'Hindi Literary Beginnings', in *South Asian Texts in History: Critical Engagements with Sheldon Pollock*, ed. by Whitney Cox, Yigal Bronner, and Lawrence McCrea (Ann Arbor: Association for Asian Studies, 2011), pp. 203-25.

³⁵ Garcin de Tassy, *Histoire de la Littérature Hindouie et Hindoustanie*, 3 vols, 2nd edn. (Paris: Adolphe Labitte, 1870-71); Shiv Singh Sengar, *Sinsingh Saroj* (1878), repr. and ed. by Trilok Narayan Dikshit (Lucknow: Tejkumar Book Depot, 1966).

³⁶ Allison Busch, 'The Courtly Vernacular: The Transformation of Brajbhasha Literary Culture (1590-1690)' (doctoral thesis, University of Chicago, 2003), pp. 37-41.

narrative, and dramatic typologies which were based on intricate criteria of difference.

Orientalist studies of Indian literature tended overwhelmingly to focus on Sanskrit, Pali, or Prakrit literary cultures.

This focus on the ancient and the classical could be attributed to the disciplinary dictates of philology in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which, as Dharwadker explains, was conceived of as a comprehensive historical discipline seeking to trace the origins of a people's past through the textual discipline of carefully reading texts offering access to that past.³⁷ Since philology increasingly identified itself as classical philology and included in its investigative ambit language, thought, institutions, civilization and documents, Sanskrit proved a most appealing subject to study. The world of Sanskrit was idealised as a source of knowledge not just of the Orient, but of all civilisations. Consequently, any study of the literatures of India almost exclusively focused on Sanskrit or Sanskrit-adjacent ancient discursive cultures such as the Sanskrit- and Pali-based Tibetan Buddhist ones.

Further following the lead of Jones' use of the term 'literature' for any extant text (in Sanskrit) from a given region (Asia), the orientalist category of literature itself came to be defined rather broadly. This 'latitude of reference' caused literature to include 'ritual, philosophical, religious, social-theoretical, didactic, scientific, and poetic texts'.³⁸ As is evident from the titles of the most well-regarded Indological literary histories of the time, this conception of literature was shared by British and Continental orientalist scholars between the late eighteenth and early twentieth centuries. Albrecht Weber's *The History of Indian Literature* (1852), Friedrich Max Müller's *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859), Moritz Winternitz's *A History of Indian Literature* (1907), Robert W. Frazer's *A Literary History of India* (1898) and Herbert H. Gowen's *A History of Indian Literature: From Vedic Times to the Present Day* (1931) all overwhelmingly dealt with Sanskrit literature, and had little to say about contemporary vernaculars. This notion of literature was all too catholic and

³⁷ Dharwadker, pp. 175-76.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

remarkably blinkered at the same time. Vernaculars did enter scholarly scrutiny given the British colonial state's administrative imperatives, which grew increasingly complicated through the nineteenth century. For various reasons enumerated by Dharwadkar, the orientalist project had 'reached a moment of collective exhaustion'; India was less and less a 'theoretical puzzle' or key to universal answers, and increasingly a 'practical problem'.³⁹

The Fort William College's language laboratory had done much to supply practical solutions to the language problem. Since its early years, the College aimed to position itself as a centre for patronage of Indian literature, seeking to become, in Gilchrist's words, 'an asylum for Oriental literature'.⁴⁰ The output of the early years -- anecdotes, dialogues, fables, tales and poems in translations supervised by Gilchrist -- was still heavily orientated towards improving conversational function and adding depth to its use as the language of command. The College patronised individual projects in a bid to improve the variety of printed works for pedagogy. In 1803, eight native authors were rewarded for their Urdu publications, while the Hindustani and Persian departments routinely patronised poets who did not officially work at the college.⁴¹ The institution also liaised between influential presses, academic societies and schools such as the Serampore Mission Press, Asiatic Society, Calcutta Madrasa, and the School Book Society.⁴²

Anthologies of Indian literatures were also produced to train students at the College. The first among these was the two-volume *Hindee and Hindoostanee Selections* by William Price, published in Calcutta in 1827.⁴³ The first volume was a miscellany of texts, while the second consisted entirely of the *Prem Sagar*, a modern re-telling of a mythic cycle of legends about the Hindu god Krishna, a narrative also contained in Vishnu Purana -- a Hindu

³⁹ Ibid., p. 170.

⁴⁰ Sisir K. Das, *Sahibs and Munshis: An Account of the College of Fort William* (Calcutta: Orion Publications, 1978), p. 115.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 116.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia, introduction to *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2004), p. 3.

scripture.⁴⁴ The seminal *Prem Sagar* (The Ocean of Love) was commissioned by the Fort William College and written by Lallu Lal Ji between 1803 and 1810. Another notable anthology, Babu Siva Prasad's *Hindi Selections* (1867), focused solely on Hindi works and even included a few contemporary works that had been printed and circulated.⁴⁵ An anthology called *Shiv Singh Saroj* (1878) -- authored by Shiv Singh Sengar, one of Grierson's acknowledged sources -- had attempted to assign dates to poets and their works. Unlike Grierson however, Sengar deemed that *bhasha kavya* (vernacular poetry) was derived from Sanskrit, and whose evolution followed a trajectory down from heroic to devotional genres and to contemporary variations on older themes.⁴⁶ Grierson attended to the problem of periodisation and classified the literary output of a regionally-limited language within a teleology that identified a period of decay just prior to the emergence of British dominion. Yet even a cursory survey of vernacular literatures of India had to contend with the vexing question: which vernacular?

It is not strictly accurate to state that the distinctions between 'Hindi', 'Urdu', 'Hindustani' were manufactured entirely by the British and were the consequence of colonialism. Distinctions (or distinct associations) operated in syncretic worlds, were not always consequential, and more relevant in some regions than in others.⁴⁷ Grierson was scrupulous in acknowledging the breadth of dialects that constituted vernacular literary culture, and was well placed to do so because his magnum opus was the vast linguistic survey of India in 11 volumes compiled between 1903 and 1928. The survey was lauded as a grand 'Imperial Museum' showcasing India's diverse linguistic 'botany'.⁴⁸ The literary history was designed to be a selective bouquet than a comprehensively discursive taxonomy. Grierson's

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷As Aishwarj Kumar has argued, antagonism between Hindi and Urdu was far less consequential in the West Indian state of Bihar owing largely to the cosmopolitan character of the capital city of Patna, which had been a centre of trade in the Mughal empire and continued to have immense commercial appeal. As the district collector of Bihar, Grierson had been sympathetic and supportive of its linguistic separateness from North Western 'Hindi' variants and the lively syncretism of its literary culture; Aishwarj Kumar, 'A Marginalized Voice in the History of "Hindi"', *Modern Asian Studies* 47.5 (2013), 1706–46 (p. 1712).

⁴⁸ F. W. Thomas and R. L. Turner, *George Abraham Grierson 1851–1941* (London: Humphrey Milford Amen House, 1941), p. 18.

delimiting pronouncements insisted that this was a *regional* literary history. Qualifying regional-specificity of the language-object made it possible to exclude various idiolectal variations and dialects from the set of ‘Hindi’. In Grierson’s account, Hindi had a chequered history and definite teleology. It consisted of a selection of dialects from the North-Western provinces, from which a standard was constructed in the early nineteenth century. The ‘Hindustan’ of Grierson’s title was not a national descriptor but a reference to a specific region of the subcontinent. North Indian literary dialects were described on the basis of their use in the regionally-specific contexts (courtly or popular-religious). The linguistic survey too would later classify Hindustani as one among the western Hindi subgroup of dialects in the Indo-Aryan language family, and list its career as a European invention, a ‘vernacular’, a ‘literary language’, and a ‘lingua franca’.

As a complement to the survey, the literary history participated in projects of what David Ludden has called the ‘orientalist empiricism’ of the British Empire.⁴⁹ Ludden writes:

Colonial knowledge generated authoritative “facts” that constituted traditional India within a conceptual template that would be progressively theorized within modern world history. These factualized representations of India became official wisdom. They were conventionalised and then fixed as factual basis for inference and theory.⁵⁰

Like the linguistic survey, Grierson’s literary history contained an urge to ‘factualise’ a diverse literary output within one broadly characteristic genre. Also like the linguistic survey, however, it retained an awareness of an irreducible heterogeneity of vernaculars and displayed authorly pride and pleasure at having recognised a vast and various literary reserve. The literary history’s participation in the project of colonial knowledge appears, then, to be not entirely proscriptive, and displayed an impulse to find cosmopolitan

⁴⁹ David Ludden, ‘Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge’, in *Orientalism and the postcolonial predicament*, ed. by Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), pp. 250-78.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

resonance in regional literature.

Literary Empiricism, Empirical Literature

It is possible to see Grierson's potentially incompatible motivations as emanating from what Majeed has characterised as a commitment to epistemological complexity.⁵¹ As the following definition from the *Linguistic Survey* shows, Grierson was certainly alive to the discriminations in the language called Hindustani, including its literary culture:

Literary Hindostani proper, employed by both Musalmans and Hindus for literary purposes and as *lingua franca*; Urdu, employed chiefly by Musalmans and by Hindus who have adopted the Musalman system of education, and a modern development, called Hindi, employed only by Hindus who have been educated in a Hindi system. Urdu, itself, has two varieties, the standard literary form of Delhi and Lucknow, and the Dakhini, spoken, and used as a literary medium, by Musalmans of Southern India.⁵²

Majeed analyses Grierson's style in the *Linguistic Survey* as undertaking what he calls, citing Sheila Hones, a 'literary geography'.⁵³ Descriptions of regions and languages encountered in Grierson's linguistic survey were immersive, evocative of travelogues, and often tinged with a nostalgia befitting a traveler's reminiscence of a beloved tour. As such, the work marked a departure from the abstracting motives of colonial cartography and geography.⁵⁴ Further identifying a trend in the linguistic survey, in which local immersion is juxtaposed with global extrapolation of Indian vernaculars alongside European language-families, Majeed posits that Grierson subscribes to a uniquely Indocentric globalised vision. This cosmopolitan Indocentrism rests, he argues, on an acknowledgement of the irreducibility of the linguistic diversity in the colony. In its poetic descriptions of the vivid

⁵¹ Javed Majeed, "'A State of Affairs which is Essentially Indefinite': The Linguistic Survey of India (1894–1927)", *African Studies* 74.2 (2015), pp. 221–34.

⁵² *Linguistic Survey of India*, p. 1

⁵³ Sheila Hones, 'Text as it Happens: Literary Geography', *Geography Compass* 2.5 (2008), 1301–17, cited by Majeed, "'A State of Affairs'", p. 227.

⁵⁴ Majeed, "'A State of Affairs'", pp. 227–28.

array of dialects and landscapes, the survey identifies with the aesthetic of the ‘colonial sublime’, a term Sara Suleri uses with reference to Edmund Burke’s figuration of India as an unfathomable object, impossible to represent in the English language.⁵⁵ These features were anomalous in the otherwise totalising tendency of the imperial regime. As such, Majeed suggests, Grierson came to represent a whole set of colonial writings that did not fit the terms of colonialist or nationalist discourse. Embracing nuance, ambiguity and complexity allowed such writings to evade both the flattening injunctions of colonial knowledge-gathering as well as the simplifying dictates of linguistic nationalism.

That Grierson was attuned to nuance is also suggested by his record of his experiences in the state of Bihar. As Aishwarj Kumar’s analysis of Grierson’s remarks about the languages in Bihar shows, his was a rare dissenting colonial voice favouring Hindi’s heterogeneity, and went against the grain of the general trend to flatten regional variation in nineteenth-century colonialist and nationalist discourse about vernacular languages.⁵⁶ The following statement from 1883 arguing for the official use of the local languages of Bihar illustrates Grierson’s perceptive grasp of the regional variance of Indian vernaculars:

The native language of every Bihari (excepting those born and bred in the large towns) is as different from Hindi, as French is from Italian; ...I think that a perusal of the documents herewith presented will appear to be a sufficient answer to those who oppose the substitution of one of the Bihar languages for Hindi as a Court-language, on the ground that the latter is already in possession, and should not be disturbed except for very strong reasons. Unless the ungrammatical jargon of these petitions can be called Hindi or Urdu, Hindi is no more in possession than Norman-French was in possession as the language of England, at a time when the lawyers spoke what they called Norman-French in the law Courts. The matter, no doubt, is different in the North-West Provinces, west of Benaras; for there, Hindi may fairly claim to be the vernacular of the country; but it is not, never

⁵⁵ Sara Suleri, *Rhetoric of English India*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), cited by Majeed, “A State of Affairs”, p. 226.

⁵⁶ Kumar, ‘A Marginalized Voice’, pp. 1745-46.

was, and never can be, the vernacular of Bihar.⁵⁷

This statement contained a recognition that the spaces and functions of a language were interlinked, and a belief that an official language could be most efficient when it resembled the native language.

However, the injunctions of literary historiography seemed to have summoned flatter, simpler pronouncements. Grierson's *MVLH* was relatively simplistic in contrast to the sophistication of his linguistic approach in general. Grierson did embrace the irreducible diversity of literatures produced in the region called 'Hindustan', yet also posited a selective and conclusive chronology. He often appeared inconsistent, never more than when he had recourse to categorical gestures like calling the work a 'history'. Dotting his preface were proleptic caveats stating that his undertaking is neither definitive nor comprehensive. 'I do not', he writes, 'venture to call this book a formal History of Literature' (p. ix). However, everything from his chapterisation scheme and meticulous commitment to cataloguing and cross-checking dates suggested that he did intend to produce a literary history, or at the very least set up a template for one. 'I therefore' he clarified, 'only offer it as a collection of *materials* which will form a foundation upon which others more fortunate than I am, and with more time at their disposal than a Bengal District Collector, may build' (p. xxiii). If the linguistic survey exhibited an empirical mapping that is literary, the *MVLH* based its literary evaluation on empirical knowledge-gathering. The 'literary geography' of the linguistic survey allowed Grierson to fashion himself as a romantic traveller rather than a colonial machinist, a philosopher attuned to complexity rather than an assiduous clerk keen merely on recording. A consistent picture of Grierson's 'epistemological commitment' is, however, elusive in the literary history.

⁵⁷ George Abraham Grierson, 'Preface to the First Edition', in *A Handbook to the Kaithi Character*, 2nd edn (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1899), pp. v–vi, cited by Kumar, 'A Marginalized Voice', p. 1730.

Wells of Hindi Undefined: Recovery of ‘neo-Indian’ vernaculars

That the literary history’s primary allegiance was to the imperial regime was apparent not just in its empirical underpinnings and its desire to master the language of command but also in the rhetorical performance through which it envisaged a specific literary character for Hindustan. In the introduction to the *MVLH*, Grierson underplayed the scope of his work by saying: ‘All that has been attempted in the present note has been to show the most salient points of a not inglorious past in the vernacular literary history of Hindustan’ (p. xxii). As it soon becomes apparent, however, Grierson’s was no mere report. The work evaluated, omitted, and selected past literary touchstones for a language modernised at British hands. Modern Hindi emerged at the culmination of the cycles of cultural progress and decline associated with political regimes holding sway over the subcontinent. Chapters on ‘the Mughal court’, ‘Hindustan under the Company’, and ‘Hindustan under the Queen’ anchored a narrative that was said to begin with a ‘bardic’ period in 700-1300 AD.

The bardic poets of Western India were deemed significant because they embodied ‘the history of Rajputana during the whole of the struggles between India and its Musalman invaders, written by a series of contemporary authors over a period of six centuries’ (pp. xvi-xvii). The introduction to the chapter titled ‘Hindustan under the Company’ exemplified Grierson’s mode of periodisation, in which literary output was linked to political vicissitudes: ‘The years commencing with the downfall of the Maratha power and ending with the Mutiny form another convenient period in dealing with the literary history of Hindustan’ (p. 107). The telling use of the word ‘convenient’ suggests how welcome a historically-definite watershed was to this process of surveying what was perceived as a vast and unclassifiable discourse. Similarly, the chapter on the eighteenth century presented the relative cultural dormancy of the period as a prelude and contrast to the upcoming renaissance of the nineteenth century.

The period was characterised as a time of political turmoil from the decline and fall of the Muslim Mughal Empire and the supremacy and fall of the Hindu Marathas, 'favourable neither to the founding of new religions nor to the cultivation of the arts' (p. 85). Linking literary and religious reform affirmed the golden-age credentials of the so-called 'Augustan' output of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Hindu religious poets, and also signalled one of the abiding moves of the work: to posit wide-ranging socio-cultural reform as a condition for literary merit. That Grierson's approval was grounded in a notion of a homespun Hindi is suggested in the telling adjective for Urdu: 'exotic literary' (p. vii). Both were local, but only one -- Hindi -- was the implied autochthonous language.

That Grierson's aims went beyond the merely archival towards the ideological was also evidenced by his appeal on behalf of what he called the 'neo-Indian vernaculars' (p. x). Shifting the focus away from Sanskrit and Prakrit-centred orientalist scholarship was an important motivation for Grierson. He wrote:

Apologies for dealing with the Neo-Indian vernaculars are not now so necessary as they would have been twenty years ago. At first, oriental scholars devoted themselves to Sanskrit alone, and then, under the guidance of Burnouf, attacked Pali. In later years the classical Prakrits have attracted students, and thus the age of the object of our researches has become more and more modern in its character. I now ask my readers to take again one step over the very short gap which separates the latest Prakrit from the earliest Gaudian literature (p. x).

His selection was then projected as a pioneering canon, mindful not just of the vast blind spots of Western orientalist scholarship but also of the changing currents of contemporary literary culture, in which the modern was being defined as the current. Yet Grierson did not suggest that a radical cultural revolution of modernity was impending. Making a friendly appeal to Sanskrit-scholars, he suggested that the present categories of scholarship be made more elastic:

It is possible, however, that some oriental students may still cling to the old love for Sanskrit, and these I must ask to test the rich ore found in the following pages, which contain the names of several vernacular commentaries on difficult Sanskrit books, and of numerous technical works on such subjects as Grammar, Prosody, Vocabulary, Composition, and the like (p. x).

By being treated as a trove of untapped material deserving academic attention rather than as mere vehicles of song and local flavour, vernaculars were being invited into an expansive philological community.

Grierson's academic designs were clear when he exhorted students of history and antiquarians to attend to vernacular literatures. 'The student of inscriptions', he wrote,

will also find a productive mine in the literature of Hindustan, owing to the custom which vernacular poets had of dating their works and of naming their patrons. Besides this the muse of History, so silent in Sanskrit literature, has been assiduously cultivated by these authors, and we have still extant historical works founded on materials which were written so far back as the ninth century (pp. x-xi).

Vernacular works, and not institutional Sanskrit, were the home to History's muse.

Grierson himself courted the credentials of a historian when he paid particular attention to dates and revisited information in the form of appendices and corrigenda that reflected incoming information about the provenance and circulation of texts from the past.

Grierson appeared as an assiduous facilitator of a governmental machine and as a personal champion of the vernaculars even in the more empirically-minded document of the linguistic survey. The interpenetration of these registers gave, as Majeed has posited, Grierson's writing a uniqueness that was quite distinct from the imperatives of either

colonialist or nationalist writings.⁵⁸ Signs of this autobiographical and subjective temper were to be found in a 'Note on the Languages of India', compiled to form the basis for a chapter on languages in the general report of the Census of India in 1901. Grierson's extensive notes described the Indo-Aryan language family through a narrative of the immigration of the Indo-Aryan people into the subcontinent. These languages were divided into two main groups, Sanskritic and the non-Sanskritic, based on their development linked to migration patterns.⁵⁹ This, he acknowledged, was a provisional nomenclature, used heuristically to distinguish between those that came in from the North, and those like Sanskrit from the South as colonists.⁶⁰ Sanskritic Indo-Aryan languages were seen as the more dominant and belonging to a world of tribal rivalries.⁶¹ This origin-story was unmistakably one of migration, competition, and triumph, in which Sanskrit was seen as a colonising force that had stunted the development of other ur-dialects for modern vernaculars in the region. Grierson wrote:

It must, however be freely admitted that the modern non-Sanskritic Indo-Aryan languages show few traces of special connection with any particular groups of Sanskritic ones. They are no nearer to what we may for shortness call the later languages than they are to the earlier ones. This can be explained by the existence in later periods of Sanskrit which for some thirty centuries has exercised a dominating influence over all the Indo-Aryan vernaculars of India proper.⁶²

The agents of domination were the upper-caste Brahmins, who had codified the vernacular Sanskrit and rendered it classical. Grierson appeared to suggest that Sanskrit's supremacy was historically-contingent and constructed rather than innate. He wrote: 'Parallel with it [the ordinary languages of mutual intercourse], the so-called classical Sanskrit had developed under the influence of the Brahmans from one of these dialects as a secondary

⁵⁸ Majeed, "A State of Affairs", p. 230.

⁵⁹ George Abraham Grierson, *Note on the languages of India. Prepared by George Abraham Grierson* (India: Census Commissioner, Census of India, 1901), p. 64.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-68.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 70.

language, and achieved a position much the same as that of the Latin of the Middle Ages'.⁶³

'This sacred language', he noted elsewhere, 'jealously preserved by the Brahmans in their schools, had all the prestige which religion and learning could give it'.⁶⁴ This characterisation led up to an implicit contrast, also alluded to in Gilchrist's grammars from Chapter Two, between Latin hegemony and the vernacular revolution that occurred in early modern Europe. The revolutionary crescendo built in his summation of the current state of the vernaculars, whose literary registers had tended to emulate Sanskrit, and had imbibed an artificiality which estranged them from the masses. 'The vernacular', Grierson lamented, 'has been split into two sections':

the tongue which is understood [sic] of the people, and the literary dialects, known only through the press, and not intelligible to those who do not know Sanskrit. Literature has thus been divorced from the great mass of the population, and to the literary classes this is a matter of small moment.⁶⁵

An indifferent literary class, and the opinions of British 'settlers' had 'wrongly' characterised the vernacular as 'rude and meagre'.⁶⁶ The British had good reason to be dismissive, given, he noted, 'the absence of scholarship and general neglect of the country during Mughal rule'.⁶⁷ The parallel regime of Sanskrit, to whom the modernising vernaculars had remained loyal, was seen as having cast a 'malignant spell' on modern Hindi.⁶⁸

Grierson's predilection for Hindu literary idioms in his literary history appeared to be at odds with his intention to be inclusively representative of the North Indian literary ethos.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 75.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 80-81.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 83.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 84.

Yet it was not inconsistent in the arc of a narrative describing a literature and civilisation in decline at the cusp of the British era. Grierson's tone was cautious and he did not explicitly side with one religion. Yet his omissions and commissions told a different story. In this account, the Hindu devotional poets of the sixteenth century writing in vernacular dialects were the ones to achieve abiding success. This preferential identification with Hindu/Aryan antiquity was politically expedient given that the Muslim Mughal dynasty was the imperial predecessor to the incoming British Empire. The mapping of a selectively Hindu literary idiom could also be seen as congruent with the comparative spirit of the nineteenth-century Orientalist fascination with the East, typified in William Jones' doctrine of a common Indo-Aryan source which (as Said has argued) served to construct the Semitic as the other and effectively precluded all identification between the West and the Near- and Middle East, and constructed the Arab-Islamic world as the object of Western hostility and suspicion.⁶⁹

The primordially of a Hindu lifeworld in contest with Muslim invaders was suggested by Grierson's characterisation in the *MVLH* of the literary output of the 'Bardic Age' as possessing a historical consciousness that had continued to be current. The bardic poets were the fount of literature in the modern vernacular, which took shape in this definition as a regionally-specific, historically-determined, and still-current stage of language. Sanskrit was effectively relegated to antiquity, and the non-Sanskrit vernaculars, such as Prakrit, were seen as not current and therefore, not modern. Grierson wrote:

It will be observed that I deal only with modern vernacular literature. I therefore give no particulars concerning authors of purely Sanskrit works, and exclude from consideration books written in Prakrit, even when it may have been a vernacular, as not connoted by the term modern (p. vii).

⁶⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 73-79.

Modernity was associated with the current and the prevalent. The British, by corollary, emerged as the arbiters both of currency and modernity. Further, the bardic accounts inaugurating a modern literary consciousness were seen as ‘embodying’ the history of the struggles between an indigenous Hindustan and its Islamic invaders. Figured thus as proto-nation-building chronicles, the Bardic poets set the tone for a literary history of a Hindu world.

Grierson’s case for Hindi’s revival rested on the evidence of its already rich and complex dialects, which did not need classical vocabulary and idioms to expand the range of their eloquence. “There is no necessity”, he wrote in his *Note on the languages of India*, ‘as may have existed in the case of Bengali, for Hindi to have recourse to the classical tongue’.⁷⁰ Hindi, and by extension North and Northwestern India, were implicated in a regional competition with Bengal and Bengali. Enumerating Hindi’s characteristics, he continued:

In themselves, without any extraneous help whatever, the dialects from which it [Hindi] is sprang are, and for five hundred years have been, capable of expressing with crystal clearness any idea which the mind of man can conceive. It has an enormous native vocabulary, and a complete apparatus for the expression of abstract terms. Its old literature contains some of the highest flights of poetry and some of the most eloquent expressions of religious devotion which have found their birth in Asia.⁷¹

In this picture, Hindi was pulled into a network wider than its subcontinental environs. Presenting Asia as the aboriginal home of Hindi served to globalise the discourse, and suggested that the old genealogies of its poetic idioms too merited global recognition.

Grierson’s *Note* had pointed out that only few native writers had championed the ‘use of

⁷⁰ Grierson, *Note on the languages of India*, p. 84.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Hindi undefiled'.⁷² This phrase echoed Spenser's characterisation of Chaucer in the *Fairie Queene*.⁷³ Samuel Johnson's had used this phrase in the preface to his dictionary with reference to 'writers before the Restoration' whose works he regarded as 'the wells of English undefiled'.⁷⁴ Grierson's own championing of Hindi by picturing it as a pure source vulnerable to defilement was rich with allusory reference to both Spenser and Johnson. It certified Grierson as a Spenser- or Johnson-like commentator for Hindi literary history, who sought to retrieve for it a desirable source and a promising horizon.

'Augustan' Hindi: India's 'Golden age' and 'Reformation'

Grierson's account dubbed the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the 'Augustan Age' for literature of Hindustan and compared it to the Elizabethan 'Golden Age'. The Elizabethan and Mughal courts were also noted for being in contact with one another through English ambassadors to the Mughal court. The period was rendered continuous with the contemporary imperial project through the mention of the East India Company's origins in this period when 'each of the nations, separated so widely by sea and land, was as its culminating point of literary glory' (p. xix).

The naming of the Indian golden age as 'Augustan' is instructive for a number of reasons. It served the idiom of comparison by offering 'a notably colonial register and set of evaluative patterns'.⁷⁵ Equating the East and West offered the European readers of this

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Whylome as antique stories tellen vs,
 Those two were foes the fellonest on ground,
 And battell made the dreddest dangerous,
 That euer shrilling trumpet did resound;
 Though now their acts be no where to be found,
 As that renowned Poet them compyled,
 With warlike numbers and Heroicke sound,
 Dan Chaucer, well of English vndefyled,
 On Fames eternall beadroll worthie to be fyled.
 Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 423.

⁷⁴ Johnson, sig. C1^r.

⁷⁵ Ira Sharma, 'George Abraham Grierson's Literary Hindustan', in *Literature and Nationalist Ideology: Writing Histories of Modern Indian Languages*, ed. by Hans Harder (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2010), pp. 176-208 (p. 186).

work a blueprint for positioning Indian vernacular literature in a familiar framework of categorising cultural epochs. The term ‘Augustan Age’ itself appeared somewhat anomalously in the more typical ‘dynastic-political’ classification (Elizabethan, Jacobean, Restoration), or even one according to literary personalities (Age of Shakespeare, Milton, or Dryden). The British Augustan age follows the Restoration but refers back to a past era of Rome under Augustus, ‘drawing a parallel between the cultural life of early eighteenth century England and first century Rome’.⁷⁶

Neoclassical criteria for literary evaluation, decorum and harmony, allowed another familiar modality for understanding the Indian poetic output in terms of its stylistic discipline. Yet while the British Augustan output updated classical poets, Indian Augustans were instead figured *as* the classical. Hindi literature, as Ira Sharma says, became ‘incorporated into a system of world literature or “classics” of general acclaim’.⁷⁷ This move echoed the globalising tendency observed in the linguistic survey as well, in which comparisons with European language families served to elevate the status of the local, and identified the colony as a source for more universal observations. Grierson’s parallel referred less to the Augustan poets of Britain and more to a sense of the originary classicism of Latin Augustan poetry. Tulsidas, Jayasi, and Surdas -- deemed the doyens on the Indian golden age -- were compared variously to Shakespeare, Milton, and Spenser. The characterisation of the Indian vernacular golden age, then, did a few notable things: (a) it assigned classicism to a period in Indian vernacular literary history, which would form the source of the modern, and be revived by the nineteenth-century British-led ‘Renascence’; (b) it projected parity between the Elizabethan and Mughal courts as patrons of vernacular efflorescence, elevating the status of Indian vernaculars and anticipating a period of decline; (c) comparing Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton to contemporaneous Indian poets, it presented the latter as pioneers and models for future literary output.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 187.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

Grierson saw the 'Augustan' period as one in which consensus about a single literary language began to emerge, thus signalling an end to the 'apprenticeship' of Indian Literature. Leading the charge for vernacular literary autonomy were poets writing in dialects thus far only spoken in 'rural areas'. These poets were compared with Spenser and Milton, who were in turn fashioned as hesitant pioneers. Grierson wrote: 'When they wrote, the language spoken was practically the same as that spoken now in the rural parts of India, and they must have felt the same hesitation which Spenser and Milton felt in writing in their vernacular' (p. xix). That any desirable progression must be orientated forwards, towards the current-modern language, was made clear in the following evaluations:

Spenser chose the wrong method and cast his Fairie Queene into an antique mould, but Milton, though he once thought of writing his Paradise Lost in Latin, dared to be right, and thenceforward the English language was made. So was it in India, — the first vernacular authors dared greatly, and succeeded (p. xix).

The 'wrongness' of Spenser's archaic response to a moment of linguistic ferment was contrasted with Milton's progressivist daring. Cast in the part of the safe antiquarian, Spenser was now made to speak for an old regime, and the revolutionary Milton was figured as the true harbinger of the new.

Grierson's assessment of Malik Muhammad Jayasi, author of the epic Avadhi poem *Padmavat*, exemplified his vision of 'golden age' India as a period of vernacular efflorescence and rejection of custom. Highlighting Jayasi's philological significance, Grierson noted the 'happy accident' for the student of language who could read him for 'a representation of the speech and of the pronunciation of those days [early sixteenth century]' (p. xviii). By means of this happy accident, the poet could be shown as subverting the staunch mores of protectionist Hindu elites. Grierson wrote:

Hindu writers, tied by the fetters of custom were constrained to spell their words, not as they were pronounced, but as they were written in the old Sanskrit of their forefathers. But Malik Muhammad cared not for Hindu customs, and wrote his work in the Persian character, thus giving necessarily a phonographic representation of every word he wrote (p. xviii).

This was a recognition of a radical syncretism and of a literary originality not subservient to the many straitjackets of Hindu custom. Grierson called *Padmawat* a 'philosophic' (p. xviii) work, written in the 'purest vernacular of his time' (p. xviii), and represented the best of Muslim and Hindu traditions. But as a product of an age heralding a literary-philological modernity, Jayasi's work was presented as primarily allegorical. This is how Grierson interpreted the *Padmawat*:

This work, while telling in vivid language the story of Ratan Sen's quest for the fair Padmawat, of Alau'd-din's siege of the virgin city of Chitaur, of Ratan's bravery, and of Padmawat's wifely devotion which culminated in the terrible sacrifice of all in the doomed city that was true and fair, to save it from the lust of the conqueror, is also an allegory describing the search of the soul for true wisdom, and the trials and temptations which assail it in its true course (p. xviii).

He sidestepped the more obviously communal reading of the bardic legend -- told as an invading Muslim warrior's designs on a Hindu king's chaste bride and city -- to make way for a more sanitised and secular interpretation. Grierson wrote, 'Malik Muhammad's ideal is high, and throughout the work of the Musalman ascetic there run veins of the broadest charity and of sympathy with those higher spirits among his Hindu fellow-country-men who were groping in the dark for that light of which so many of them obtained glimpses' (p. xviii). Later in the text, Jayasi and his work were subsumed entirely into the Hindu discourse, first suggestively through the claim that 'the story of the Padmawat is founded on the historical facts of the siege of Chitaur' (p. 16), and then in the following summation:

‘Malik Muhammad’s work stands out as a conspicuous, and almost solitary, example of what the Hindu mind can do when freed from the trammels of literary and religious customs’ (p. 18). The poet’s personal Muslim identity seemed irrelevant to Grierson and his narrative’s anticipation of a vernacular literary revolution that would come in the wake of an internal Hindu Reformation. He wrote:

From the date of the Padmawat, the literature of Hindustan became, so to speak, crystallised into two grooves. This was due to the Vaishnava reformation of Ramanand and Ballabhacharjee...The first founded on the modern worship of Visnu in his incarnation of Rama, and the other worship of same god in the incarnation of Krish’n...but the fact remains that from the middle of the sixteenth century to the present day all that was great and good in Hindustani literature was bound by a chain of custom or of impulse, or of both, to the ever-recurring themes of Ram and Krish’n (p. 18).

The ‘Renaissance’ would however, have to wait a century after this ‘Reformation’. If religious reformation and enlightened courtly patronage characterised the Augustan age, it was headed for a fall in a period of stagnation and apathy. Even though the reign of Mughal emperor Akbar was compared to Elizabeth in terms of the ‘extraordinary outburst of literary vigour’ at the time of his reign, poets at the Mughal court were dismissed relatively quickly in one chapter.⁷⁸ Among all the stalwarts of the ‘golden age’, the poet Tulsidas and his Avadhi retelling of the Hindu God Rama’s life in the *Ramacharitmanas*, emerged as the best representative of the great and good in the literature of Hindustan. In Grierson’s reckoning, successors of Tulsidas had lived insecurely in a climate of strife between various sub-imperial princely states and the grand Mughal court. Valued largely as witnesses of political friction, poets after Tulsidas were grouped ‘according to their patrons

⁷⁸Grierson’s *MVLH* did offer some notable examples of the Mughal’s court’s progressiveness. Akbar’s court, for instance, was noted for facilitating in the 1580s several translations of Hindu and Sanskrit texts into Persian; Todar Mal (a minister in Akbar’s court) was lauded, among other things, for his influence in the development of Urdu by making ‘Hindus learn Persian’. The poet laureate Birbal’s bon mots and facetious tales were called the Indian Joe Miller’s jest book, testifying to his iconic popularity. Kesab Das (1580) was credited as ‘having stepped forward and settled forever the canons of poetic criticism’ (pp. 35, 36, xxi). This favourable depiction stood in contrast to Grierson’s relative silence on the not insignificant poetic output of late-Mughal courts of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

or the states to which they were attached' (p. 70).

Grierson's survey reserved its highest praise for Tulsidas. He was called the 'the greatest star in the firmament of medieval Indian poetry' (p. xx, 42) who sat 'unapproachable and alone in his niche in the Temple of Fame' (p. xx). Noting his timelessness, Grierson wrote: 'Looking back along the vista of centuries we see his noble figure standing in its own pure light as the guide and saviour of Hindustan' (p. xx). Compared with Shakespeare, and assessed within the idioms of literary romanticism and Christian monotheism, Tulsidas was comfortably ensconced within the usual frames of reference in orientalist perception of Indian literature.

Tulsidas' significance to the literary and cultural life of North India cannot be underestimated. In many ways his signature work, the *Ramcharitmanas* continues to be a highly popular and successful vernacular scripture, and was remarkable in its time for having presented an accessible version of Rama-worship in an inventive stanzaic pattern for lyric quatrains composed in the literary Avadhi dialect. The work circulated in a vibrant syncretic world, and found esteem in various literary spaces buoyed along by many agents who helped spread its fame during a three-centuries long career. Introducing the work to twenty-first century readers, Philip Lutgendorf draws attention to the multifaceted diachronic network through which the fame of the *Ramcharitmanas* remained current: from 'oral expounders, itinerant singers, and the scholarly exegetes' patronised by elites and princely rulers, to nineteenth-century colonial administrators, modernist Hindi poets of the mid-twentieth century, audio cassettes and televised serialisations in the late-twentieth century, to the early twenty-first-century's international academic interest in Indian literary cultures.⁷⁹

Vernacular literary production in Tulsidas' world was dominated by Avadhi, Brajbhasha,

⁷⁹ Philip Lutgendorf, introduction to *Tulsidas: The Epic of Ram*, trans. by Philip Lutgendorf, Murty Classical Library of India, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2016), I (2016), p. vii.

and Persian, which continued to predominate in literary expression till the rise of literary Urdu in the later eighteenth century. Brajbhasha, the speech of the Agra district, was the standard language of Krishna-worship and court poetry while Persian was recognised as the leading literary language of North India. Avadhi, localised around Lucknow and Allahabad regions, was used extensively for Islamic Sufi narrative poetry, and in a Sanskritised version as a vehicle for Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*.⁸⁰ Though the genre conventions of the poetry in these languages were determined by a distinct community of users based on their spiritual affiliations, there was much dialogic interplay and mutual interest. An illustrative example is Mirza Khan's Persian work called *Tubfatul Hind* (A Gift from India), composed between 1675 and 1700, which was a survey of Brajbhasha poetry and poetics, and included a bilingual glossary.⁸¹ The range of use implied in this glossary suggested that this mutual interest went beyond mere conversational familiarity with a foreign language for efficient communication in an Indo-Muslim world. As Stuart McGregor notes, many glossed Brajbhasha words were already familiar in an Indo-Persian lifeworld; homonyms were tagged based on their 'common' or on 'recondite' meanings usually encountered in metaphorical or poetic usage. It was likely, then, that the glossary itself would have served as a 'hard word' dictionary not unlike those used in early seventeenth-century England to improve 'common' usage by means of imported 'unusual' words.⁸²

Tulsidas' own sources for *Ramcharitmanas* displayed a versatile pattern of influence, testifying to a lively dialogism of literary activity. The work was a retelling of Valmiki's Sanskrit epic *Ramayan*, but owed as much to 'multiform oral and literary traditions' of *Ramakatha* (Rama story-telling), which had several precursors in many Indian languages and dialects.⁸³ Its idiom of a highly personalised god and emotive public worship was the idiom of the ideological current of the *bhakti* (devotional) mode. Other sources of influence were Sanskrit texts of wide-ranging provenance including schools of esoteric philosophy, ascetic

⁸⁰ McGregor, p. 913.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 942.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 943.

⁸³ Lutgendorf, p. viii.

sects, dramas, and spiritual handbooks.⁸⁴ Formal influences extended beyond Hindu idioms, and to Sufi poetic narratives (of which Jayasi's *Padmawat* is a notable example) popular in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India. Called *Premakhyān* (love stories), these works themselves drew upon Persian allegorical conventions of the *masnavi* (epic narratives in rhyming couplets, in which a lover's romantic quest and yearning symbolised a Sufi's mystical longing for Allah) and transposed them onto Hindu/local folklore.⁸⁵ The forms in which the work continued to exist also suggested its syncretic success; there was a relative absence of 'competing non-sectarian treatments' of the story after Tulsidas' time. Also in existence were several commentaries in Brajbhasha and other dialects, as well as manuscripts in the Persian script.⁸⁶

Curating Tulsidas: The Bible, Shakespeare, and the spaces of literary pasts

The usefulness of Tulsidas' work to any understanding of Indian culture had been acknowledged well before Grierson's literary history formally canonised it. It had a place in the syllabi for the training of incoming British civilian officers. New rules for examination of Bengal civil servants introduced in 1856 included, among other things, a demonstrable familiarity with Tulsidas' *Ramayān*.⁸⁷ In 1871, Adalut Khan, a government examiner and munshi at the Fort William College, had produced a translation of Tulsidas into simple English to aid those sitting for the government exam.⁸⁸ Having acknowledged Tulsidas' literary significance, Khan's preface went on to address points of anticipated criticism:

The Ramayan is indeed a delightful book for the natives to read, but a difficult one for foreigners. Unaccustomed to the manners and customs of an oriental life, a stranger is generally disgusted with the varied forms of etiquette displayed by the dramatis personae, and considers the poet's sweet verses and his manly sentiments to be slovenly, rough and

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp. ix-x.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. x.

⁸⁶ McGregor, p. 939.

⁸⁷ Safadi, p. 21.

⁸⁸ Adalut Khan, *Translation of the Second Book of the Ramayan* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1871).

childish.⁸⁹

Frederic Growse's influential translation of Tulsidas' *Ramcharitmanas*, first published between 1877 and 1880, shared this qualified appreciation of the work as a representative sample of vernacular poetry. In the prologue to a specimen translation presented to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Growse had compared Tulsidas' 'rough colloquial idiom' unfavourably to the 'polished phraseology' of classical Sanskrit. On the other hand, he noted:

The Hindi poem is the best and most trustworthy guide to the popular and living faith of the Hindu race at the present day -- a matter of not less practical interest than the creed of their remote ancestors -- and its language, which in the course of three centuries has contracted a tinge of archaism, is a study of the greatest importance to the philologist, since it serves to bridge an otherwise impassable chasm between the modern style and the medieval.⁹⁰

This evaluation was entirely characteristic of the currents of orientalist and technocratic interest in Indian vernaculars. Growse's proposed translation had assessed the work for its versatile usefulness to the colonial enterprise and to the orientalist academic fascination with Indian languages and cultural pasts. It presented the work as an ideal window on a Hindu past and present, proffering practical utility as well as philological value. Grierson encountered Tulsidas in the same confluence of currents that came together in Growse's translation. Setting aside Growse's relative circumspection, however, Grierson's story positioned Tulsidas as the definitive, and entirely praiseworthy, protagonist.

Tulsidas' primacy in Grierson's narrative was clear right at the outset. The frontispiece to the *MVLH* was an illustration called 'Rama's childhood' taken from a manuscript in

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. iii.

⁹⁰Frederic Growse, 'The Prologue to the Ramayana of Tulsi Das, A specimen translation', *The Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal* 45.1 (Calcutta: [n.pub.], 1876), p. 1.

possession of the Maharajas (kings) of Benaras, and which Grierson praised as a ‘worthy specimen of Hindu art’ (p. xxiii). This overt signalling of Tulsidas’ pre-eminence was layered with subtextual significance, noted in Sharma’s analysis of two key paratextual elements of the work. As the paratextual ‘threshold’ of the text, the tableau of Rama’s childhood home defined the entrance to a specific space. As Sharma describes it, ‘Grierson has us enter literary Hindustan through Ayodhya [the birthplace of Rama] and its literary realm which is thus, from the very beginning, established as a centre of Hindustani literature both in terms of spatial and literary significance’.⁹¹ By foregrounding the Hindu aspects of Hindustani literary modernity, Grierson formulated Hindustan as the land of the Hindus.

The other significant paratext to which Sharma draws attention is the motto of the book, given in German: ‘Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichters Lande gehen’: ‘Who the minstrel understand, Needs must seek the minstrel’s land’.⁹² The quotation and the theme of cross-cultural understanding were taken from Goethe’s *Notes and Papers for a Better Understanding of the West-Eastern Divan* (1819). Aphorisms in Goethe’s work had pronounced that it was the reader’s duty to maintain a deep, immersive engagement with a literary work.⁹³ In Grierson’s account, this engagement extended beyond the poetic sentiment to the works’ language and contexts, the telling shorthand for which in the cited lines was ‘land’. To the extent that it shared the itinerant method of the linguistic survey and classed literature by the region of its origin, this literary engagement with the orient was then geographical both in letter and spirit. Grierson’s paratextual invitation invited the readers to enhance their literary appreciation by imaginatively visiting -- and, after a fashion, inhabiting -- the home of the literary creation. If the frontispiece invited the reader into the Hindu heartland through the gates of Rama’s childhood home, it also underscored in contrast the usurpation in the act of the visitor turning host.

⁹¹ Sharma, p. 185.

⁹² *The Poems of Goethe: Translated in the Original Metres*, trans. by Edgar Alfred Bowring (London: John Parker, 1953), cited by Sharma, p. 185.

⁹³ Sharma, p. 185.

Signposting a glorious literary past and heralding a vernacular modernity, Grierson's Tulsidas was carefully curated within a network of comparisons and contrasts. Presented as a literary heavyweight operating at the fringes of the Mughal court who had given colloquial mellifluity and sensibility to a Sanskrit epic, the poet represented the subversive power of the popular over the hegemonic. As the purveyor of a noble and virtuous sensibility, he could offer a moral and civic ideal seen as absent in the courtly poetic styles or the supposedly licentious mores of some Hindu devotional idioms. Favourable comparisons with European literary figures enabled Tulsidas' participation in the frameworks of world literature. If his literary persona was compared to Shakespeare, his style was also deemed akin to Romantic nature poets, and the wide reach and rectitude of his sentiments to the Bible. The projected affinity with English poets appeared to endorse the inclusion of Tulsidas in a global literary pantheon.

This transport from one category to another, similar to one which Majeed recognises in the linguistic survey's 'literary geography', asserted the local significance of Tulsidas by assessing it with respect to global standards. The *Ramcharitmanas* was lauded as his best work for 'sustained and varied dramatic interest' (p. 48), his characters living and moving 'with all the dignity of a heroic age' (p. 48). If Sita (Rama's wife) was seen in a Wordsworthian vein as the 'perfect woman nobly planned' (p. 48), Raban (the antagonist) was lauded as being like 'Satan in Milton's epic' (p. 48). 'All these', Grierson wrote, 'are as vividly before my mind's eye as I write as any character in the whole range of English literature' (p. 48). As it soon becomes clear, however, the comparison with Shakespeare was not on account of stylistic or thematic symmetry between the two sets of poets. Rather, in fielding Tulsidas as a classic, a *figure* of Shakespeare was invoked. This was a figure refracted through the lens of selective instances of reception, and served to create a native touchstone in Indian literary vernaculars.

That Grierson opted to compare Shakespeare with Tulsidas was interesting given that

nineteenth-century European orientalists more generally compared Shakespeare to Kalidasa -- a fifth-century Indian poet and dramatist whose Sanskrit drama *Abhijnanashakuntalam* (translated as ‘the recognition of Sakuntala’, and commonly referred to as *Sakuntala* after its eponymous heroine) was highly lauded as the finest among Sanskrit literary achievements. The preface to William Jones’ 1789 English translation, *Sacontala: or the Fatal Ring*, referred to Kalidasa as ‘our illustrious poet, the Shakespeare of India’ and set in motion an association that was to have a long and illustrious career among Orientalists and Nationalists alike.⁹⁴ Robert Frazer’s *A Literary History of India* (1856) singled out the *Sakuntala*’s English translation as the precise moment which ‘showed that India possessed a literature’.⁹⁵ The audience of this ‘discovery and encounter’ were, of course, the early European orientalists. Offering a summary of the beginnings of the orientalist fascination with Indian literature, Frazer writes: ‘The attention, not only of men of taste but also of scholars, was naturally attracted to these works, and efforts were made in Europe to study and master the Sanskrit in which they were composed’.⁹⁶ The reference here was to the Germans Alexander von Humboldt, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, and Friedrich von Schlegel who were among the most famous celebrants of Kalidasa’s drama in Europe soon after the transmission of Jones’ translation.⁹⁷

Arthur Macdonnell’s *History of Sanskrit Literature* (1900) had observed structural affinities between Sanskrit and Elizabethan drama.⁹⁸ Discussing the structural arrangement of Sanskrit plays, Macdonnell argued that Indian drama, while showing some similarities with Greek comedy had ‘more striking points of resemblance to the productions of the

⁹⁴ William Jones, preface to *Sacontala: or the Fatal Ring* (Calcutta: J. Ghose and Company, 1876), p. iii.

⁹⁵ Robert W. Frazer, *A Literary History of India* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1898), p. 5.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Among Kalidasa’s pre-eminent European admirers were Franz Schubert, who had turned the play into an opera in 1820, and Alphonse de Lamartine, who found in Kalidasa the combined the genius of Homer, Theocritus, and Tasso; Turner, *Philology*, p. 95.

⁹⁸ Macdonnell’s work was the first short but purportedly ‘complete’ account in English of its subject, tracing a history of all known and extant texts and genres in Sanskrit. Other classic European studies of Indian literature focusing on Sanskrit works and applying wide-ranging definition of literature were in German: Albrecht Weber’s *The History of Indian Literature* (1852), Friedrich Max Müller’s *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (1859); Dharwadker, p. 162.

Elizabethan playwrights, and in particular of Shakespeare'.⁹⁹ The catholicity and admixture of genres and sentiments in their plays made 'Indian dramatists' distinct from classical plays, which were organised according to strict unities. The character of the 'vidushaka' in Sanskrit secular dramas too was noted as a direct equivalent of the Shakespearean fool.

Further listing affinities, Macdonnell wrote:

Common to both are also several contrivances intended to further the action of the drama, such as the writing of letters, the introduction of a play within a play, the restoration of the dead to life, and the use of intoxication on the stage as a humorous device. Such a series of coincidences, in a case where influence or borrowing is absolutely out of the question, is an instructive instance of how similar developments can arise independently.¹⁰⁰

The striking parallels were seen as coincidental and symmetrical, and not the result of probable influence or borrowing; though Kalidasa and his invoked contemporaries predated Shakespeare by many millennia, the two were 'allied in genius'.¹⁰¹

This projected alliance was commonplace enough to have become the 'classic colonial comparison' and a 'recognised nationalist response' seen in several eminent Indian litterateurs including the Nobel-prize winning Rabindranath Tagore.¹⁰² If Kalidasa in translation fascinated orientalist Europeans, Shakespeare too was enthusiastically received in Indian languages. Since the 1870s, Shakespeare's works were translated into several Indian languages, a list that included, as Harish Trivedi enumerates, 'over seventy full-length translations and adaptations and over one hundred further abridgements and narrative renderings of his plays into Hindi alone'.¹⁰³ Far from uniformly reinforcing the idea of Shakespeare's literary superiority, these translations displayed a range of attitudes of

⁹⁹ Arthur Macdonnell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (New York: Appleton, 1900), p. 351.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 351-52.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 360.

¹⁰² Harish Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions: English Literature and India* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 18.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Indians towards British colonisers. Translators, Trivedi notes, were either ‘good natives’ who had internalised Shakespeare’s superiority, or ‘bad natives’ who had, through creative translation, expressed a subtly subversive view.¹⁰⁴ The alliance between Kalidasa and Shakespeare too was implicated in the literary staging of native-coloniser relationship. As an example of subversion by comparison, Trivedi takes note of a statement in the preface to a Hindi translation of Charles Lamb’s *Tales from Shakespeare* in 1912 by Jayavijaya Narayana Singh Sharmma. Shakespeare, Sharmma wrote, ‘is regarded as supreme in English literature and is described as the Kalidasa of English...Kalidasa was a poet of India and Shakespeare of Europe. Shakespeare lived in the time of Elizabeth, i.e., in the fifteenth [sic] century of Christ, and Kalidasa at least one thousand years before him’.¹⁰⁵ This re-description highlighted Kalidasa’s antecedence, and inverted the more usual comparison by now calling Shakespeare the Kalidasa of English.

These comparisons accepted Shakespeare and Kalidasa as the respective ‘greatest’ of English and Indic literatures. By corollary, English and Sanskrit were the literary cultures deemed worthy of comparison. As they were extant at separate times and were unlikely to have been in contact through transmission, comparisons were at best structural. Grierson’s suggested alliance between Tulsidas and Shakespeare was not based on a rigorous analysis of their dramatic/poetic structures, and did not generate any grand theoretical insight. Instead, it did something more tangible: the two figures were recognised as contemporaries, with symmetrical reputations in their respective cultures as benchmarks for future writings. Their connection and symmetry suggested that Tulsidas and Shakespeare could be imagined as part of a shared history. This was a history of the Mughal and Elizabethan worlds, in which it was possible to imagine actual contact and parity, which could later be applied to Hindi- and English-language literatures.

¹⁰⁴ Trivedi draws attention to the curious silence of the years between 1932 and 1956 when only one translation of Shakespeare appeared to have been published in India. This turn away from Shakespeare was, Trivedi argues, an act of quiet subversion in stark contrast to the concurrent patriotic revival in England when E. M. W. Tillyard valorised Shakespeare as a national poet ‘caring deeply for “nature”, “order”, monarchy and for England’; Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Jayavijaya Narayana Singha Sharmma, ‘Bhoomika’, in *Shakespeare Katha-gatha* (Allahabad: Ramnarayan Lal, 1912), pp. 1, 7, trans. and cited by Trivedi, *Colonial Transactions*, p. 18.

Grierson, then, was attuned to a wholly different set of resonances with ‘Shakespeare’, configured as the shining example of a homespun ‘golden age’ for the English language. As Hinojosa has shown, the 1880s had seen the beginnings of a phenomenon in which promoting ‘Shakespeare’s Englishness’ became the move at the heart of a number of literary historians working to standardise the Elizabethan age as the origins of modern, national English literary culture.¹⁰⁶ A protean Shakespeare was invoked in Grierson’s comparisons to present Tulsidas in the nineteenth century: if he represented the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in history, he was also de-historicised and regarded as an eternal great and as the subject of revival in posterity. Tulsidas was put to a similar use. The interplay between the eternal and the contingent could be seen in the fate of Grierson’s comparison: Frazer’s 1907 *Literary History*, which had accepted Kalidasa as the Shakespeare of India, also cited Grierson’s study, calling Tulsidas the ‘Shakespeare of Akbar’s time’.¹⁰⁷

In the *MVLH*, Grierson involved Kalidasa in a comparison with Tulsidas by contrasting the former’s display of virtuosity with the latter’s humility found in their respective Rama-themed works. ‘*Kalidasa*’, Grierson writes, ‘took Ram as a peg on which to hang his graceful verses; but *Tulsidas* wove wreaths of imperishable fragrance, and humbly laid them at the feet of the god whom he adored’ (p. 49). The modesty topos of Kalidasa was set against Tulsi’s actual modesty:

Kalidasa may begin his *Raghuvaramca* with a comparison of himself to a dwarf, and of his powers over language to a skiff on the boundless ocean; but from under this modest statement there gleams a consciousness of his own superiority. His modesty is evidently a mock one, and the poet is really saying to himself all the time, ‘I shall soon show my readers how learned I am, and what a command I have over all the nine *rasas*’ (p. 48-49).

Grierson’s interpretation emphasised Kalidasa’s primary allegiance to Sanskrit poetic

¹⁰⁶ See Hinojosa, pp. 152-165.

¹⁰⁷ Frazer, p. 237.

mores. Tulsidas, on the other hand, ‘never wrote a line in which he did not himself believe heart and soul’ (p. 49). Grierson cited Tulsidas’s own modesty topos from the preface to Fredric Growse’s translation of the *Ramcharitmanas*: ‘My intellect is beggarly, but my ambition is imperial. May good people all pardon my presumption and listen to my childish babbling, as a father and mother delight to hear the lispings prattle of their little one’ (p. 49). Tulsidas’ self-presentation as a clumsy child courting his parents’ delight was, for Grierson, evidence of his modesty, one of the more important ‘reason[s] for [Tulsidas]’ excellence’ (p. 42). An endorsement of Grierson as simple, popular, and excellent fed into distinctions commonly drawn between mannered Sanskrit poetics and mellifluous vernacular metrics, and the contrasting topos of ambition and humility that characterised poetic styles and self-presentation. Tulsidas’ brand of successful revisionism was important for Grierson; he was introduced in the chapter as the ‘author of the well-known vernacular *Ramayan*, which competes in authority with the Sanskrit work of *Valmiki*’ (p. 42). In another set of contrasts with other vernacular idioms of Hindu poetry, Tulsidas’ plainness and piety would be invoked to project him as impervious to moral corruption.

The simplicity of Tulsidas’ person and poetry was not, however, to be mistaken for lack of poetic value. In the spirit of the orientalist affinity for literary Romanticism, Grierson saw the measure of Tulsidas’ originality in his unique relationship with nature. ‘He is’, Grierson wrote, ‘perhaps, the only great Indian poet who took his similes direct from the book of Nature and not from his predecessors’ (p. 49). The nature-poet avatar of Tulsidas too was a very-specific analogue of Shakespeare, as the following statement illustrates:

He [Tulsidas] was so close an observer of concrete things, that many of his truest and simplest passages are unintelligible to his commentators, who were nothing but learned men, and who went through the beautiful world around them with eyes blinded by their books. Shakespeare, we know, spoke of the white reflection of the willow leaves in the water, and thus puzzled all his editors, who said in their wisdom that willow leaves were

green. It was, I think, Charles Lamb who thought of going to the river and seeing if Shakespeare was right, and who thereby swept away a cloud of proposed emendations. So, too, is has been reserved for Mr Growse to point out that 'Tulsi' Das knew far more about Nature than his commentators do (p. 49).

The above description achieved a number of things: It allowed 'Tulsidas to be considered, like Shakespeare, as a 'naive poet' in the vein of Friedrich Schiller. Characteristically, this was a superficial echo rather than a detailed or even explicit allusion. Yet it opened up new dimensions to interpreting 'Tulsidas via the analogy with Shakespeare. Simplicity for Schiller distinguished naive poetry from the sentimental, 'since the naive poet only follows simple nature and feeling, and limits himself solely to imitation of actuality, he can have only a single relationship to his subject'.¹⁰⁸ In Grierson's construction in the *MVLH*, the unmediated simplicity of 'Tulsidas' style, persona, and affect could be celebrated as that which qualified him to be excellent and popular among the 'learned and unlearned alike' (p. 43). This commitment to a 'true' interpretation was presented as the province of British critical activity. In a throwaway statement that led into the description of 'Tulsidas as a nature poet, Grierson categorically stated: 'One other point I would urge, which has, I believe, escaped the notice of even Native students of our author' (p. 49). Giving an account of the extant copies of 'Tulsidas' manuscript, and the legends surrounding them, he offers a critique of some 'highly esteemed commentaries' on the *Ramcharitmanas* (p. 46):

All the commentators have a great tendency to avoid difficulties, and to give to simple passages mystical meanings, which Tul'si Das never intended. They are unfortunately utterly wanting in the critical faculty. Though there are abundant materials for obtaining an absolutely accurate text of at least the *Ramcharitmanas*, the commentators have never dreamed of referring to them, but have preferred trusting their inner consciousness (p. 47).

¹⁰⁸ Friedrich Schiller, *Naive and Sentimental Poetry, and On the Sublime*, trans. by Julius A. Elias (New York: F. Ungar, 1966), pp. 115-16.

Growse, then, was more than a translator of Tulsidas, and Grierson rather more than its curator. Literary commentary and literary historiography could be imagined as being on a custodial mission to restore original literary property to a language and its people. The theme of retrieval and revival was foremost in Grierson's mind when he later chose to announce the nineteenth century as the 'Renaissance'. Literary commentary could then be seen an act of rediscovering a lost or misunderstood essence. Tulsidas and Shakespeare could be distanced from their own moment and reconstituted with ahistorical import. Bound by an essential affinity beyond their moment, the canonical credentials of the two were rendered increasingly inviolate. Finally, recognising Tulsidas as a contemporary of Shakespeare as well as Shakespearean in essence was presented an act of astute discernment by Growse, whose empirical commitment to locating the 'truth' in similes matched that of Charles Lamb.

Grierson's enthusiastic appropriation of Tulsidas as best vernacular poet could then be seen as being on the wavelength of his near-contemporary Thomas Carlyle's strident call for seeking a national poetic 'hero' in Shakespeare. In his 1840 lecture, Carlyle effusively projected Shakespeare as the 'rallying-sign' for the English nation and all of its Empire. Shakespeare was like Dante, was 'the grandest thing we have yet done'. Pride aside, there were more palpable benefits to valorise Shakespeare. Carlyle wrote:

Nay, apart from spiritualities; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English: in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another?¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Thomas Carlyle, 'Lecture III: The Hero as Poet. Dante: Shakespeare' [12 May 1840], in *Carlyle on Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, ed. by Archibald MacMechan (Boston: The Athenaeum Press, 1901), pp. 89-131 (p. 130).

Shakespeare was the common denominator that made it possible for geographically-separated identities to define themselves as ‘virtually’ English. Carlyle was sure that Shakespeare was entirely worthy of this task given the aura of his authority which could keep a national identity intact:

This King Shakespeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; indestructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence.¹¹⁰

John Addington Symonds’ *Shakespeare’s Predecessors in the English Drama* (1884) too had valorised the Elizabethan age and seen Shakespeare as having perfected in drama the ‘pageant of renascent humanity’; he was an exemplary figure in a drama that was the ‘school of popular instruction and a rallying point of patriotism’.¹¹¹

Growse had been primarily impressed with the wide-ranging popularity of *Tulsidas*. ‘Putting the literary merits of his work out of the question’, he wrote, ‘the fact of its universal acceptance by all classes, from Bhagalpur to the Panjab and from the Himalaya to the Narmada, is surely worthy of note.’¹¹² Further, the work appeared to cut across class divisions in a more sustained way than many other works. ‘The book’, Grierson wrote in the *MVLH*, citing Growse,

is in everyone’s hands, from the court to the cottage, and is read or heard and appreciated alike by every class of the Hindu community, whether high or low, rich or poor, young or old...It has been interwoven into the life, character and speech of the Hindu population for more than three hundred years, and is not only loved and admired by them for its poetic beauty, but is revered by them as their scriptures (p. 42).

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Symonds, p. 21, 66, cited by Hinojosa, p. 186.

¹¹² Fredric Growse, *The Ramayana of Tulsi Das*, 3 vols. (Allahabad: North Western Provinces and Oudh Government Press, 1877-80), cited by Grierson, *MVLH*, p. 42.

The unique combination of love, admiration and reverence enabled another comparison: with the Bible. Grierson called it the Bible of ‘a hundred million of people’ (p. 43), revered as much as ‘the Bible is considered inspired by the English clergyman’ (p. 43). He also noted the aesthetic similarity to Christianity highlighted by Growse. ‘Mr. Growse’, Grierson noted, ‘has pointed out, in his translation of the *Ramcharitmanas* several points of resemblance between the doctrines of the Christian Church and those of Tul’si Das. There are hymns in our Church hymnals which might be literal translations of passages written by this great poet’ (p. xvii).

Growse and Grierson’s interest in the biblical aspects of Tulsidas was of a piece with one particular direction taken by the Shakespeare criticism in late-Victorian England. As Linda Rosmovits has pointed out, there were a multitude of works published in England between 1880 and 1914 that outlined Shakespeare’s affinities with the Bible or explored Shakespeare’s characters in terms of their moral rectitude.¹¹³ These included works like F. B. Watson’s *Religious and Moral Sentences from Shakespeare Compared with Sacred Passages Drawn from Holy Writ* (1843), Charles Bullock’s *Shakespeare’s Debt to the Bible* (1879), J. R. Timmons’ *The Poet Priest: Shakespeare Sermons Compiled for the Use of Students and Public Readers* (1880), Charles Swinburne’s *Sacred and Shakespearean Affinities* (1890), Charles Wordworth’s *Shakespeare’s Knowledge and Use of the Bible* (1892), and James Bell’s *Biblical and Shakespearean Characters Compared* (1894).¹¹⁴ In general, much of amateur Shakespeare scholarship in the late 1800s linked Shakespeare to religious themes, and engaged in discussion about his place in sectarian Christianity.¹¹⁵

The analogy between Tulsidas and Shakespeare on religious terms implied an odd

¹¹³ Rosmovits shows that there was a reciprocal trend in Bible and Shakespeare scholarship in the late nineteenth century such that the Bible became more secularized and Shakespeare more ‘Biblical’ (Rosmovits, p. 20). I owe this discussion to Hinojosa, pp. 150-2.

¹¹⁴ Hinojosa, p. 225, n. 12.

¹¹⁵ This included works like John W. Hales’s ‘Shakespeare and Puritanism’ in the 1895 *Contemporary Review*, W. S. Lilly’s ‘Shakespeare’s Protestantism’ in the 1904 *Fortnightly Review*, Thomas Carter’s 1897 *Shakespeare, Puritan, and Recusant*, and Henry Bowden’s 1899 *The Religion of Shakespeare*; Hinojosa, p. 151.

equivalence between Hinduism and Christianity, which had the potential to be embroiled in considerable social and religious strife both in the colony and the metropole. However, Grierson's instrumental analogism steered clear of controversy, and used the analogy with the Bible merely to present evidence of reach and to uphold an ideal of conservatism for 'national' literature. By foregrounding Tulsidas above all others, and implicating him in comparisons with the Bible and Shakespeare, Grierson was making an advised choice for a vernacular scripture and a national poet. His historical account enshrined the Tulsidas identified by Growse as a poetically remarkable and politically useful standard-bearer for Indian/Hindu national literature.

Like Grierson and Gilchrist, Growse was a colonial administrator and dilettante translator of the Indian culture he encountered during his years in service. His translation of Tulsidas was the first complete rendering of the text into English, and was, according to Ulrike Stark, the earliest translation of a major Hindi work which was 'neither motivated by didactic purposes...nor by philological and historical interest'.¹¹⁶ Growse's translation, also known as *Tulsikrit Ramayan* ('the Ramayana of Tulsidas'), was among the first few works selected for translation and transmission in the West.¹¹⁷ The translation and its fame (it had by 1891 gone through five editions) was significant since it emerged at a time when many negative perceptions about Hindi literature were abound. Assessing the evidence of the British Home Department's annual Reports on Publications Issued and Registered (RPIR) in the 1870s and 80s, Stark discerns the condescending attitudes to Hindi texts.¹¹⁸ The 1876 Report for North Western Provinces and Oudh, for instance, noted that only four works of 'literary value' had been published that year, two of which were grammars and dictionaries by British authors, one an edition of a Sanskrit grammatical treatise, and

¹¹⁶ Ulrike Stark, 'Translation, Book History, and the Afterlife of a Text: Growse's The Ramayan of Tulsi Das', in *India in Translation Through Hindi Literature: A Plurality of Voices*, ed. by Maya Burger and Nicola Pozza (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), pp. 155-80 (pp. 166-67).

¹¹⁷ Stark, 'Translation, Book History', p. 158.

¹¹⁸ The Press and Registration of Books Act of 1867 was the first systematic official attempt at surveying the literary production of British India, and stipulated that a deposit copy of every book published in the subcontinent be submitted to the Government. The RPIRs were annually compiled in the wake of the act; Stark, 'Translation, Book History', p. 159.

another an Urdu translation of Augustine's *Confessions*.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the report for 1878 lamented a 'barren year', and that for 1883 recorded 'no improvement'.¹²⁰

In contrast to the official disdain and apathy, Protestant missionaries had found it useful to engage with 'Tulsidas' work in their proselytizing. Missionaries, Stark notes, were aware of its popularity among prospective converts and considered knowing the *Ramcharitmanas* a 'matter of expedience'.¹²¹ In January 1880, an American religious mouthpiece, the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, carried a joint review of a Sanskrit and Growse's Hindi version of the epic Ramayana, and highlighted the importance of Tulsidas for the Indian missionary.¹²² Stark observes that the reviewer, one Revd. B. H. Bradley, saw the usefulness of the work for a comparison between its protagonist Ram and Jesus Christ. Reference to the 'national epic', as it was called, would, he said, serve as 'a fitting introduction to what we have to say about the sinless Incarnation'.¹²³ This association between Hinduism and Christianity offered by the text was not initially intended by Growse. The 1877 volume made no reference to Christianity. In fact, its so-called Christian vocabulary caused concern among Christian missionaries in India, who worried that the equivalence being projected between Christianity and Hinduism was derogatory.¹²⁴

Perhaps to allay such misgivings, Growse conceded in the 1878 volume that the *Bhakti* tradition of devotional poetry to which Tulsidas belonged had a marked similarity to Christianity, but was not in any way historically connected with it.¹²⁵ The Bible and Christianity were then taken to be tokens of the pure moral sentiment embodied in Tulsidas' own position as a poet of the *Bhakti* movement. As such, Growse's appreciation of Tulsidas did not desire to be controversial or evangelical; it was an acknowledgement of its popularity to a Western/English-reading audience. Its very pervasive existence made it

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 168.

¹²² Ibid., p. 171.

¹²³ *Methodist Quarterly Review*, January 1880, cited by Stark, 'Translation, Book History', p. 171.

¹²⁴ Stark, 'Translation, Book History', pp. 172-73.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

possible to imagine a desirably homogenous Hindu/Hindi reading public for whom Tulsidas could be the common denominator. The *Ramcharitmanas*, then, could be imagined as the definitive Hindu national epic.¹²⁶

Grierson's account in the *MVLH* had valorised the lyrical and virtuous sensibility of Tulsidas over the poets at Mughal courts and of other Hindu spiritual idioms. Court poets, and other Bhakti poets of the so-called Augustan age found appreciation in Grierson's reckoning, but did not merit enduring glory. Tulsidas' re-telling of the *Ramayan* proffered a 'stern morality' in an age of immorality, when 'the bonds of Hindu society were loosened and the Mughal empire being consolidated' (p. 43). With its cast of characters of devoted brothers, obedient spouses, and statesmanly kings, it represented a civic morality that had abided steadfast through changing political and social regimes. Grierson made it a point to note its echo in the late Mughal period, an 'age of license' (p. 43) in which its 'pure' tone needed to reverberate as a reminder of what was authentically Hindu. The triangulated identifications could not be more obvious: British endorsement of Tulsidas allied them to the civic social order being threatened in apathetic and licentious regimes.

The binary between the decadent and the spiritual was a commonplace in most assessments of Hindi literary history to have emerged in the colonial era. As Allison Busch has noted, Hindi language literary historiography overwhelmingly relied upon a distinction between the *Bhakti* and the *Riti* periods and styles, which had their ideological underpinnings in colonial-era tropes about Indian spirituality and courtly decadence.¹²⁷ This separation of Indian literary pre-modernity into *Bhakti* and *Riti* was accompanied by the ultimate valorisation of the religious over the courtly.¹²⁸ As Busch demonstrates, the distinctions implied in the oppositional terminology were not necessarily of significance to

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

¹²⁷ Allison Busch, 'Questioning the Tropes about "Bhakti" and "Riti" in Hindi Literary Historiography' in *Bhakti in Current Research, 2001-2003: Proceedings of the Ninth International Conference on Early Devotional Literature in New Indo-Aryan Languages, Heidelberg, 23-26 July 2003*, ed. by Monika Horstmann (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), pp. 33-47.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 34. The term 'Riti' itself was, Busch notes, coined and applied in 1929 by Ram Chandra Sukla in his *Hindi Sahitya Ka Itihaas* (The History of Hindi Literature); Busch, 'The Courtly Vernacular', p. 8.

poets and their audiences themselves. Nevertheless, the classification did enable a more streamlined access to past styles, motifs and poets when deciding traditions and practices for Indian literary modernity, given what Busch calls the ‘unequal interpretive milieu’ of late nineteenth-century India in which ‘the literary prejudices of the British were often accepted without sufficient debate or rigorous critical analysis’.¹²⁹ Pressures to conform to Western aesthetic regimes such as Romanticism further consolidated interpretive frames in which ‘many traditions were re-evaluated, found wanting, and then subjected to rehabilitation’.¹³⁰

Aesthetic evaluations went hand in hand with modernising and reformist urges. Summarising colonial attitudes to a variety of Indian pre-modern idioms, Busch notes, ‘Traditional courtly literateurs’ predilection for erotic themes and Sanskrit-style literary taxonomies came to be newly viewed as the self-indulgent hallmarks of a tired and decadent feudal past, a past that the growing Hindi literary public became increasingly anxious to repudiate’.¹³¹ Poetic craftsmanship without a suitably edifying merit and popularity was dismissed as showy. Refracted through literary romanticism and Christian monotheism, it was possible to see Bhakti literature as the most amenable to a re-evaluated restoration. It could be ‘dressed up in new clothes and made to appear democratic, pragmatic, and morally exemplary, whereas *riti* was constructed as its antithesis: it seemed feudal, frivolous, and morally suspect’.¹³²

As an important representative of these colonial-era predilections, Grierson’s literary evaluations went further in singling out Tulsidas from the many devotional ecosystems *within* the *Bhakti* poets, and participated in the fraught arena of sectarian Hinduism, especially the tensions between the Vaishnavism and Shaivism (affiliates of Hindu Gods

¹²⁹ Busch, ‘The Courtly Vernacular’, p. 8.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 34. Urdu literature’s contact with and conformity to Wordsworthian aesthetics have been chronicled in Frances Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness: Urdu Poetry and its Critics* (Berkeley and LA: University of California Press, 1994).

¹³¹ Busch, ‘Questioning the Tropes’, p. 35.

¹³² Ibid., pp. 35-36.

Vishnu and Shiva, respectively).¹³³ Some provinces (notably Northern and Northwestern) were seen as better than others (notably Bengal) in terms of the rituals and religious affinities predominant there, and Tulsidas' text was even distinguished from 'other versions of the Rama legends' (p. 43). Grierson's Tulsidas represented a hierarchical Hinduism in which Vaishnavism (featuring Rama and Krishna as the incarnations of the God Vishnu) trumped Shaivism and Goddess worship. Further, of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, Rama was preferable to Krishna as a role model for citizens. Lauding the nobility of Tulsidas' Rama worship and taking sides, Grierson explained:

Other Vaishnava writers, who inculcated the worship of *Krish'n*, too often debased their muse to harlotry to attract their hearers; but *Tul'si Das* had a nobler trust in his countrymen, and that trust has been amply rewarded (p. 43).

The sensual, erotic, or mystical oeuvre of love poems generated by Krishna worship were deemed too prone to misinterpretation by the 'common' disciples. Grierson wrote:

Far different has been the fate of that other great branch of the Vaishnava religion which is founded on mystic interpretations of the love which Krsna bore to Radha. Beautiful in itself, paralleled, also, by the teaching of many Christian doctors, and rendered more beautiful by the magic poetry of Mira Bai (fl. 1420) in the west, and of Bidyapati Thakur (fl. 1400) in the east, its passionate adoration, whose inner meaning was too esoteric for the spirits of the common herd of disciples, in many cases degenerated into a worthy of only the baser sorts of Tantrik Shiva worshippers (p. xvii).

Of concern here was the absence of moral tuition for the 'common herd'. Going by Grierson's outrage, few things could be worse than being subjected to the 'tantric obscenities of Shaivism', a fate that had befallen the state of Bengal, and from which

¹³³ See Vasudha Paramasivan, 'Between Text and Sect: Early Nineteenth Century Shifts in the Theology of Ram' (unpublished doctoral thesis, UC Berkeley, 2010) pp. 1-5.

Tulsidas had ‘saved upper India’ (p. 43).¹³⁴ The ‘Krishna cult’, despite its impressive poetic output, was seen to have fallen short on account of its inherent self-centredness, a less-than-complete affiliation to Christian commandments of communal charity. At its best, Grierson insisted in the *MVLH*, ‘its [poetry of Krishna worship’s] essence is almost selfish -- a soul-absorbing, nay all-absorbing, individual love cast at the feet of Him who is Love itself. It teaches the first and great commandment of the Christian law, but the second, which is like unto it --Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself -- it omits’ (pp. vii-viii). This was in contrast to the style of deification achieved in Tulsidas’ idiom, which had ‘developed naturally into a doctrine of eclecticism in its best form’ that Grierson interpreted as one which inculcated a Christian tenet of ‘loving thy neighbour as thyself’ (p. xvii).

The Krishna-worshipping Surdas, earlier classed with Shakespearean Tulsidas as India’s Spenser and remembered for having in his time ‘exhausted all the possibilities of poetic art’ (p. 21), was ever so slightly demoted in the service of an aesthetics applied to Hindu sectarian contexts. ‘Natives of India’, Grierson wrote, ‘give him [Surdas] the very highest niche of fame, but I believe the European reader will prefer the nobility of character of all that Tulsidas wrote to the often too cloying sweetness of the blind bard of Agra [Surdas]’ (p. 25). Tantra-ridden Bengal, and to a lesser degree, centrally-located Braj (the region of Krishna worship) were then constituted as ‘the literary and moral periphery’.¹³⁵

Tulsidas was clearly the still centre of a chaotic literary Hindustan, but only just about. Grierson was quick to temper the effusion of his praise, by noting with distaste the hyperbole to which Tulsidas often succumbed. Even Tulsidas, Grierson wrote, was unable ‘to rise altogether superior to the dense cloud which fashion had imposed upon Indian poetry. I must confess that his battle descriptions are often luridly repulsive, and sometimes

¹³⁴ ‘Tantra’ was and remains a much-misunderstood esoteric Indic tradition, which took shape as a religious movement or cultural style for Hinduism and Buddhism. Tantra fell into disrepute within the sectarian hierarchies of Hinduism often because of antinomian practices of some of its adherents. This reputation intensified in the British colonial times. For an account, see George Feuerstein, *Tantra: The Path of Ecstasy* (Boston and London: Shambala, 1998).

¹³⁵ Sharma, p. 196.

overstep the border which separates the tragic from the ludicrous' (p. 48). The presence of what were for the natives 'the finest passages which he has written' (p. 48) made him considerably less palatable to 'cultivated Europeans' (p. 48). Grierson now criticised Tulsidas because of the very thing that elevated him above others: a relentless commitment to the conservatism of a Vaishnava Hindu idiom. Grierson wrote: 'He was hampered, too, by the necessity of representing Ram as an incarnation of Vishnu, which leads him into what, although only mere adoration to the pious believer, sounds to us *Mlechchhas* as too gross hyperbole' (p. 48). This is the only time the British were identified as 'mlechchas', a Sanskrit term for foreigners, the semantic counterpart to the Greek barbarians, and a category of people contact with whom was considered polluting to upper-caste Hindus. The use of the term marked Grierson and his ilk as outsiders who were significant others in a caste-defined discourse of Hinduism. Further, the usage reclaimed the term from its pejorative connotations, and anointed it with a superiority borne of cultured 'good' taste. Grierson's sarcasm constructed self-confessed *mlechchas* as the more discerning authority about Tulsidas' Hindu aesthetic.

Giving an account of the extant copies of the *Ramcharitmanas* and the legends surrounding them, Grierson offered critique of some 'highly esteemed commentaries' by Indian commentators who had 'a great tendency to avoid difficulties, and to give to simple passages mystical meanings, which Tul'si Das never intended' (p. 46). Local critics were seen as 'utterly wanting in the critical faculty' (p. 47), opting to be impressionistic instead of consulting the 'abundant materials' for 'obtaining an absolutely accurate text of at least the Ram-Charit-Manas' (p. 47). Intellectual and scholastic incompetence of native commentators, coupled with a need to recover authentic sources and to create a suitable archive for this national poet, made him ripe for restoration at the hands of British interlocutors. The nineteenth-century Renaissance signalled in this narrative had its classical world and modern outlook defined.

A colonial 'Renaissance' for Hindi

The metaphor of the renaissance had been used with reference to colonial India in two notable ways. Raymond Schwab's famous 1950 French work, *La Renaissance Orientale*, described the period between the late-eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries as one of a 'second renaissance' for the West. The East was the cultural horizon this time, and Romanticism the extended literary consequence of the ensuing knowledge revolution.¹³⁶ The term was also famously applied to the 'Bengal Renaissance', a period often characterised as a socio-cultural 'awakening' in the Bengal region.¹³⁷ Comparisons with Europe were applied even to regional contests, as exemplified in the following statement from a Marxist pamphlet from 1946 characteristic of most dogmatic accounts of the phenomenon:

The impact of the British rule, bourgeois economy and modern Western culture was felt first in Bengal and produced an awakening known usually as the Bengal Renaissance. For about a century, Bengal's conscious awareness of the changing modern world was more developed than and ahead of the rest of India. The role played by Bengal in the modern awakening of India is thus comparable to the position occupied by Italy in the story of the European Renaissance.¹³⁸

The 'renaissance' characterised by Grierson, on the other hand, focused on the revival and development of vernacular literary output in the North and North-Western regions. Grierson's choice of spelling of 'renaissance' had an affinity, both in letter and spirit, with Matthew Arnold's coinage. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Arnold stated in 1869's *Culture and Anarchy* that he was making an advised decision to spell Renaissance in

¹³⁶ Aamir Mufti, *Forget English!: Orientalisms and World Literature* (Cambridge MA, London: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 100.

¹³⁷ For an account see David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773-1835* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969).

¹³⁸ Amit Sen, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* (Bombay: People's Publishing House, 1946), p. 1.

order to give an English form to the foreign word, i.e. Renaissance.¹³⁹ This naming accompanied his belief that a nineteenth-century 'Renaissance' was due in England if the intellectual culture imbibed the critical spirit and developments of the earlier Renaissance. Grierson applied the concept of the 'renaissance' to the cultural development of Indians; in this, the British were the technocratic facilitators, enlightened Indians the agents of change, the 'Augustan' golden age was poised for revival, and Hindi was the linguistic object whose literary maturity was foreshadowed. Grierson's *MVLH* introduced the renaissance through the following set of features:

The first half of the 19th century, commencing with the downfall of the Maratha power and ending with the Mutiny, forms another well-marked epoch. It was the period of renaissance after the literary dearth of the previous century. The printing-press now for the first time found its practical introduction into Northern India, and, led by the spirit of Tul'si Das, literature of a healthy kind rapidly spread over the land. It was the period of the birth of the Hindi language, invented by the English, and first used as a vehicle of literary prose composition in 1803, under Gilchrist's tuition, by Lallu Ji Lal, the author of the *Prem Sagar*. It was also a period of transition from the old to the new. The printing-press had not yet penetrated to Central India, and there the old state of affairs continued (p. xxii).

Political upheavals, print culture, and invention of a language were the key components of the impending cultural transformation. First, the renaissance was linked to the dynastic fortunes of key ruling power centres in the subcontinent, and was bookended by two moments of political transition: the decline in the early nineteenth century of a major Hindu political dynasty (the Marathas); and the Indian Rebellion of 1857 after which the governance of several regions in the subcontinent passed to the British Crown, either directly or through a protectorate system in princely states under British suzerainty. The chapter corresponding to this period was titled 'Hindustan under the Company (1800-1857)' (p. 107).

¹³⁹ Arnold, p. 159.

If the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the height of Mughal splendour, the eighteenth century witnessed its decline and fall. Grierson presented it as a time ‘favourable neither to the founding of new religions nor to the cultivation of the arts’ (p. 85). The term renaissance registered the political fate of Hindustan and a cultural revival, linked the two inextricably, and established British agency as entirely salutary. The subsequent and ongoing epoch of Grierson’s narrative -- ‘Hindustan under the Queen (1857-1887)’ -- was ‘a period free from internal commotion, and in which every inducement and encouragement has been offered for the spread and for the acquisition of knowledge’ (p. 145). With this promise of a tranquil golden age, measured against the strife-laden barrenness of the preceding age, the history of the modern vernacular literatures of Hindustan could come full circle.

Grierson singled out the extension of print and the rise of a vernacular press as a key feature of this period. He wrote of large publishing houses in towns large and small across North India, and their prolific production of works ‘old and new, good, bad, and indifferent’ (p. 145). The desired consequence of the British-led renaissance was a homespun modernity, which could take on a life of its own through works in public circulation.¹⁴⁰ While print was first introduced in India in 1556 by Portuguese Jesuits in Goa and moveable types in the ‘Nagari’ script for Hindi had been cast in Rome by 1740, Arabic, Persian, Bengali, Urdu and Hindi types did not arrive in East and North India until the late eighteenth century. From the 1780s onwards, Calcutta had become the largest centre of printing in South Asia. The East India Company’s Press and the commercial presses owned by Englishmen in India had cast the first Nagari, Bengali, Urdu, and Persian types.¹⁴¹ Lithography was introduced in the 1820s and allowed for widespread Indian ownership of printing presses.¹⁴² Till about the 1830s, commercial presses were largely

¹⁴⁰ For a comprehensive account of the introduction of print in the Indian subcontinent and its subsequent impact on the Hindi and Urdu language public spheres, see Ulrike Stark, *An Empire of Books: The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), especially chapter 1, ‘The Coming of the Book in Hindi and Urdu’, pp. 29-83.

¹⁴¹ Stark, *An Empire of Books*, pp. 35-36.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

European owned and fostered by Christian missionaries and colonial institutions like the Fort William College. Indian ownership of commercial printing presses rose considerably in the second half of the nineteenth century and spread to several prominent North Indian regional centres beyond Calcutta.¹⁴³

Grierson's account of the rise and spread of print was incomplete without the mention of regional contests, notably between Hindi-oriented regions and Bengal. He writes in the *MVLH*:

This is not the place to allude to the tone of the Indian Vernacular Press, and I purposely avoid doing so, beyond calling attention to the fact that as a rule the Hindi newspapers offer a favourable comparison with the more disloyal and scurrilous contemporaries which disgrace Bangali journalism (p. 145).

The renascence itself was committed to a very specific kind of quality led by the pious spirit of Tulsidas. Benaras, the North Indian city home to Tulsidas, was singled out for its potential once it had come into British possession: 'The end of the eighteenth century', Grierson wrote, 'saw that city a British possession; and with the *pax Britannica* came the introduction of printed books' (p. 107). He continued more effusively:

What an opportunity for making or marring a nation's character! And here again the pure and noble figure of Tulsi Das stands forward as the saviour of his fellow countrymen. Hindustan, happily in this differing from Bangal, had that figure to go back to as an example (p. 107).

Grierson's exclamation was significant in the light of the often-negative view taken of the burgeoning vernacular printed output of the late nineteenth century. Ulrike Stark's account of the booming vernacular book trade in the North-Western Provinces in the year 1885

¹⁴³ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

notes that of the 227 new titles produced that year, a third had been printed in the presses of Benaras.¹⁴⁴ The growing sphere of Hindi public letters was facilitated by an emergent Hindu nationalist and revivalist ideology. Popular genres (the short story and the novel) flourished. Yet the vibrancy of local literary culture often met with European indifference or even disgust. As John Avery, an orientalist scholar, wrote in the *American and Antiquarian Oriental Journal* of September 1887:

The most striking feature of the literature produced in the Hindi language over the last three hundred years is its enormous mass. With here and there a work rising above the general level, it is extremely trashy in quality.¹⁴⁵

For several years, British commentators had been registering their alarm at the exponential spurt of vernacular printed output in India since the mid nineteenth century. Writing in 1875 and arguing against the doctrine of free Press, an anonymous critic in the *Calcutta Review* had contrasted the coming of print in Europe with the case of India:

The wonderful art of printing, which had remained unrevealed to the Latins and Greeks, was granted to European nations just at the moment when the state of their intellectual progress enabled them to make a good use of it. But all the slowly-elaborated discoveries of Europe, including those of lithography and photography, are suddenly poured into the lap of a nation deficient in moral culture, which has not undergone the discipline of self-government, and which is unshackled by the control of a superior power.¹⁴⁶

India was projected as an unschooled and unworthy recipient of the wondrous gift of print, having lacked the supposedly more organic, gradual, and deserved civilisational maturity of Europe. Lamenting that Indians were at a lower stage of intellectual progress and moral culture, the reviewer wondered with bitterness: ‘How is it that indecent erotics and

¹⁴⁴ Stark, ‘Translation, Book History’, p. 160.

¹⁴⁵ John Avery, *American and Antiquarian Oriental Journal*, September 1887, cited by Stark, ‘Translation, Book History’, p. 161.

¹⁴⁶ *The Calcutta Review*, vol. lxi (1875), p. 92, cited by Stark, ‘Translation, Book History’, p. 160.

discordant religious dogmas have monopolized a free Press?¹⁴⁷ Regulations moderated the need to promote print and to manage its potentially distasteful repercussions.¹⁴⁸ The Press and Registration of Books Act of 1867 had created the India Office and the British Museum libraries in London as archives of Hindi texts. This improved the circulation of the text among Europeans and accounted for a change in attitudes after greater access to texts. The emergent Urdu and Hindi public spheres fostered by the print revolution very quickly diverged. By the late eighteenth century, Stark notes, Urdu had begun ‘to gather prestige as the lingua franca of the educated classes and gained momentum as a prose idiom’.¹⁴⁹ Coincident to its elevation as the official vernacular to replace Persian in lower courts and administration in 1837 was its rising acceptance as a ‘language of religious expression and a vehicle of rationalist and scientific discourse’.¹⁵⁰ Hindi revivalists competed against the Urdu language public sphere by moderating the production of printed works and translations in the activities of scholars, literati, journals, and societies.¹⁵¹

As Grierson tells it in the *MVLH*, the birth of Hindi had very precise co-ordinates: it was invented by the British, and came into its own as a vehicle of literary prose in 1803. Written ‘under the Marquis of Wellesley’s Government, and under Dr. John Gilchrist’s direction’, and printed in 1809, ‘in Lord Minto’s Government, under the direction of Mr Abraham Lockitt’, the inaugural *Prem Sagar* was presented as a product of British tutelage and patronage (p. 132). Grierson’s elaboration charted the cosmopolitan antecedents of *Prem Sagar*’s language:

[It was written] in the mixed Urdu language of Akbar’s camp-followers and of the market

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ For an account of colonial regulations on Indian commercial printing see Stark, *An Empire of Books*, pp. 83-100.

¹⁴⁹ Stark, *An Empire of Books*, p. 33.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Through the nineteenth century, Hindi’s career was consolidated as a Hindu language seeking to appear distinct from Islamic elements, in contest with the modern Urdu public sphere, and increasingly alienated from other regions within the subcontinent (especially the Southern states). For an account see Vasudha Dalmia, ‘Hindi as the National Language of the Hindus’, in *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harishchandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 146-221.

where men of all nations congregated, with this peculiarity, that he used only nouns and particles of Indian, instead of those of Arabic or Persian, origin. The result was practically a newly-invented speech; for though the grammar was the same as that of the prototype, the vocabulary was almost entirely changed. This new language, called by Europeans Hindi, has been adopted all over Hindustan as the *lingua franca* of Hindus, for a want existed which it fulfilled. It has become the recognised medium of literary prose...but unsuccessfully used for poetry (p. 107).

In this narrative, the nexus of Gilchrist, the College of Fort William, and Lallu Ji Lal had, in Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar's words, 'refashioned the linguistic indigenous for the people'.¹⁵² Persian and Arabic nouns had been replaced by a new category of 'Indian' nouns and particles, creating a language for Hindus from which Muslim, Mughal and plebeian associations could be expunged. The notable contrast was between the 'unregulated and wild invention of Urdu, associated with the empire of disorder' and the 'the regulated and scientific invention of Hindi...associated with the empire of order'.¹⁵³ As such, Grierson's formulation also compared two philological revolutions: in the seventeenth century Mughal world, its public spaces, and courts; and in nineteenth-century British India's language laboratories.¹⁵⁴

Grierson's *Note on the languages of India* compiled in aid of his linguistic survey acknowledged the success of this 'novel experiment' and praised the *Prem Sagar's* achievement in giving to the Hindus their own 'pure' language:

The subject of the first book written in it attracted the attention of all good Hindus, and the author's style, musical and rhythmical as the Arabic *saj*, pleased their ears. Then, the language fulfilled a want. It gave a *lingua franca* to the Hindus. It enabled men of widely different provinces to converse with each other without having recourse to the, to them,

¹⁵² Rashmi Dube Bhatnagar, 'Preamsagar (1810) and Orientalist Narratives of the "Invention" of Modern Hindi', *boundary 2*, 39.2 (2012), 75-110 (p. 78).

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

unclean words of the Musalmans.¹⁵⁵

The new language retained the pleasing musicality of Arabic but none of the lexical impurity of ‘Muslim’ words. Grierson, however, insisted on the need for balance, cautioning about the perils of too much Sanskritisation and appropriation by upper caste Hindu learned men (Pandits). ‘It [Hindi] has’, he wrote, ‘of late years fallen under the fatal spell of Sanskrit, and is showing signs of becoming in the hands of Pandits, and under the encouragement of some European writers who have learned Hindi through Sanskrit, as debased as literary Bengali, without the same excuse’.¹⁵⁶ Yet again Hindi had to be constructed free from influences of Muslim and upper caste Hindu mores, and to be protected from the debasement of other competing vernaculars. Urdu, as a medium of literary prose, was also projected as a creation of Fort William, emerging, like Hindi, from the ‘need of text-books in both forms of Hindostani for the College of Fort William’.¹⁵⁷

Grierson’s account of Lallu Ji Lal’s significance to modern vernacular literature was a testament to the activities of the College. Its repertoire had included works translated from Sanskrit into Hindi, Urdu, and Braj Bhasha; commentaries on older poetic texts; collaborative translations of novels, legends, grammars, stories; and modern editions of older works that expunged dialectal words not current in ‘ordinary Hindustani’.¹⁵⁸ The standard language invented in this institutional space, which both preserved traditions and rendered them modern, promised newness in a stagnant literary culture. Grierson did not ascribe many redeemable qualities to the eighteenth century, which was at best ‘an age of commentators’.¹⁵⁹ Stating that ‘nearly all the great poets of the preceding period found their best annotators and explainers in the eighteenth century’, he appeared to formalise the persistent impact of the Augustan age on a literary culture in decline. However, as Busch has noted, this period was not considered to have been in decline before Grierson’s

¹⁵⁵ Grierson, *Note on the Languages of India*, p. 119.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 133-34.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

watershed classification.¹⁶⁰

Through the narrative of decline, the colonialist (and later nationalist) enterprises were rejecting a type of output classified under the rubric of *Riti*. *Riti* literature was usually associated with the purported cultural weakness of the late-Mughal period. Its subject matter -- chronicles of defunct kings, erotic poems, treatises on poetics modelled on classical Sanskrit themes -- were deemed irrelevant and outdated. Finally, new aesthetic modalities derived from the West (notably Romanticism) became popular and could be imagined as offering an infusion of modernity to outdated idioms. Grierson's evaluative criteria for Tulsidas, as we have seen earlier, had reflected and contributed to these conditions. Such criteria, Busch notes, had enabled the classification of Hindi literature within rigid chronologies that did not entirely represent the sophistication and fluidity of pre-colonial Hindi vernacular literary production.¹⁶¹ Colonial and early nationalist literary evaluations tended to see Avadhi (language of Avadh) and Brajbhasha (language of Braj) as separate literary dialects, and the religious and the courtly as separate spheres of cultural activity. While religious communities and courts were two major spaces of literary production in pre-colonial India, and Avadhi and Brajbhasha the two predominant literary dialects, there was much idiosyncratic fluidity.

Poets did not necessarily use the terms Avadhi or Brajbhasha, nor did they work strictly within one dialect. Many vernacular (*bhasha*) poets did not bother to name the language they used; the use of the term *bhasha* in most cases designated simply that the language in question was not Sanskrit.¹⁶² Avadhi was generally connected with two major literary styles: Devotional Rama poetry, and Sufi romances (*Premakhyaans*). It was linked with the city of Ayodhya, the kingdom of Rama. Brajbhasha was rooted in the Hindu lore associated with Krishna and his deeds in the cities of Vrindavan and Mathura. It was also used in non-

¹⁶⁰ Busch, 'The Courtly Vernacular', p. 93.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 43.

devotional courtly idioms. Poetry classified as *riti* was written and received in Mughal and sub-imperial courts, did not share the didactic function of devotional *bhakti* poetry, and was a part of a patronage culture that celebrated virtuosity in court-mandated literary competitions. *Riti* poets vernacularised Sanskrit poetics into a high literary register of Brajbhasha, did not espouse a literary humility, and constructed technically-skilled verses within intricate typologies designed to showcase their aesthetic erudition.¹⁶³

Grierson's account did not directly address these distinctions other than to acknowledge the persistence of literary dialects as the preferred vehicles for poetry. He wrote in the *MVLH*, 'Now-a-days no Hindu of Upper India dreams of writing in any language but Hindi when he is writing prose; but when he takes to verse, he at once adopts one of the old national dialects such as the Awadhi of Tulsī Das or the Braj Bhasha of the blind bard of Agra' (p. 119). At stake in this analysis were not the complex social contexts of production and reception, but simply the Hindu antecedents and 'golden age' affiliations of the two 'old national dialects', which continued to be current.

Renascence as re-nascence: the poetic penury of modern Hindi

Grierson's preface had summarised an impressive list of modern Hindi's literary achievements:

Poets, of whom Padmakar Bhatt was the most famous, not unworthily wore the mantle which had descended from Kesab Das and Chintamani Tripathi, while Bikram Sahi wrote an ingenious *Sat Sai* in imitation of the more famous one of Bihari Lal. In Banaras, on the contrary, the art of printing gave a new audience to the learned; and to supply the demand thus created, several works of the first importance appeared. The chief of these was the translation of the *Mahabharata* into Hindi by Gokul Nath. Critical writers of a new school also came to the front, of whom the best, *longo intervallo*, was Harichchandr', the author of

¹⁶³ Ibid., pp. 39-46.

the *Sundari Tilak* and many other excellent works; while in Raja Siva Prasad the cause of education received an enlightened friend, and a pioneer in that most difficult work, the writing of good school-books. Lallu Ji Lal, the author of the *Prem Sagar*, has already been mentioned; and another product of Calcutta civilisation, of a very different kind, was the huge anthology of Krish'nanad Byas Deb, called the *Rag-Sagarodbhadb Rag-Kalpadrum*, written in emulation of the better known Sanskrit lexicon, the *Cabda-Kalpadruma*... The same period saw the rise of the Hindi drama, which is now firmly established, and gives hope of achieving considerable excellence in the near future (pp. xxii-xxiii).

Featuring a corpus of imitations, new works, translations, literary criticism, pedagogical reform, lexicography, and the rise of drama, this was a characteristic renaissance. The pioneering spirits of Benaras and of Tulsidas were again given pride of place:

His [Tulsi Das'] popularity gave its tone to the demand, and with characteristic acuteness the Nabaras Pandits fostered the supply. In 1829 was completed and printed for the Maharaj of Banaras Gokul Nath's great translation of the companion epic to the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*. This alone was sufficient to make our present period noteworthy, but it is only one early instance of the many valuable works issuing from the Holy City. Other authors, of a younger generation, of whom one of the greatest is happily still alive, endowed with a wider and more catholic mental vision, no longer bounded by the horizon of Pauranik cosmology, came to the front, and the benefit done to the intellect of Hindustan by such men such as Raja Siva Prasad and Harishchandr' cannot be easily calculated (p. 108).

Grierson was happy to recount the intellectual development free from a regressive Hindu world-view. Yet the robust linguistic and prosaic achievements had not, in his view, been achieved by poetry. Grierson noted with disappointment that Hindi was 'nowhere a vernacular' and thus 'has never been successfully used for poetry' (p. 107). An acute observation summarised the costs of acquiring a modern standard:

Northern India therefore at the present day presents the following unique state of literature, - its poetry everywhere written in local vernacular dialects, [...] and its prose in one uniform artificial dialect, the mother tongue of no native-born Indian, forced into acceptance by the prestige of its inventors, by the fact that the first books written in it were of a highly popular character, and because it found a sphere in which it was eminently useful (p. 107).

The Hindi being standardised in the renaissance was now a *lingua franca* in search of a literature. Grierson's historical survey had offered it a genealogy, the British, technocratic support. The Renaissance was then also a re-nascence, the 'newly-minted' language once more in a fledgling state.

Hindi as the linguistic object constructed in colonial-era experimentation had grown to take on several linguistic characteristics, not all of which were wholeheartedly applauded. In Grierson's view, excessive sanskritisation had been an inhibitor of Hindi's potential. Sanskrit had been cast as an antagonist in his own narrative of vernacular modernity in Hindustan. The classical language had since cast a 'malignant spell' leading to Literature becoming 'divorced from the great mass of the population' and a thing of small moment to the literary classes (p. 83).

Anxiety about the character, reach and status of Hindi had been shared by several among the Indian intelligentsia who were concerned with the impact of the British legislations on vernacular language-use since 1837, when Persian had been replaced with vernaculars as the language of law and administration at lower levels. The so-called Hindi movement had formally begun in 1867 when some Hindus of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh petitioned the government to make Hindi an official language.¹⁶⁴ The initially modest demand was that the Devanagari (Hindi's script) be allowed as an alternative script for judicial and administrative business alongside the modified Persian script used for Urdu.

¹⁶⁴ For an account of the Hindi-Urdu controversy see Christopher King, *One Language, Two Scripts: The Hindi Movement in Nineteenth-Century North India* (Bombay: Oxford University Press, 1994).

These demands became more strident through the 1880s and 1890s, with two landmark occasions in 1882 (The Hunter Commission set up to recommend changes in the Government's language policy) and the establishment in 1893 of the Nagari Pracarini Sabha (Society for the Propagation of Nagari).¹⁶⁵ Despite its Hindi-philic character, Grierson's *MVLH* had not addressed the Hindi-Urdu problem in any significant way. The one stray mention accompanied his description of Raja Siva Prasad (praised in the *MVLH* mainly as a pedagogue) and his conciliatory efforts 'to popularise a style of the Hindustani language, which he calls the colloquial speech of Agra, Dilli, and Laknau, or of Hindustan proper, midway between the Persian-ridden Urdu and the Sanskrit-ridden Hindi' (p. 148). These efforts, he wrote, 'have given rise to a lively and not yet decided controversy amongst the natives of India' (p. 148).

Though carefully neutral, Grierson's narrative had presented a categorical literary history in chronological terms. It had also expressed doubts about modern Hindi's poetic potential given its distance from the Wordsworthian language of ordinary men. A twofold impact and echo of the *MVLH* can be discerned in early Hindi nationalist responses to the question of the literary character for national vernacular poetry.

The 'Hindi Renaissance' and the language of modern poetry

Though linked to the flattening rhetoric of the discourse of 'national literature', the 'language question' remained complex despite the neat invention narrative supplied by works like Grierson's. Championing vernacular eloquence did not just entail valorising the

¹⁶⁵ The Nagari Pracharini Sabha in Benaras was the most significant among the several societies set up to promote the cause of the Hindi Nagari script. It played a decisive role in ensuring the official acceptance of Nagari, and went on to sponsor a number of major initiatives that helped shape and define Hindi language and literature in the decades to come. It functioned as an academy of sorts conducting searches for rare Hindi works and manuscripts, publishing editions, commissioning dictionaries, and organising literary conferences. It was instrumental in establishing what is now defined as modern Hindi language and literature, and more than earned its reputation as 'symbolically originary'; See Harish Trivedi, 'Progress of Hindi: Part 2', in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. by Sheldon Pollock (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 958-1022 (p. 965); Christopher King, 'Forging a New Linguistic Identity: The Hindi Movement in Banaras, 1868-1914', in *Culture and Power in Banaras: Community, Performance, and Environment, 1800-1980*, ed. by Sandria Freitag (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 198-200; Orsini, pp. 25-29.

vulgar over the classical; a worthy vernacular needed to be selected in the first place. A key discursive moment for European vernacular modernity, Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* (1303) too had framed its defence of modern Italian over Latin in the context of a search for vernacular eloquence among regional dialects in fourteenth-century Italy. Seeking excellence *among* the vernaculars was, Blank suggests, Dante's primary concern given the evidence of his own text, which did little to emphasise the contest between Italian and Latin itself. The better part of Book I was devoted to establishing which of the many regional dialects could be advanced as the most correct and elegant.¹⁶⁶ Dante, Blank notes, led readers 'through a guided tour of the provinces and, one by one, discommends fourteen alternative varieties of Italian as he searches for what he calls an "illustrious" Latin vernacular'.¹⁶⁷ The quest ended with an announcement of the 'discovery' of a pan-regional vernacular: 'I proclaim an illustrious, cardinal, royal, and courtly vernacular in Italy, which is of every Latin city, and seems to be of none'.¹⁶⁸

In a much more superficial but somewhat analogous journey, Grierson's narrative too had sought and identified eloquent vernaculars (Avadhi, Brajbhasha) for Hindustan. It had also memorialised the 'invention' of an artificial lingua franca (Hindi) that was the mother tongue of no one. But these domains had not interpenetrated enough to earn Grierson's categorical endorsement of one Hindi literary character. A programmatic cultivation of an eloquent national language was not the priority of his undertaking. A marriage of these two aspects was, however, important for the nationalist modernisers of Hindi keen to promote its status as national language in its modern form. To be the answer to the language question, the lingua franca Hindi had to be illustrious and cardinal, in possession of a sophisticated literary character and tradition.

An 'internal literary development', the search for a form of Hindi suitable for writing prose,

¹⁶⁶ Blank, p. 9.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Dante Alighieri, *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, trans. by Warman Welliver (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1981), cited by Blank, p. 10.

had accompanied the public demand for linguistic policy changes in the early years of the Hindi movement.¹⁶⁹ The template for the new literary medium was the Northern dialect -- the 'Khari Boli'. The fact that it was not Brajbhasha or Avadhi perhaps commended Khari Boli as the 'new' clean slate for the essays and novels that would memorialise Hindi's literary modernity.¹⁷⁰ In what Trivedi describes as a 'slow and stoutly resisted change wrought over several decades', Khari boli vied to be the medium for poetry too, since all other developed languages had one language for prose and poetry.¹⁷¹

The emergence in the late nineteenth century of Khari Boli as the preferential literary language threw into sharper relief its cultural otherness with Urdu given that the two languages were closer to each other in grammatical structure and basic vocabulary than either was to Brajbhasha or Avadhi. 'Hindi', Trivedi writes, 'now set up a new correlation with Urdu, one that could prove either mutually and harmoniously assimilative or sharply and divisively contestatory'.¹⁷² Mutual contentious agonism between Hindi and Urdu were increasingly more exact; Brajbhasha and Avadhi were rendered archaic; and a standardised Hindi took shape as the language of prose, poetry, and the public sphere. In the five-six decades following the late nineteenth century, the forms and movements of Hindi literature, Trivedi notes, went through an accelerated, 'telescopic' assimilation of trends that had taken several centuries to evolve in the English language.¹⁷³ The literature of the 'English colonial masters' had inevitably become an instructive model and horizon to which the idea of modern Hindi literature modulated by educated literati aspired.¹⁷⁴

The task of fashioning and promoting the modernity of Hindi literature had begun in earnest in the North Indian Hindi language public sphere since the late nineteenth century.

¹⁶⁹ Trivedi, 'The Progress of Hindi', p. 959.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ The Romantic movement in English, it was specifically pointed out, represented this consonance between the language of prose and poetry. The broadly corresponding Romantic movement in Hindi poetry ('Chayavad') to emerge in the 1920s was widely considered to be the moment of Khari Boli's maturation as the language of Hindi poetry as well; Trivedi, 'The Progress of Hindi', p. 960.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ In fiction, these were the romance, the popular novel of adventure and suspense, the novel of realism and the psychological novel; and in poetry, Romanticism, Modernism, and Progressivism. See Trivedi, 'The Progress of Hindi', p. 962.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Dominated by intellectual and social elites who had been schooled in Western education and had served in various departments of the British government, the public sphere oversaw the publication of several influential literary journals and works in which the shift to a Khari Boli Hindi literary culture was played out. The shift to a Hindi literary culture free from the legacies of Brajbhasha and Avadhi on the one hand, and of Urdu and Persian on the other, was not straightforward. Bharatendu Harishchandra (1850-1885) -- poet, dramatist, literary-critic, journalist, editor, and the widely-acknowledged father of modern Hindi literature -- had been a pioneering figure in this movement. He had received unequivocal praise from Grierson in the *MVLH*, which had cited evidence from Harishchandra's biographical essays on medieval poets (p. 22), lauded him as the best of the 'critical writer of a new school' (p. xxii), as a literary editor of renown (p. 22), and as the best representative of a Hindi modernity no longer bound by the dictates of ancient Sanskrit cosmology and 'endowed with a wider and more catholic mental vision' (p. 108).

Yet, much to Grierson's consternation, modern Hindi at the turn of the nineteenth century was increasingly imbibing the artificiality of Sanskrit. In the next set of landmark developments, this anxiety was symbolically assuaged in act of inversion: the very quality which created doubts about Hindi's potential for poetry was embraced as its unique character as it embarked on its literary modernity independently from Urdu, and as distinct from other regional languages in the subcontinent.

In defense of artifice: Khari Boli poetry and Hariaudh's *Priyaprasava*

The decided shift towards Sanskritised khari boli style was characteristic of the period widely known as the 'Dwivedi era' named after Hindi litterateur Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi. As the editor of an instrumental literary journal 'Sarasvati' launched in 1900 by the Nagari Pracarini Sabha, Dwivedi oversaw several experiments in the self-conscious re-invention of Hindi. Fashioning 'through peremptory editorial emendation the language they wrote', he

played an important role in what was called the ‘Hindi navjagran’ (Hindi Renaissance).¹⁷⁵ The journal was the first to publish several eminent writers and to advocate poetry in a Sanskritised form of Khari Boli.¹⁷⁶ The epic poem *Priyaprasava* (Departure/Journey of the Beloved, 1914) by Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay (nom de plume ‘Hariaudh’) was a landmark event of the Dwivedi era and did much to consolidate the reputation of modern Hindi poetry written in a artificial, sanskritised register.

Yet this was a sanskritisation qualified, adapted to serve a modernising endeavour in which idioms and aspects of other languages had been carefully incorporated. From Hariaudh’s prefatory remarks, it is possible to see that the prestige register promoted here sought to represent a cosmopolitan Hindi nationhood inasmuch as it desired to cut across distinct regional preferences, speak for a diverse populace in a voice that embraced useful aspects of ‘alien’ tongues while expunging others, and envision international fame. The language of *Priyaprasava* demonstrated that modern poetic Hindi could imbibe a Sanskritised vocabulary and register, syntax and prepositions drawn from Persian, and the conversational conventions from the mixed spoken registers across North India.¹⁷⁷ Expelled from this modern poetic regime were Persianate words and associations, the eroticism of Brajbhasha bhakti idioms and courtly vernacular poetry, as well as a few characteristics of classical Sanskrit grammar.

Priyaprasava enjoyed instant acclaim and longstanding canonical reputation as the first significant modern Hindi poem. In both content and language, it was an act of cultural revision. It encroached upon Brajbhasha’s thematic territory by having Krishna as hero, invoked through the devotional *bhakti* as well as sensual *riti* filters. The poem’s story was drawn from Sanskrit scripture (the *Bhagvata Purana*, said to be composed between 800 and 1000 BCE, and the source among other things of popular hagiographies of Krishna). It

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 985.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 986.

¹⁷⁷ Valerie Ritter, ‘The Language of Hariaudh’s “Priyaprasava”’: Notes toward an Archaeology of Modern Standard Hindi’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.3 (2004), pp. 417-38.

focused on the episode in which Krishna left his village in the Braj region to fulfil his divine destiny as the slayer of the evil king Kansa in the city of Mathura, leaving behind compatriot villagers in a state of longing. The poem humanised Krishna, portraying him as a great man (*Mahapurush*; as opposed to divinity or *Brahma*) fulfilling a civic destiny (p. 30).¹⁷⁸ One of most conspicuous ‘modernisations’ of poetic conventions in *Priyapravas* was in the versions of love presented and promoted in the poem’s didactic content. An eroticised romance, often with Krishna and his lover Radha as the protagonists, was the central conceit holding together the intricate typologies in much of Brajbhasha poetry, whose ethos was grounded in ancient Sanskrit poetic theory as well as contemporary courtly protocols.¹⁷⁹ The eroticism of Krishna poetry in Brajbhasha, which had earlier been dismissed by Grierson, was replaced in *Priyapravas* by ‘an idiom of parental affection’.¹⁸⁰ Also, Krishna and Radha’s romance had here remained unconsummated; Radha herself was not portrayed through the usual typology of a lovelorn, pining heroine. Described as an educated woman, she rejected angst, embraced chastity, and dedicated herself to a lifetime of social service. Like Krishna, she too was ‘rewritten as an exemplar of civic virtue’.¹⁸¹

These modernisations relied for their effects on creative interpretations of traditions. It is possible to see the *Priyapravas*’ descriptions of its modern heroine as a variation on the typologies of Brajbhasha *Riti* poetry, itself derived from traditional Sanskrit aesthetic theories. If traditional Sanskrit rhetorical theory (*Alankarshashtra*) generally subsumed *Nayikabheda* (typology of female characters) within the broader *Rasa* theory (theory of emotive states, codified in the ancient Sanskrit dramaturgical treatise *Natyashastra*), typology became a new discipline in its own right in the sixteenth- and seventeenth century

¹⁷⁸ Ayodhya Singh Upadhyay ‘Hariaudh’, *Priyapravas* (Banaras: Hindi Sahitya Kutira, 1961). Further references to Hariaudh’s *Priyapravas* are from this edition and given in the text.

¹⁷⁹ For an account of Brajbhasha courtly literature see Allison Busch, *Poetry of Kings: The Classical Hindi Literature of Mughal India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), in particular chapter 2, ‘The Aesthetic World of Riti Poetry’, pp. 65-99.

¹⁸⁰ Datta, p. 1543.

¹⁸¹ Valerie Ritter, ‘Epiphany in Radha’s Arbor: Nature and the Reform of Bhakti in Hariaudh’s *Priyapravas*’, in *Alternative Krishnas: Regional and Vernacular Variations on a Hindu Deity*, ed. by Guy L. Beck (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), pp. 177-208 (p. 180).

efflorescence of courtly Brajbhasha poetry.¹⁸² *Riti* literary theorists were particularly known for producing ‘the perfect catalogue’ of female characters in love, their nuances of behaviour, moods, and ways of expressing affection. Increasingly intricate typologies and sub-typologies were developed; there was, for instance, a tripartite division according to changes in a woman’s personality in various stages of a romantic relationship, or the degree to which a woman might be quick to anger at a straying lover, and even the styles of expressing indignation.¹⁸³ Such excessive classifications, with ever increasing permutations, were occasions for poets to display their virtuosity. As reflected in colonial-era assessments such as Grierson’s, this had earned *Riti* poets the belated reputation of being mannerist rather than ‘good’, over-sexualised, and stale products of a decadent culture given to repetition.¹⁸⁴ Grierson had demoted Krishna poetry even in the devotional *Bhakti* idiom by noting its ‘almost selfish’ essence; this ‘all-absorbing, individual love’ (p. vii-viii) for an amorous Krishna was less desirable than a Christian-adjacent love of one’s neighbour as oneself, better embodied in principled gods like Rama.

Descriptions of Radha as the modern heroine in *Priyaprasava* did not abandon the conventions of *nayikabheda*. It is possible to argue that they formed yet another typology: that of a chaste, cerebral, socially-engaged woman, who might prefer urbane community-building to pastoral amatory liaisons. The conventional male gaze of the *Riti* typology had expanded its repertoire. The *nakha-shikha-varman* (top-to-toe descriptions) used for *nayikabheda* were considerably toned down in the poem, and referred to more than just physical characteristics. Words for love were prefixed with ‘*sat*’ (true, pure; *sat-prem*, for instance, would refer to ‘pure love’), underscoring the divergence from former, supposedly licentious traditions.¹⁸⁵ In a telling admission, Hariaudh shares in his preface that the poem’s original title was *Brajangana Vilaap* (the Lament of the woman of Braj), which he

¹⁸² Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, p. 79.

¹⁸³ *Riti* literary theory, as Allison Busch points out, was a ‘highly structured semiotic system that enabled the production, performance, and interpretation of Brajbhasha court poetry’. As such, the measure of literary success or skill was inextricable from demonstrations of creative familiarity with sophisticated rhetorical elements before an audience of connoisseurs; See Busch, *Poetry of Kings*, pp. 84-85.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-83.

¹⁸⁵ Ritter, ‘Epiphany in Radha’s Arbour’, p. 183.

changed for undisclosed reasons left for the reader to guess at after reading the poem (p. 4).

Similar adaptations were afoot even with respect to the question of literary language, which was an overwhelming concern in Hariaudh's preface. Working as a defense and a discourse of Hindi poetry, the preface justified using a calibrated sanskritised register for modern Hindi poetry developed through an aware assessment of other poetic registers and languages in which Indian poetry had been composed through the ages. Hariaudh opened his preface by expressing his desire to write poetry in a language which had a history of significant works including the *Ramcharitmanas* and the *Padmawat*. This marked his work as being part of a continuous literary tradition of Khari Boli Hindi, in which distinctions between Brajbhasha and Awadhi appeared irrelevant. There was no sense of the discontinuity implied in Grierson's invention narrative of modern, artificial Hindi. Moreover, the Hindi literary culture whose modernisation Hariaudh hoped to enable was demarcated not through its linguistic geography but through a lineage of canonical works. This was a Hindi implicated in several levels of identification. Situated with Brajbhasha and Awadhi, Hindi was the '*Matrbhasha*' (mother tongue) (p. 1). Elsewhere, when Hariaudh proposed Sanskritisation to facilitate pan-Indian intelligibility, it was deemed the '*Rashtrabhasha*' (national language) (p. 7).

The ambivalence about classifying Hindi as demotic or formal was successfully mitigated in the work's reception as the epitome of pure Hindi.¹⁸⁶ Rajendra Prasad, the first President of independent India, praised the work for its kinship with Sanskrit, saying: 'one who wants to learn Sanskrit through Hindi should read the works of Hariaudh'.¹⁸⁷ However, crafting

¹⁸⁶ The canonical reception of Hariaudh's work largely overlooks the fact that *Priyaprasas* remained a work in progress for several years during which his oeuvre continued to develop. Even though the text was increasingly Sanskritised in the editions between 1914 and 1941, he did produce shorter works in other registers and genres. As Valerie Ritter shows, Hariaudh appeared to have softened his stance by the 1920s and expanded his repertoire to write in more local styles, often using Brajbhasha and Urdu metres; Ritter, 'Language', p. 436. These apparent contradictions between literary practice, linguistic polemic and canonical reception had been characteristic even of Bharatendu Harishchandra's work.

¹⁸⁷ Ritter, 'Language', p. 419.

modern Hindi as a conduit to artificial Sanskrit was not the ostensible design of Hariaudh. In envisaging Hindi as the linguistic object created in poetry, Hariaudh promoted a composite modernity, which would draw from the best of tradition. Sanskritisation, then, was proposed within a rhetoric of inclusion and enrichment. Giving examples of mellifluity, Hariaudh invoked examples from poetry in Sanskrit, Brajbhasha, Awadhi, Urdu, Persian and even the mixed forms of rekhta. He advocated using Sanskrit metres and Brajbhasha words, which were also to be found in Urdu (p. 53). Yet this was an unquestionably Sanskrit-dominant Hindi. Hariaudh's own descriptor was '*Sanskrit-garbhit*' (p. 8): a Hindi imbued (literally, pregnant) with Sanskrit.

A large part of the preface was engaged in defending the infusion of Sanskrit into Khari Boli Hindi against the charge that it would diminish the natural form of the language. Some of these defensive arguments were rhetorical, while others relied upon a more linguistic analysis. Hariaudh's modesty topos showcased a brief history of Sanskrit traces in the vernacular tradition. He exhorted critics to appreciate experimental efforts from modest figures like himself, who could scarcely turn the tide in the affairs of Hindi literature.¹⁸⁸ Defending his style against the charge that it was difficult to understand and not amenable to good poetry, he made comparisons with the Sanskrit-infused Avadhi works of Tulsidas, whose immense popularity exemplified that great texts were not destroyed by Sanskrit (p. 10). He cited several other canonical works, which were all registered by Grierson as the best examples of modern vernacular literature, to show the persistence of Sanskrit words and forms.

Hariaudh's preface cited many examples of Sanskrit poetry to dismantle claims that it seemed artificial, by introducing criteria of softness and sweetness -- '*Komal*' (soft) and '*Kant*' (pleasant) (p. 12). These were criteria based in orality: softness was associated with ease of recitation; sweetness with the pleasure of listening. It listed ways in which the more

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

natural vernaculars also adapted and ‘softened’ Sanskrit forms, offered examples from Brajbhasha, Urdu, and Persian to illustrate the respective degree of softness and sweetness which Sanskrit could also display (pp. 20-21). Appeals to Sanskrit’s antiquity framed all these justifications; it was, after all, the ‘*poojya*’ (revered) and ‘*prachin*’ (ancient) tongue of the subcontinent (p. 7). Though ostensibly rooted in ‘natural’ orality, its self-conscious evocation of Sanskrit metrical and rhetorical legacy invoked ‘a textuality that Orientalism glorified’.¹⁸⁹ As Ritter sums it up, Hariaudh’s Hindi evoked ‘equally a former Sanskritic cosmopolitanism (albeit filtered through nineteenth-century colonial thought), and a possible future Sanskritic linguistic cosmopolitanism (a linking lexicon between Indian languages), meant to be on a par with any literature of the world’.¹⁹⁰

Hariaudh’s appeal was not for Sanskrit, but for a Khari Boli adapted to its influence. It was his endeavour to show that there was beauty possible in its poetry (p. 29). His preface was also an exercise in proposing an objectivity which he thought was missing from contemporary criticism of Sanskritisation. Despite his own formal register that did not correspond to spoken language, Hariaudh’s perplexing claim was that Sanskritised Khari boli was the literary analogue for the common speech; Brajbhasha was too archaic and removed from everyday language (pp. 27-28). Adaptations and modernisations were necessary to increase the ‘prestige’ of the language. In that, the time was right to redeem Khari Boli’s reputation (p. 28). The sanskritisation he proposed was then a careful process of applying Sanskrit metrics, with variations in syntax, shortened syllables, colloquial copula and postpositions -- all of which could showcase the distinctive mellifluousness of Hindi literary character. On display was an attempt to vernacularise Sanskrit rather than classicise Hindi.

Reading Hariaudh’s preface to *Priyaprasava* as a manifesto for Hindi poetic modernity, we can see a complex list of demands made on the language: sweetness, softness, intelligibility,

¹⁸⁹ Ritter, ‘Epiphany in Radha’s Arbour’, p. 179.

¹⁹⁰ Ritter, ‘Language’, p. 419.

31erudition, approval from aesthetes and connoisseurs, international and inter-regional prestige, and cosmopolitan modernity. In that, it addressed learned Indians and international orientalists, appeared to speak for a modern Hindu polity looking for a rallying sign, and for a modern language in search of a literature.

Declarative gestures of Literary Modernity: Samuel Daniel and Hariaudh

Daniel's call for rhyme to be the English literary character in 1603 had heralded a regime-change in the story of English modernity. To make rhyme a criterion for excellence was to transfer power to that which had been previously disempowered. As Ginzburg has argued, the declaration of independence from Continental mores entailed in this event had a distinctive role to play in the breaking away and 'insularisation' of England.¹⁹¹ The very quality that made English poetry seem 'inferior' and insufficient could make it unique, current, separate from and yet on a par with other vernaculars on the Continent. Tuning Ginzburg's observations to an assessment of Hariaudh's *Priyaprawas* as an event in the story of Hindi literary modernity, it is possible to see an analogous inversion shaping the discourse of Hindi poetry and declaring for it a calibrated independence. Sanskritisation -- the very tendency which had inhibited its modernity in Grierson's invention narrative -- was argued for as the sign of its self-reliance and potential for independence. Grierson's portrayal of early modernity as represented by the literary cultures of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was hagiographical. In imagining this period in both England and India as a chain of distinct events that had already attained greatness, its works, authors, and impact were imbued with a classical aura. Metaphors of the 'golden age' and 'renaissance' hinted at a schematic equivalence between the respective periods, and aided the chronological organisation of the Indian literary past.

Grierson's appreciation of nuance and variance was highly selective, and ultimately

¹⁹¹ Ginzburg, p. 42.

subservient to the flattening injunctions of literary historiography and orientalist empiricism. The *MVLH* became an occasion to display the rigour of his research and commitment to the complexities of the vernaculars; to project British cultural interventions as salutary; and to endorse certain types of literary evaluations either by explicitly preferring or quietly excluding some works/styles over others. This attitude which directed Grierson's use of an 'early modern' past and its literary wealth also extended to his assessment of the colonial present and modern Hindi's supposed poetic penury. The early modern period in England and in colonial India was a time of greater flux than Grierson's classicised rendering could, or needed to, represent. Actors within literary movements, however, operated in a more animated reality in which there were more than a few contestants vying to be identified as the characteristic, the current, and the modern. Driven by an urgency to differentiate and to 'make it new', Daniel's and Hariaudh's declarations reflected strategic negotiations within the complex of available and contentious realities. Where Grierson's literary inventory was a gesture of imperial mastery, Daniel's and Hariaudh's trend-making inversions could be seen as 'modern' reactions to 'classicising' trends. The gothic revival implicit in Daniel's *Defense* and Hariaudh's cosmopolitan sanskritisation in *Priyapravas* signaled analogous reflexes for vernaculars setting out in search of new idioms for their modern literatures.

CONCLUSION

Forked Tongues and Long Shadows

National languages are therefore almost always semi-artificial constructs and occasionally, like modern Hebrew, virtually invented. They are the opposite of what nationalist mythology supposes them to be, namely the primordial foundation of national culture and the matrices of the national mind.

— Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*¹

Appeals to the past are among the commonest strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainty about whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps.

— Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*²

Engaging with the making of vernacular standards in early modern England and colonial India, the preceding chapters have shown that the movement towards a standard linguistic modernity was far from straightforward. This thesis has explored the projects of early linguists of English and Hindustani by focusing on the discursive currents that shaped the inconsistencies contained in their statements. To do so, I have followed the tracks of the comparative rhetorical moves in texts from the two periods as their authors sought to promote their grammatical, lexicographic, or literary-historical renditions of the respective languages. Taking a cue from one such move by British linguists of Hindustani -- multifaceted counter-chronological comparisons between early modern England and India -- I have strategically associated the two moments in the light of the resemblances between them to observe the insights such a cross-reading of texts and events could yield. This cross-reading enabled a common focus on early linguistic works for the two languages, in which their programmes were defined by the relational dynamics and anxieties at the level of author, user, language-communities, markets, precedents, and cultural and imperial identity.

¹ E.J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p. 54.

² Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 1.

Documenting the comparative rhetoric that negotiated a range of similarities and differences drew attention to the ambivalence in early attempts to promote vernaculars considered too unstructured to merit systematic description, too local to admit lexical variety, too porous to filter influx properly, too insular to be accessible, and too subservient to express with flair their own identity. The relatively unregulated market for vernacular linguistics afforded unique opportunities to language-entrepreneurs facing various imperatives of self-fashioning. To justify using a vernacular idiom for a vernacular grammar, the first English grammar proposed an alternative criterion for the ‘success’ of English among non-English speakers by applauding its ‘ease’ rather than rejecting its unsophistication. Using weak arguments about Hindustani’s structural affinity with English, John Gilchrist presented its liberation from the hegemony of Sanskrit and Persian by envisaging its future as the ‘grand popular language’ across India and, fleetingly, as a part of a global linguistic order. Lexicographers faced ‘new’ and ‘strange’ incursions into local idioms, managed the dilemma of protecting *and* enriching linguistic identities, and prescribed limits while promising everyone a share in lexical bounty. Being self-initiated projects attuned to market-forces of different kinds, early modern dictionaries imported referents supplied by new encounters and cultural traffic, circulated local coinages, and offered foreign words conditional citizenship in the language community of their readers. Prefaces to the glossaries of technical and colloquial words in British-Indian usage expressed the British anxiety of self-definition in and through India and its words. The rhetoric of colonial dictionaries sought to strike a balance between assimilating with and maintaining superior distance to the otherness of imperial subjects.

We also saw that not all others were created equal, and not all relationships were consistently defined. Early English grammars did not immediately escape the long shadow of Latin despite making inroads into Latin models of grammars; continental lifeworlds aroused feelings of both aspiration and envy; the unskilled and women were valorised as the ‘plain speakers’ who nevertheless could do with erudite affectations learnt from hard

word glossaries; English poetic practice courted alliance with Greco-Latin styles or threw down the gauntlet in a contest between Gothic and Greek lineages of poetic forms; Indian vernaculars were either crass jargons or an overflowing cabinet of curiosities; knowing the language of command enabled British commanding officers to exercise benevolence and to be vigilant to natives' violence. Presented in a filial bond with English, Hindustani was constructed as a colonial object that was 'the same but not quite'.³

The fates of English and Hindi literature, once having shared a 'golden age', diverged in a British account to make room for an episode of regressive medievalism directed by Mughal imperial rivals. A British-led renaissance 'invented' Hindi only to deem that its modern poetic output was altogether too artificial to be freely expressive. Early assertions of Hindi poetry's independence from British judgements, its own supposedly outmoded pasts, and 'other' literary dialects, echoed a seventeenth-century English move: the supposedly stilted 'Khari Boli' Hindi, like beggarly English rhyme, decided to wear its distinctive voice as a badge of nationalist pride.

Mapping and cross-reading these interactions in texts and events from the two periods have thrown into relief that acts of comparisons served insular concerns, ambivalent reflexes characterised categorical moves. When British reformers of Indian vernaculars mobilised comparisons with English early modernity, there was an advised quality to their choice. Themselves forging an imperial character ever adjusting to winds of political change, British reformers reached out to the early modern past to feed their rhetoric of origins and cultural character. The use of comparativism in early modern England too supported various permutations of national and cultural identity in the face of worries about cultural provinciality in Europe and the desire for cultural and imperial prestige. The

³I borrow this phrase from Homi Bhabha's description of the concept of 'colonial mimicry' in the discourse of post-Enlightenment English colonialism, which is 'the desire for a reformed, recognisable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite'; Homi Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse', in *The Location of Culture* (London, New York: Routledge, 1994) pp. 121-131 (pp. 122-124).

significance of the past and its paradigms was assessed with respect to the negotiations it made possible in the present. Upon reading one moment in the light of themes and reflexes shared with another, we can see the rhetorical universe of the selected texts as negotiating a resonant set of anxieties despite their disparate contexts and chronological distance.

Associating them together in the act of cross-reading emphasises the ambivalences, echoes, repetitions, reversals and emendations in projects touting certainty, consistency, and stability.

Contemporary mobilisations of linguistic and national identity can be insightfully approached by attending to the ambivalence of their models, their anxious competitiveness and the dynamics of self-fashioning therein. Appeals to visions of the past have continued to legislate cultural identity in both Britain and India. In the more recent past, we can observe the rhetoric of national or standard language rehearsing familiar appeals, taking familiar turns, and serving familiar wills to power. Driven by an imperative to find a representative national language for a diverse federation of provinces embarking to form a Republic, Indian thinkers in the wake of its partition and Independence worried, among other things, about the threats linguistic rivalries (between Hindi and Urdu, and Hindi and other regional vernaculars) posed to the dream of a secular, democratic, modern Indianness.⁴ A variety of arguments about the language best suited to replace English were showcased in the Parliamentary debates of 1949. One proposed developing a ‘simple vigorous, chaste, sweet style of Sanskrit’ on the basis of a belief that all provincial languages ‘derive their origin from Sanskrit’; identifying Hindustani as the most useful secular lingua franca, another insisted that Urdu, Hindi, and Hindustani were three names for different literary styles of the same language of which Hindustani included ‘each and every shade of

⁴For instance, B. R. Ambedkar’s careful deliberation about the problem linguistic states advocated a policy of a Hindi unilingualism to ease racial and cultural tensions, while M.K. Gandhi proposed developing a mixed Hindustani composite of Hindi and Urdu as the national language as a means of symbolic unity between Hindu and Muslim populations; see B. R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Linguistic States* (Delhi: B. R. Ambedkar, 1955; repr. Aligarh: Anand Sahitya Sadan, 1989); a chronology of Gandhi’s public opinions and publications about Hindustani language can be found in Daud Rahbar, ‘Gandhi and the Hindi-Urdu Question’, in *Indian Critiques of Gandhi*, ed. by Harold Coward (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), pp. 217-38.

the spoken language of the North'.⁵ The Sahitya Akademi of India (National Academy of Letters), founded in 1954, aimed to build a consciousness that 'Indian literature is one, though written in many languages'.⁶ These views did not all share the same presuppositions about Indian provincial languages or similar secular ideologies. Yet they were united in the inherited recognition that a provisional standard was necessary, and that a more sustainable standard was needed the better to suit a democratic national character. The gap between these beliefs and diverse realities on the ground is affirmed by the fact that no national language was ever laid down in the Indian Constitution.⁷

Despite the official bilingualism of the Republic and the multilingualism of federal states, the rhetoric of 'national language' continues to be deployed by purveyors of Hindu ethno-nationalism in ways ranging from the silly to the insidious. In June 2017, a Union minister of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party caused a stir by calling Hindi India's 'Rashtra Bhasha' (national language) in a speech which warned that the 'obsession' with English was against national interest.⁸ Though ostensibly a polemic against English-focused education, the minister's comments fuelled the idea that the standard, Sanskritised Hindi associated with upper-caste Hinduism should be the link language across the country. A month earlier, a mob defaced an Urdu couplet in praise of Delhi being painted as part of a government-commissioned public art project. In a twist that was both egregious and ironic considering that the term 'Urdu' first referred to the language spoken in and around Delhi, the artists

⁵ Extracts from the statement of Lakshmi Kanta Maitra and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, respectively, in the Constituent Assembly Debates, 1949 cited by Devapriya Roy, 'It's Mother Language Day. Which 'Mother Language' Did India's Lawmakers Want After Independence?', *Scroll.in*, 21 Feb 2017, <<https://scroll.in/article/829934/its-mother-language-day-which-mother-language-did-indias-lawmakers-want-after-independence>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

⁶ Sahitya Akademi, 'Current Programme,' *First Annual Report*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi archives, 1954), p. 14.

⁷ To begin with, Hindi (using the devanagari script and numerals) and English were both assigned the status of 'official languages' for the Indian Republic in 1950, with an understanding that English would continue to be used for executive, judicial and legal purposes for 15 years. In the wake of violent protests against the imposition of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking Southern Indian states, the Official Languages Act in 1963 provided for the continued use of English beyond 1965, and a 1967 amendment to the Act guaranteed an effectively indefinite policy of bilingualism for the Republic; Individual states can specify their own official languages.

⁸ 'Hindi Our National Language, Says Venkaiah Naidu. Gets Opposition Retort', ed. by Divyanshu Dutta Roy, *NDTV*, 24 June 2017 <<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/hindi-our-national-language-cant-progress-without-it-venkaiah-naidu-1716504>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

were abused for being ‘anti-nationals’ and forced to replace the couplet with a Hindi slogan for ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ (Clean India Movement): an anti-littering initiative. These demonstrations are a part of a worrying spectrum of violence against any cultural, social, and religious ‘otherness’, which seems to be encouraged by the State’s curiously complicit silence or disingenuous condemnation.

A specious philological argument was peddled on October 28, 2017 in a speech by right-wing ideologue Mohan Bhagwat, who disregarded the Persian etymology of the term ‘Hindustan’ by saying that it meant the ‘land of the Hindus’ just like ‘Germany is a country of Germans, Britain is a country of Britishers, and America is the country of Americans’.⁹ ‘The term Hindu,’ he said, ‘covers all those who are the sons of Bharat Mata [Mother India], descendants of Indian ancestors and who live in accordance with the Indian culture’. He went on generously to promise that no ‘others’ will be discriminated against in the ‘land of Hindus’. This species of argument was reminiscent of the faux-historicist rhetoric of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, a prominent intellectual forebear of the Hindu right, who coined in 1923 the term ‘Hindutva’ (Hinduness) for the collective ethnic essence of Hindus and Indians. Savarkar’s rhetoric reached further back into the past to ‘discover’ philological roots in a Pre-Islamic Persia with which Hindu-Indians could possibly share an Aryan ancestry. The word ‘Hindu, Hindi, Hind,’ he wrote, ‘dates not from Mohammedan Persian but from ancient language of Iran, the Zend’.¹⁰ Echoing Gilchrist’s heuristic genealogy, Savarkar too made analogies between Hindustan and England:

There was a time when the term ‘England’ had fallen so low in England itself in the estimation of her Norman conquerors that it became a formula for swearing against each

⁹ ‘Hindustan Is Country Of Hindus But It Doesn’t Exclude Others: RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat’, DNA India, 28 Oct 2017 <<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-hindustan-is-country-of-hindus-but-it-doesn-t-exclude-others-rss-chief-mohan-bhagwat-2555916>> [accessed 1 November 2017].

¹⁰ V. D. Savarkar, *Hindutva* (1923), 5th edn. (Bombay: Veer Savarkar Prakashan, 1969), p. 73.

other! 'May I become an Englishman!' was the strongest form of self-denunciation and calling a Norman 'an Englishman' an unpardonable insult.¹¹

England, he reminded his readers, did not become Normandy; instead, the word Norman became 'a historical fossil' and the English language came to 'own the largest empire the world has yet seen!'¹²

Intimations of empire are discernible in more systematic mobilisations of domestic cultural policy and international diplomacy to promote a Hindu-associated Hindi within and beyond India. The government-sponsored Vishwa Hindi Sammelan (World Hindi Summit) meets in locations across the world to discuss means of bringing about a 'purification' of Hindi, seeks to represent a Hindi-speaking diaspora, and to establish international consensus about its wider relevance. A World Hindi Secretariat, operative in Mauritius since 2008, has among its objectives the international promotion of Hindi and campaigning for its recognition as an official United Nations Language. In March 2017, the President of India accepted nearly all of the recommendations made by the Parliamentary Committee on Official Language to promote the use of Hindi within India, which included compulsory teaching of Hindi in all schools that followed the national curriculum, and the compilation of transliterated lists of Hindi to English words to make difficult words more accessible. Attempts to promote this inkhorn register of Hindi at the cost of regional languages have been met with protests in states where non-Hindi vernaculars are dominant, in the English language press, and via sustained mockery on social media.

Pockets of political impositions and cultural resistances aside, the language we can call Hindi continues to grow in a multifaceted lifeworld and enjoys a fertile ambiguity of definition. It has rich private, social, and political lives, in which it shares varying degrees of intimacy with colloquial cognates and other prestige dialects including Urdu and English.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 74.

¹² Ibid.

Some of these domains are more porous than others: if Urdu and English codes are exiled from the ‘official’ tongue, they continue to enliven literary, cultural, and social expression. Today, everyday Hindi is as at ease with idiosyncratic code-switching as it was in its mixed manifestations through the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. English itself continues to be one of the biggest markers of cultural capital, offering for many a ticket to upward social mobility and cosmopolitanism.

The rise to prominence of a globalised English has been an abiding story for modern times. Its rise to prominence as the pre-eminent language of academia, lingua franca of global commerce, a ‘global literary vernacular’, its success at becoming naturalised among those it has colonised and even becoming a potent language for post-colonial critique -- has been, as Aamir Mufti has said, characterised by a ‘retroactive ability’ in its contemporary form to ‘suspend its own pre-history’.¹³

Calibrations of histories and pre-histories have been instrumental to the protean self-fashioning of English as it emerged from provincial shadows in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, into its golden age credentials deployed in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century India, and its somewhat paradoxical contemporary position as a politically-neutral hegemon with space within its domain even for critiques of Englishness.

The seemingly inviolable dominion and cosmopolitanism of the English language have, however, faced some rhetorical challenges in the wake of Britain’s vote in June 2016 to ‘Brexit’ from the European Union. In May 2017, amid an acrimonious exchange of broadsides between the UK and the EU, the president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, said that ‘slowly but surely English is losing importance in Europe’ before

¹³ Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 12, 16-17.

switching to French in his speech to an assembly of European diplomats.¹⁴ Discussing in June 2016 the legal repercussions of the Brexit referendum, the chair of the European Parliament's constitutional affairs committee, Danuta Hubner, said that 'English is our official language because it has been notified by the UK. If we don't have the UK, we don't have English'.¹⁵ Though this dramatic consequence is highly unlikely given that contemporary English can no longer be described limitedly as the language of the UK, Hubner was referring to its official identity as a relatively ostracised EU idiom given that it had been nominated by only one of the three member states who had it as an official language.¹⁶ A semi-humorous article in the *Guardian*, under the instructively-titled series 'The Global Student', addressed the question: 'Which language would ease our way in the post-Brexit world?'¹⁷ Linguists reassured readers that there were no threats to the longevity of English, but evaluated other potential claimants for the role of a global lingua franca. German was useful and relatively familiar to English speakers; Mandarin was useful but difficult; French was useful and prestigious; Russian or Arabic were strategically useful and 'very important in Germany because of the refugee situation'; Spanish was easy and widespread; Afrikaans was straightforward though not very useful; and Frisian -- the historical mid-point between English, German, Dutch -- could be a potential replacement for English as a 'middle-ground language' but was too limited to be useful. The linguists assigned grades to each language based on its difficulty and usefulness, echoing William Bullokar's hypothetical persuasions in 1580 that English could be easy and useful to strangers of all nations. Age-old cultural rivalries with Continental others and xenophobic sentiments have also resurfaced in absurd ways, such as in the language of an unsuccessful petition to the UK Parliament that called for the removal of all French words from the

¹⁴Jennifer Rankin, 'Brexit: English Is Losing Its Importance In Europe, Says Juncker', *The Guardian*, 5 May 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/may/05/brexit-english-is-losing-its-importance-in-europe-says-juncker>> [accessed 7 September 2017].

¹⁵ Francesco Guarascio, 'Au Revoir Anglais? EU Could Drop English As Official Tongue After Brexit', *Reuters*, 27 June 2016 <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-language/au-revoir-anglais-eu-could-drop-english-as-official-tongue-after-brexit-idUSKCN0ZD2AC>> [accessed 28 June 2017].

¹⁶ The UK chose English, while Ireland chose Gaelic, and Malta picked Maltese.

¹⁷ Tess Reidy, 'Which Language Would Ease Our Way In The Post-Brexit World?', *The Guardian*, 24 May 2017 <<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2017/may/24/which-language-would-ease-our-way-in-the-post-brexit-world>> [accessed 25 May 2017].

cover of new British passports. The petition which ran for six months before closing in February 2017 said:

The vote to leave the EU means people voted to Take Back Control. Control of their borders, their culture and their language. Whether ‘Dieu et mon droit’ and ‘Honi soit qui mal y pense’ have existed as mottos in England for ages is irrelevant. French is an EU language and has no place on a UK passport.¹⁸

Here too was an instance of the anxiety of international ostracism being met with reactive insular pride.

The identity politics of Hindi and English today largely displays only a selective remembrance of their pre-histories. It is often forgotten that the form of Hindi being promoted aggressively by Hindu nationalists had an undeniably colonial provenance, and continues to be enmeshed with the global empire of English. The empire of English too was a companion to its colonial empire; its dominion derived less from the innate virtues of insularity than from opportune contacts with ‘immigrant’ cultural influences which were inconsistently Anglicised. Anglophone and Indian vernacular cultural systems, as Mufti has argued, were less separate than imagined given their shared emergence within the confluence of orientalist revolutions in eighteenth-century global imagination. Seemingly continuous lineages were hardly consistent and rendered dogmatic only retroactively. Exigencies of language reform were addressed not by official decree but by dilettantes anxious to self-fashion, and to curry favour with patrons and customers in a rapidly changing market. Further, the rhetoric framing inaugural grammars, dictionaries, and literary histories had a flair for inconsistency. Reading recurrent inconsistencies, in works whose objective was to make consistent, throws into relief that English and Hindustani

¹⁸ *Petitions: UK Government and Parliament* [online], archived petition, closed on 5 February 2017 <<https://petition.parliament.uk/archived/petitions/163824>> [accessed 1 November 2017]

were modernised in a protean discourse in thrall to injunctions of self-fashioning in the face of a range of transforming realities.

Contemporary recursions make it possible to see that protean tropes from the past continue to wield a power that is citational as well as incantatory: they refer and represent; and when recited at strategic junctures, are capable of summoning deeply divisive apparitions. What, then, can be the critical value of mapping reflexes that haunt the relationship between language and identity, which insists on strict rules of belonging in one domain but is also happy to flourish ambiguously elsewhere? For a compelling imperative, I turn via Mufti to Theodor W. Adorno's thoughts about the German language that plague the returning exile caught in a web of traditions, stereotypes, ideologies, and momentous modern history. Stressing the need for critical self-reflection, Adorno writes: "The returning exile, having lost the native relation to what is his own, must unite the most intimate relation to his own language with untiring vigilance regarding any swindle which it promotes."¹⁹

It is this spirit of vigilance that has driven this enquiry into the ambivalent dynamics of projects seeking to define and legislate forms of languages and identities. Inviting two historical junctures into one comparative frame has been an attempt to soften the grip of insular frames of reference, and to test ways of questioning the language of reform and the swindles it can promote.

¹⁹Theodor W. Adorno, 'On the Question: "What Is German?"', trans. by Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique* 36 (1985), 121–31 (p. 130); Mufti cites Adorno in support of his own cultivation of a 'vigilant and split' relationship to English so that criticism in English can work *as* critical thinking about English and its ubiquity as the global literary vernacular; *Forget English!*, p. 19.

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Declaration

I declare that I have referenced all resources and aids that were used and assure that the paper is authored independently on this basis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Driming" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Signature:

Date: **SEPTEMBER 17, 2018**