Race, Evolution and Public Spheres: The Vernacularization of Science in Colonial India, 1860-1930

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presented by

Luzia Judith Savary
MA, Heidelberg University

born on 29.03.1983
citizen of
Payerne, VD

accepted on the recommendation of

Prof. Dr. Harald Fischer-Tiné
Prof. Dr. Margrit Pernau
Prof. Dr. Douglas E. Haynes

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Presented by Luzia Judith Savary, MA, born 29.03.1983, Basel, Switzerland.

Accepted on recommendation of:

Prof. Dr. Harald Fischer-Tiné (ETH Zurich)
Prof. Dr. Margrit Pernau (Max-Planck-Institute Berlin)
Prof Dr. Douglas E. Haynes (Dartmouth College Hanover)

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# CHAPTER I

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A Note to Transliteration and Translation

The system of diacritical marks followed in this thesis is based on that outlined in the following dictionaries.


Personal and place names are not presented with diacritics; the same holds for Indian words current in English. In transliterations from Hindi, the inherent vowel ‘a’ in words of Sanskrit origin has been omitted unless it occurs as part of standardized English spelling.

All translations from Hindi and Urdu to English are by me, unless specified otherwise.

In citations, English words in italics indicate English usage within the Hindi/Urdu original.
Introduction

Eighteen years ago in a compelling research article Sumit Guha has shown how colonial ideas of aboriginality based on racial anthropology continued to thrive in Independent India. In the few pages dedicated to the colonial period he quotes a small newspaper excerpt that appeared in 1890 on the pages of the *Avadh Akhbār*—one of the major North Indian Urdu newspapers of the time—describing colonial census commissioner Herbert Hope Risley’s racial classification of Indian society. The excerpt stems from an already translated quote in *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal* (1895), a book written by Khondkar Fuzli Rubbee, Diwan of the Nawab of Murshidabad. The excerpt reads:

> The physical measurements and anthropological examination of the people have revealed the existence of different races of men in Bengal, namely the Aryan and the aboriginal. The former is represented by the Brahmans, Rajputs and Sikhs. These generally have tall forms, light complexion and fine noses, and are in general appearance superior to the middle class of Europeans. The Kols are a specimen of the latter. They have short stature, dark complexion and snub noses, and approach the African blacks in appearance ... the higher [a man's origin], the more he resembles the Europeans in appearance.

Juxtaposing the excerpt with racialist statements made by Rajendralal Mitra and Anantha Krishna Iyer, two important figures of the contemporary Calcutta intelligentsia, Guha interprets the piece as evidence of the ways in which upper class elites tried to ‘enhance their own status in the emerging knowledge system’. If we read through Rubbee’s treatise—from which Guha took the excerpt—this argument effectively applies. In his book, Rubbee incorporated the *Avadh Akhbār* quote into a

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2 The book was the author’s own translation his original Urdu work, titled *Haqīqat-e Musalmān-e Bangalah*. Khondkar Fuzli Rubbee, *The Origin of the Musalmans of Bengal* (Calcutta, Thaker Spink & Co.: 1895), pp. 91-92.

3 Ibid., p. 91. Rubbee’s quote is longer that this. I reproduce only the part quoted by Guha. Quoted in Guha, ‘Lower Strata, Older Races’, p. 428.

4 Guha, ‘Lower Strata, Older Races’, p. 428. Rajendralal Mitra (1823-1891) was an outstanding Sanskrit scholar of the time who acted as ‘native informant’ to Risley and former census commissioners regarding the order of social precedence of different castes. The Kerala born Anantha Krishna Iyer (1861-1937) was the first Reader of Ethnology at Calcutta University.
chapter, titled ‘The Physique, Features, and Characteristic Traits of the Musalmans of Bengal’, in which he contended that the physical features of the Muslims of Bengal (of both high and low social status) proved that they ‘were not descended from the original native races and tribes’ of that place. This is all very well—but to what extent did Guha’s argument apply to the author of the Avadh Akhbār article? Was the original excerpt selected and translated by Rubbee followed or preceded by comments, which might have further explained, supported, criticized or made fun of Risley’s theory? Did the same or the subsequent numbers of the journal contain other articles commenting and discussing the racial classification of the people of Bengal? Which Urdu words did the author use for ‘specimen’ and ‘African blacks’ and which semantic shifts did they imply?

While I have not been able to find the quoted issue of the Avadh Akhbār that would have presumably enabled me to answer these questions, my aim in reporting the example above is not to write a pedantic critique of Guha’s otherwise well-researched article. Rather, I wish to highlight that an in-depth exploration of vernacular sources might provide a more varied and complex picture of the ways in which South Asian actors reinterpreted racial concepts in British India. To verify this claim with respect to the Hindi and Urdu public spheres between 1860 and 1930 and, indeed, to depict and discuss this complex ensemble of racial concepts in the Raj is the aim of this thesis.

The study of race and racism, both at the level of discourse and practice, has gained exciting new ground from being viewed through a transnational approach. For more than a decade now ‘new imperial histories’, ‘entangled histories’, and global histories have been emphasizing the fact

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7 The expression ‘entangled history’ derives from the Franco-German current of histoire croisée or Verflechtungsgeschichte. See Sebastian Conrad & Shalini Randeria. Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften. Frankfurt am Main/New York:
that historical relationships between societies—especially between metropoles and colonies—influence both sides so strongly that neither of them can be understood and explained without referring to the other. Scholars who have taken this insight seriously have produced a vast field of fascinating research on the global circulation of knowledge. One of the major aims of these approaches has been the bidding of farewell to Eurocentric views. However, while much has been achieved over the past decade, there are not many scholars, within this growing field who give equal or primary importance to sources in non-European languages. Post-colonially inspired area studies on South Asia have been among the most vocal in stressing the fact that, notwithstanding the historical importance of European-authored subjectivities, the colonized were never simply passive recipients of European modernity. They have highlighted that processes of attentive selection and readaptations of minor or major degree were crucial in defining South Asian trajectories into ‘the modern world’. Nevertheless, the critique of ‘colonial modernity’, and the over-concern to highlight ‘alternative’ modernities have sometimes led to

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10 Recent exceptions include Kris Manjapra, Age of Entanglement. German and Indian Intellectuals across Empire (Cambridge Mas.: Harvard University Press, 2014); and Margrit Pernau & Helge Jordheim, Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in 19th Century Asia and Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). The latter work has been among the first to take up the challenge of writing a global conceptual history giving equal importance to European and non-European languages. The theoretical insights offered by this work are discussed below.

11 A milestone in awakening global scholarly awareness of this fact has been Dipesh Chakrabarty’s call to ‘provincialize’ our conception of European intellectual hegemony in the colonial and post-colonial era, and consider each case of transition to capitalism as a case of ‘translation’. Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

highly abstract debates, which ended up preserving the Europe-centred narrative of progress as a defining characteristic of European history to which all others must respond. This has obscured the fact that such categories have always and everywhere been ‘in question’. New directions have been suggested in Michael S. Dodson and Brian A. Hatcher’s edited volume, Trancolonial Modernities in South Asia. Firstly, by pluralizing the concept these authors emphasize that, while modernity my have been understood as a transregional or transnational phenomenon, it was also conceptualized and made use of in decidedly local terms. Secondly, the notion of ‘transcoloniality’ highlights the fact that ‘modernity, as conceptualized and lived in South Asia, always transcended the terms envisioned for it by the colonial state’. Tony Ballantyne has used the term ‘webs of empire’ to point out that, in spatial terms, modernity was built up in dialogue with transregional and transnational flows. Finally, in linguistic terms, the idea of ‘trans-colonial modernity’ underlines that a range of processes of translation and linguistic exchanges marked the debates concerning modernity. As this study will show, Hindi and Urdu writers’ manifold readaptations of racial concepts very well illustrate this. Nevertheless, while these theoretical inputs are highly valuable, they still keep the discussion at a relatively abstract level. Conceptual historians have framed these questions more concretely in terms of studying the ‘globalization’ of concepts, that is, the different semantic trajectories in which ‘foreign concepts with global pretensions’ have confronted ‘local’


15 The multiple modernities argument has first been brought forward by scholars who have sought to highlight the rich variety of processes of change outside of ‘the West’. See, for instance: Dilip Parameshvar Gaonkar, ‘Alter/Native Modernities’, special issue of Public Culture 11,1 (1999). Others have taken inspiration from these approaches to claim plural modernities for England itself: Bernhard Rieger & Martin Daunton, ‘Introduction,’ in Daunton & Rieger (eds.), Meanings of Modernity: Britain from the Late-Victorian Era to World War II (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 5–7. At the same time the notion of ‘cosmopolitanism’ has been taken up by a range of scholars as a way of engaging with multiplicity and hybridity of ‘modern’ identities: Carol A Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha & Dipesh Chakrabarty, Cosmopolitanism (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002). A similar argument has been made in: Donald M. Nonini and Aihwa Ong, ‘Chinese Transnationalism as an Alternative Modernity’, in Ong and Nonini, Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 15–16.

16 Dodson & Hatcher, Trans-Colonial Modernities, p. 6

17 Tony Ballantyne, Orientalism and Race. Aryanism in the British Empire (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-17. The implications of the fact that knowledge circulated through ‘webs of empire’ will be discussed in the next chapter.
concepts and the semantic changes this implied. In his afterword to Margrit Pernau and Helge Jorheim’s recent edited volume, *Civilizing Emotions: Concepts in Asia and Europe*, Jan Ifversen has compellingly summed up four crucial passages involved in this task, which I am reproducing in the form of four questions. Which were the linguistic contact points and trajectories between the ‘foreign’ and ‘local’ concepts? Through which media and channels did they move? Which discursive and institutional settings decided what the concepts were used for? Which were the moments of uncertainty and instability and how were they problematized? In sum, the major theoretical insight this research has taken up from both edited volumes that have just been mentioned, is the importance of scrutinising the local dimensions of global entanglements and transfers. While Ifversen has used the term ‘glocalization’ to emphasize this point, Dodson and Hatcher have summed up this insight by provocatively reformulating the globalization critiques’ political slogan ‘think global, act local’ as ‘think global, study local’.

1. *South Asian Articulations of Race: State of the Art*

If the history of race in South Asia was an entangled one, most scholarship has so far focused on the British side of the entanglement, though from a rich variety of perspectives. The question of how South Asians articulated and used racial concepts still lacks systematic study and existing works addressing the problem specifically consist of few highly interesting but isolated case studies. Some examples are the chapters of Javed Majeed, Christophe Jaffrelot, Indira Chowdhury-Sengupta, and

18 The expression ‘conceptual history’ hails from the German *Begriffsgeschichte*, one of whose major theorists has been Rheinhard Koselleck (1923-2006). In the late 1990s it moved into an international field of intellectual history, when efforts were made to bring the German variant of conceptual history into dialogue with the so-called Cambridge School of intellectual history. The Cambridge based historian Quentin Skinner has been influential in this respect. For a recent overview of the numerous ways in which conceptual history and global history can benefit from each other see Margrit Pernau & Dominic Sachsenmaier, ‘Introduction: Global History, Translation and Semantic Changes’ in Idem (eds.), *Global Conceptual History. A Reader* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), pp. 1-27.


22 British ideas of race in India and their global background will be discussed in Chapter One.
Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam in Peter Robb’s edited volume, *The Concept of Race in South Asia* (1995), which have explored, Pan-Islamic, Hindu nationalist and Tamil nationalist negotiations with race.\(^{23}\) More recent examples are Harald Fischer-Tiné’s work exploring the ways in which early-20\(^{th}\) century Arya Samaj educationists put Victorian eugenic thinking into practice in the Gurukul Kangri and Subho Basu’s article on the appropriations and adaptations of race in Bengali geography textbooks.\(^{24}\) Susan Bayly’s contribution to an edited volume under the title ‘Race in Britain and India’ (1999), often quoted in this context, provides important insights as to the forms in which racial arguments were adapted by Indian authors. Nonetheless, her arguments are not supported by a direct analysis of substantial primary material.\(^{25}\) Margrit Pernau has also touched upon the race question, looking at late-19\(^{th}\) and early-20\(^{th}\) century Urdu writers’ discourses on civilization.\(^{26}\) Besides the mentioned case studies scholars dealing with four different thematic complexes have sometimes touched upon the question of South Asian articulations of race. The first regards the ways in which Indians adopted and readapted the Aryan origin myth of Indian history.\(^{27}\) A second related topic concerns direct answers to the colonial racialization of Indian society, such as the aforementioned work of Rubbee. While Nicholas B. Dirks and others have considered some of


these answers, the question still lacks systematic study and vernacular sources have not yet been interrogated. Conversely, the exploration of Indian readaptations of the theory of evolution and social evolutionism (in particular Herbert Spencer) represents a vast and quite well researched topic. Most histories of European racial thought have emphasized that, after the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* (1859), ideas of race gradually morphed into scientific categories. In order to understand in how far South Asian actors participated in this process, the multiple receptions of evolution and social evolutionism are of crucial importance. Finally, a last research trend, which has been directly relevant for this study comprises a number of works exploring discourses and practices of reproductive health and eugenics between the 1850s and 1950s.

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2. Structure and Chapter Preview

The bulk of this thesis is divided into three broadly conceived chapters. Chapter One seeks to provide the necessary historical and theoretical background to the present research agenda and then concludes with a brief methodological excursus. First of all the chapter tries to make clear what is at stake when dealing with appropriations and adaptations of ‘Western science’ in a colonial context. On one hand the nascent but nonetheless rich scholarly debate on the global circulation of knowledge has shown that the world of ‘science’ has always been polycentric and characterized by a multiple set of entangled knowledge traditions. At the same time, this scholarship has highlighted that the imperial globalization brought forward by Western European nations not only incredibly intensified this exchange but also led to the establishment of Eurocentric epistemic hierarchies. The second half of 19th and early decades of the 20th century saw the emergence of ‘modern Western science’ as a dominant discursive trope, which was linked to the ideology of the colonial civilizing mission. The other side of the flip coin was the construction of ‘non-Western’ forms of knowledge as well-defined and separate traditions or systems. The chapter then zooms in on colonial India, emphasizing the fundamental role played by vernacular idioms for the negotiation and readaptation of ‘Western science’. While I am in accord with Bernard Cohn’s point about the colonial standardization of Indian languages as an effective tool of command, in this chapter I have sought to highlight the agency of local elites in the ‘great translation venture’ that constituted Indian modernity. Having said that, the chapter takes a closer look at the processes of selective appropriation, translation, and creative readaptation. Following the research trend established by scholars such as Brian A. Hatcher and Projit Bihari Mukharji I have chosen to define this processes as vernacularization. At the same time, I try to sharpen this conceptual lens by accommodating it to the new insights of my research: I emphasize that there was often an important gulf between the vernacular and the Anglo-Indian public spheres. Firstly, in many occasions the two public spheres

32 As the next chapter will make clear, with the expression ‘Western science’ I am referring to a powerful myth that took shape during the high phase of colonialism and was endorsed (and negotiated) by European and Indian authors.


34 The expression ‘Anglo-Indian public sphere’ has been used by Christopher A. Bayly to describe the (English-language) arenas of public debate introduced by the British in India between the late 18th and the early decades of the 19th century in the form of press and pamphlet, in which ‘Indian issues became
literally ignored each other, and, secondly, what they regarded as ‘science’ could be very different. The rest of the chapter then provides the necessary historical background, tracing the rise, consolidation and institutionalization of British ideas of race in India, which are viewed against the background of their global ideological entanglements and in their function as local ‘tools of empire’.35 The chapter then turns to the social milieus and figures dealt with in the thesis. After providing a general overview on the scholarly debate on South Asian ‘publics’, it then narrows the focus on the Hindi and Urdu public spheres, thereby addressing a further divide. As a matter of fact, the explored time frame coincided with the gradual implementation of the ‘invented tradition’, which framed (‘Hindu’) Hindi and (‘Muslim’ or secular) Urdu as two separate and competitive languages. Despite a few important exceptions, analysing the two public spheres together therefore largely translates into looking at two still more or less strongly interrelated but distinct intellectual milieus. The question in how far this division was reflected in the authors’ selective appropriation of racial concepts is addressed again in Chapter Two and at the end of this work. The last section of Chapter One concludes with a few methodological reflections on dealing with transcolonial readaptations of knowledge.

The two middle chapters are dedicated to the empirical analysis of two sets of selected primary material and discuss the insights provided by them. Chapter Two is the broadest in terms of length, but also in the variety of sources used, as well as time span it tries to explore. Looking at a composite group of sources broadly concerned with discussing the concepts of civilization and savagery the chapter charts how, since at least the 1860s, European racial concepts gradually made their entry into Urdu and Hindi language. It asks if and to what extent, between 1860 and 1930 race became a ‘more self-sufficient idea’, that is, independent from other, more fluid conceptualizations of human difference, as it was the case in colonial literature on the subject.36 Firstly, the chapter focuses on a composite set of texts published between the 1860s and the turn of the 20th century, comprising periodicals (such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s Tahzīb ul-akhlāq and Bhalkrishna Bhatt’s Hindi Prādīp), armchair travelogues, and geography textbooks, where race was variously combined

entangled with domestic political division’. Christopher A. Bayly, Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 213-224. English-educated Indians did not only participate in this arenas of debate but soon established their own English-language periodicals, one of the earliest and most prominent examples being Ramananda Chatterjee’s Calcutta-based Modern Review (est. 1907).


36 David Arnold, Race, Place and Bodily Difference in Early Nineteenth-Century India’, Historical Research 77,196 (May 2004), pp. 254-273, p. 273.
with and merged into local markers of difference. In particular, it looks at the semantic shifts that occurred to the word ḫabšī, an Urdu/Hindi term for ‘African’, ‘black’, or ‘Negro’. It then turns to an early-20th century discourse in Hindi, which I have termed ‘the showcasing of the wild’ because its authors ‘displayed’ savage customs and bodies from different angles of the world to their readers. I argue that in both of these contexts authors still relied on the idea that civilization was learnable, notwithstanding an individual’s ‘race’. The chapter then explains why in the genre of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ this notion persisted well into the early decades of the 20th century. It also seeks to make sense of the absence of an equivalent exhibition on savagery in the Urdu public sphere. Subsequently, the chapter turns again to the two public spheres. This time, the analyzed sources suggest that in the early decades of the 20th century they were less closely interconnected entities. The explored texts reflect two intellectual milieus that were more and more separated from each other. I try to zoom in on the instances in which more fixed ideas of race came into play. I try to compare the ways in which, in the first three decades of the 20th century, Hindi and Urdu authors readapted the Darwinian concept of the ‘struggle for existence’ and discussed or actively endorsed eugenic thought. Finally, the last section of the chapter tries to explore to what extent, during the same period of time, the race question marked discussions on caste. The focus is on upper-caste treatises and journal articles in Hindi, defending or attacking various aspects of caste.

Chapter Three explores the issue of eugenics in greater detail. It introduces santati-śāstra (lit. ‘science of the progeny’ or ‘progeniology’), a literary genre and ‘scientific’ knowledge tradition in Hindi that emerged around 1900 and expanded in the early decades of the century. Santati-śāstra instructed newly married middle class couples on how to produce mentally and physically perfect children. The chapter compares this form of vernacular knowledge with eugenics as it was promoted in India and elsewhere during the same period of time. It emphasizes that santati-śāstra based its principles not on ‘classical eugenics’ as promulgated by Francis Galton and re-adapted by Indian eugenicists, but on an entirely different set of sources, which included Ayurveda, rati-śāstra and theories on heredity stemming from a mid-19th century American phrenologist. Santati-śāstra’s singular frame of ‘scientific’ reference, and especially its use of American ‘fringe science’, provide new insights into the multiple, and sometimes unexpected, ways in which ‘Western science’ functioned as a legitimising source in vernacular texts. After a brief presentation of the figures promoting santati-śāstra the chapter highlights that there were compelling parallels between their socio-political aims and those of eugenic movements in India and the globe. Nevertheless, the analysis of two specific subject matters treated in santati-śāstra literature, namely the view of conception and the theory of hereditary transmission reveals how this form of knowledge entailed a different ‘eugenic logic’. The in-depth exploration of these two subjects also charts the multiple
ways in which ‘Western science’ could function as a legitimising source in vernacular knowledge. Finally, the last section moves beyond issues of ‘race’ in the strict sense, exploring the question of authority of ‘Western science’ in Hindi writers’ attitudes to birth control, promoted not only as a eugenic measure but also an aspect of ‘modern conjugal life’. The heated debate on birth control took place in the late colonial political climate of the 1920s and 30s, burdened heavily by nationalism. Within this context, it was not primarily the authority of ‘Western science’ authors had to engage with, but also Gandhi’s ideal of brahmacārya, which symbolized a form of cultural nationalism that was highly influential in the Hindi public sphere.

An epilogue at the end of the dissertation provides a short summing up of this study’s major findings, compares them with each other and attempts to draw a few general deductions from them. The latter are combined with a discussion of the clear limitations of this work and suggestions for possible directions of further research. Last but not least, I have provided an appendix, containing five translated excerpts of some among the most relevant sources analyzed in this work.

One major drawback of what is being attempted in this thesis must be made clear at its outset. As the chapter overview has made clear, Hindi and Urdu sources have not been considered in equal amounts. The comparison between the two public spheres is confined to two sections of the first chapter. The primary reason of this lies in the archive: I simply have not found a comparable amount of Urdu texts dealing with race. Although it was beyond the scope of the present thesis, it might be rewarding for the further research on the topic to fully consider literary genres in Urdu. More precisely, I am referring to genres, which bore tangible parallels to the analyzed Hindi genres even tough race and eugenics were less important issues in them. Future research might make the different attitudes of Hindi and Urdu writers the centre of the discussion.

3. Archival Research

The primary sources used in this study have been collected in two types of archives, one physical, the other digital: the first comprehends eight very diverse libraries, seven of which are located in different cities in India, and one in London. The second is a vast new digital archive, the Digital Library of India.

The present research has started at ‘heart of the Empire’, in the British Library, hosting the Asia, Pacific and Africa Collection, previously called the Oriental and India Office Collections (OIOC),
which include the documents from the India Office Library and Records. Anyone who has spent time in the British Library calling up Vernacular Tracts (VT) has probably experienced both the richness as well as the limits of this archive. From 1867 the British started methodically to collect publications to be sent over to London. As Ulrike Stark has pointed out, this played a significant role in the preservation of early printed books in South Asian languages. These works were stacked in the South Asia Collections and can (mostly but not always) be located through different catalogues such as those by J.F. Blumhardt. While the collections provide substantial material regarding a number of topics—including, for instance, a large amount of religious publications of all kinds—a considerable number of publications were never registered with the authorities. The latter comprehended clearly subversive pamphlets as well as many of the cheap but popular booklets that were available in small stalls at markets and festivals (which would have been subject to censure for ‘indecency’). Despite a few important exceptions (such as the Awadh Akhbar, 1875-1884) vernacular periodicals build up a further major lacuna of South Asia Collections. For the present research this archive has proven fruitful mainly for its collection of geography textbooks in Urdu and Hindi, caste histories (Hindi), and a few Hindi advisory manuals on ‘fit reproduction’. In India, seven different archives have proven very rewarding for the present research. The Hindi material has been collected mainly in the Aryabhāṣā Pustakālaya of the Nāgarīpracārini Sabha in Varanasi, the library of the Hindi Sāhyta Sammelan in Allahabad, and the Marwari Public Library in Delhi. Unlike the first two, whose pivotal role in the standardization and spread of Hindi literature will be discussed in the next chapter, the last is a smaller, privately owned library, established in 1915 by Kedarnath Goenka, which was also used as a secret meeting place for


38 Stark, An Empire of Books, pp. 88-89.

39 Some of this vast material has recently been explored in Francesca Orsini, ‘Booklets and Sants: Religious Publics and Literary History’, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 38,3 (2015), pp. 435-449.

40 One of the most complete explorations of this kind of literature in Hindi has been provided in Charu Gupta, Sexuality, Obscenity, Community. Women, Muslims, and the Hindu Public in Colonial India, 2nd ed. (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005).

41 Barrier, ‘South Asia in Vernacular Publications’, p. 808.
freedom fighters. It hosts almost complete collections of important Hindi monthlies such as Sarasvati, Čānd, Maryādā, Viśvamitra, Indu, Vijnān, and Mādhurī, which have all been scrutinized for the period under analysis. The Hindi Sāhitya Sammelan and Aryabhāṣā libraries have both been remunerating archives for Hindi advisory literature. Most exemplars of santati-śāstra literature have been collected here. In addition to this, I also explored the Aryabhāṣā library’s remarkable collection of caste magazines, which comprehend, Agravāl, Agravāl Jātiya Bulletin, Brāhmaṇsarasva; Brāhmaṇ-Jāgat, Kānyakuhj, Khandelvāl Hitaiṣī, Khatrī- Hitaiṣī, Osvāl, Pāncāl Paṇḍitā, and many others. Last but not least, I have visited the much more recent Kendriya Saivālaya Hindī Pariṣad in Delhi (est. 1960), where I have collected a number of significant anthropology books of the 1940s and 50s, which have provided me some insights on the question, in how far the early-20th century discourses on savagery analyzed in this work stretched beyond the analyzed time frame of my study.

As for Urdu publications, many of my findings stem from the libraries of the Jamia Millia and Hamdard Universities in Delhi. Both have remarkable collections of Urdu periodicals, which can be located through reliable catalogues. In the Hamdard library, the ‘scientific’ journal Sa’īns was of particular interest, whereas the numerous Unani journals available in the library of Hamdard University such as al-Hakim and Rafīq al-Āğibbā have not proven very fertile for the research question. In the Jamia Millia I have consulted the numerous volumes of Maulana Azad’s daily al-Hilāl. Last but not least, I have visited the library of the Arabic and Persian Institute in Tonk, Rajasthan, originally established in 1867 by Wazir ul Mulk, late Nawwab Muhammad Ali Khan. Besides its manuscript collections for which it is famous, this library also possesses a fair amount of Urdu books and periodicals. The Urdu armchair travel book by Pyarelal, zamindar of Barautha, analyzed in Chapter Two, was found there. Unfortunately, like in the case of the Aryabhāṣā library, the state of the material and the working conditions there can sometimes be quite precarious.

The Digital Library of India is a vast archive of books and periodicals in Indian languages, whose potential for historical research is enormous. So far, no scholar of South Asian history has spelled

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43 The fundamental difference between the two is that while the former possesses a well organized catalogue, helpful staff and quite well preserved books, in the latter the situation is quite the opposite: the pages of some volumes literally crumbled away as I tried to move them, electric illumination was absent, and the librarians were not permanently present to help out visitors.

44 Although I was interviewed by a local TV called by the director of the library upon my arrival, when it subsequently came to my research I unfortunately did not receive much assistance.
this out, most probably because those who base their research mainly on vernacular sources have
not expected to find such texts uploaded in online libraries. Sponsored by the Government of India,
the Digital Library of India was started in 2000 by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in
Bangalore, the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics in Pune, the International
Institute of Information Technology in Hyderabad and other institutions. It is part of the Universal
Library Project (also called Million Books Project) led by Carneige Mellon University School of
Computer Science and University Libraries. It provides free-to-read access to books, which are
searchable by name, author, and subject. The project’s further objective is to develop full texts
searching for Indian languages using OCR, which will truly make vernacular sources available to
historical research in a way they had never been before. A further unique aspect of the project is
that it unites books from libraries that are very diverse in size and focus, ranging from the Osmania
University Library in Hyderabad to the Shri Sanmati Library in Jaipur and the Jain Vidhya Sansthan
Library, Digamber Jain Atishay Kshetra, Karauli (Rajasthan). For the sake of the present research
the Digital Library of India has been fundamental in filling gaps in the sources collected in the
physical archives. It has provided access to many Urdu periodicals (Tamaddun, Dakkan revīū,
Mu’allim-e nisvān), upper-caste Hindi treatises on the caste debate and some Hindi advisory books
on ‘fit reproduction’.

45 When I have started my dissertation in 2010 this project was still in the making, and for many months the
books have not been consultable. Since then the website has improved and a fair amount of digital sources
has been added to it. http://www.dli.ernet.in/
Chapter I

‘Western Science’, Indian Vernaculars and Colonial Race Theories

1. Global Circulation of Knowledge and the Myth of ‘Western Science’

An often used entry point into the discussion on the global flows of knowledge and the contingent character of the term ‘science’ is the Eurocentric diffusionist model proposed by the American historian of science and development theorist George Basalla. In his controversial 1967 article Basalla presented the history of the global circulation of knowledge as a unilateral export of ‘Western science’ from ‘Europe’ to ‘the rest of the world’, which was supposed to have occurred in three different stages. The first was characterized by the ‘exploring expeditions’ of European scientists, in which the colonies and semi-colonies played the passive role of data reservoirs. In the second phase, starting in the second half of the 19th century domiciled Europeans and ‘assimilated natives’ started conducting their own scientific research, while they remained intellectually and institutionally dependent from Europe. Finally, the third phase, starting in the early 20th century saw the emergence of ‘mature’ separate scientific traditions in the late- and post-colonial regions, while the ‘West’ continued to set the professional standards.1

It has been only since about two decades that historical scholarship has started to emphasize the limitations of Eurocentric explanations of the global circulation of scientific knowledge. The fresh insights provided by historical area studies,2 global history, and ‘new imperial history’ have

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2 A few insightful area studies for the history of science are, for instance: Roshi Rashed, ‘Science as a
contributed to show that knowledge has never had a topographic centre. Edited volumes like *The Dialogue of Civilizations in the Birth of Modern Science* and *The Brokered World*; monographs by Kapil Raj and David Arnold on South Asia; Neil Safier on South America; Sujit Sivasundaram on the Pacific; and Richard Drayton’s on variously interconnected colonial locations have shown that the world of ‘science’ has always been polycentric and characterized by ‘entangled knowledges’.

Authors inspired by post-colonial scholarship have deconstructed the idea of a fixed ‘European blueprint’ that could be adopted in more or less complete form by non-Europeans. Rather, they have revealed the existence of a series of different ‘knowledge traditions’ or knowledge-systems’, which have mostly been in permanent relationship with each other.

Nonetheless, knowledge chiefly traveled through imperial networks and within imperial spaces. It is undeniable that the phase of imperial globalization worked as a catalyst of knowledge production, long-distance circulation and exchange between different traditions or ‘systems’ of knowledge. This imperial setting bore an influence on the knowledge itself. It implicated the constitution of Eurocentric epistemic hierarchies, according to which all ‘other’ forms of knowledge were constructed as deficient. Between the second half of the 19th and the early decades of the 20th century, it was generally considered as the heyday of imperial globalization. See Reinhard Wendt, *Vom Kolonialismus zur Globalisierung: Europa und die Welt seit 1500* (Paderborn: Schöningh UTB, 2007), pp. 221-314.

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5 In his case study of Unani Tibb in late colonial India, Guy Attewell has cautioned against using the term ‘system’, showing that the very notion of ‘Unani system of medicine’ is itself a product of the colonial era, of ‘the will to systematize, demarcate, represent knowledge and practice as a coherent whole’. Guy Attewell, *Refiguring Unani Tibb. Plural Healing in Late Colonial India* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2007).


7 The second half of 19th century and years before WWI are generally considered as the heyday of imperial globalization. See Reinhard Wendt, *Vom Kolonialismus zur Globalisierung: Europa und die Welt seit 1500* (Paderborn: Schöningh UTB, 2007), pp. 221-314.

8 For example, Dhruv Raina has shown how the Indian tradition of mathematics came to be constructed as one that was devoid of the idea of proof. Dhruv Raina, ‘Science East and West’ in Helaine Selin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures*, 2nd ed (New York: Springer, 2008), pp. 1927-1933; and Dhruv Raina, ‘Ramchundra's Treatise Through the Unsentimentalised Light of Mathematics or the Mathematical Foundation of a Cultural Project’, *Historia Mathematica* 19 (1992), pp. 371-384.
The idea of science as simultaneously modern (and thus secular), universal, and specifically European emerged as a powerful trope, which was intimately linked to the ideology of the colonial civilizing mission. Some scholars have contrasted this new approach with that of pre- and early-19th century missionaries in different parts of the world, who—while substantially contributing to the entanglements between different knowledge traditions—made no sharp distinctions between European and local forms of knowledge. Conversely, the new idea of science posited the existence of a ‘universal knowledge’ that united all humanity, and, following a linear development, finally reached its full development as ‘modern science’ in Europe. During the interwar years in England, the United States, and France the new discipline of the history of science was conceived around this ideology. A decisive landmark that conferred ulterior strength upon this view was the idea, conceived in the early 1930s, of the ‘Scientific Revolution’—geographically and historically located in early 17th-century Europe—as a fundamental turning point, a transformation by which Europe, and by extension, ‘the West’ broke free from traditional knowledge systems and thereby cast itself off from the rest of the world, which after this stage would always ‘lag behind’.

In the immediate post-war period this idea shaped the work of British scientist, historian, and Sinologist Joseph Needham (1900-1995), who famously asked ‘why modern science emerged in Europe and not in China’. As pointed out by Kapil Raj, Needham’s reflections on the origins question were

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9 Marwa Elshakry, ‘When Science Became Western: Historiographical Reflections’, *Isis* 101,1 (2010), pp. 98-109, p. 100. Early references to ‘Western science’ in English suggest that prior to the 19th century the term was used primarily to refer to ancient Greek forms of knowledge. From the 18th century onwards it was sometimes used interchangeably with ‘European science’, particularly in French, as part of the literary debate between the Ancients and the Moderns. Ibid., n. 5, p. 100. A detailed discussion of the colonial ideology of the civilizing mission is provided in the last section of this chapter.

10 See for instance Nicholas Standaert, ‘The Investigation of Things and the Fathoming of Principles (Gewu qiongli) in the Seventeenth Century Contact between Jesuits and Chinese Scholars’ in John Witek (ed.), *Ferdinand Verbiest (1622-1688): Jesuit Missionary, Scientist, Engineer, and Diplomat* (Nettetal: Steyler, 1994), pp. 390-420. Of course, the missionaries’ approach also depended on the nature of the particular discursive traditions they were working with and adapting to. As shown by Sujit Sivasundaram the knowledge practiced by British evangelical missionaries on the Pacific Islands between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, which was inextricably linked with religious expansion, found support from popular views of nature as much as elite science. Sivasundaram, *Nature and the Godly Empire*.


12 This subject has acquired a vast and rich historical body of literature today and that I can only touch upon here. For more on this see Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

13 Although Needham never did arrive at a definite answer to his ‘Grand Question’ various attempts can be found in his magnus opus, *Science and Civilization in China*, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954-2005). Critical discussions of the ‘Needham question’ have been manifold. For an overview see
certainly amongst the less arrogant and more comparativist if compared to earlier works on the issue. While he was fascinated by China’s technological and scientific achievements until the 15th century, he stated that the resilience of China’s agrarian bureaucratic culture had hindered the emergence of mercantile and industrial capitalism, which he considered as sine qua non for the emergence of mathematical rationality, the basis of modern science. He concluded that Chinese, as well as Indian and Arab science were based on local, ‘ethnic-bond’ categories, which permitted the diffusion of technical innovations but prevented that of their underlying theoretical systems. At the same time, building upon his belief in the universality of science as human enterprise, he stated that, although born in Western Europe, modern science had incorporated the medieval learning of both the West and the East, ‘like rivers flowing into the ocean of modern science’. This unilinear vision of the history of science subsequently merged with post-war modernization theories, which inspired reflections on the modalities of its spread from Western Europe to the rest of the world, such as Basalla’s. Unlike Needham, such works took the European origins of modern science for granted.

The birth of the category of ‘modern’ ‘Western’ science went hand in hand with the construction of various ‘non-Western’ forms of knowledge as well-defined and separate traditions or systems. In China the notion of a distinct ‘Chinese science and philosophy of life’ emerged during the late 19th century. The Middle East saw the development of tafsīr al-‘ilmī, or ‘scientific exegesis’ of the Quran in the 1920s and 30s. This new genre involved a search for modern scientific facts and theories in scripture but was coupled with a new emphasis on religious sentiment. The attempts to define a ‘Hindu science’ by early 20th-century Hindu nationalists in India, who ‘infused the Vedas


14 The reasons for the putative emergence of modern science within the narrow boundaries of Western Europe represented one of the most popular questions of historians of science even before Needham. For some examples see Raj, Relocating Modern Science, p. 1.


with the authority of Western science’, can be seen as a further instance of this trend.\(^{19}\) As pointed out by Christopher Bayly, one of the characteristics of globalization was that while ‘broad forces of global change strengthened the appearance of difference between human communities’ […] ‘those differences were increasingly expressed in similar ways’.\(^{20}\) Therefore, the exceptionalist myth of a universally valid and uniquely modern ‘Western science’ and the emergence of notions such as ‘Chinese science’, ‘Islamic science’ and ‘Hindu science’ were part of the same picture.

The aim of this section has been to clarify that when using the expression ‘Western science’ in this thesis, I intend to refer to this powerful myth. As the subsequent chapters are going to show, vernacular authors often recurred to this myth. For example, the author of a Hindi advisory manual on ‘fit reproduction’ listed the views on heredity sustained by paścātya vijñān (‘Western science’) and by paścātya vidvān (‘Western scientists’). The author of an article in the Urdu newspaper Sa’īns (‘Science’) mentioned ‘ulūm-e jadīd (‘modern science’) with reference to European promoters of eugenic theories.\(^{21}\)

### 2. Indian Vernaculars, Colonialism, and the Great Translation Venture

I we take the insight of the polycentric and entangled character of knowledge seriously, then the processes of selective appropriation, translation, readaptation, partial or total transformation of bits of knowledge across spatial and cultural boundaries become crucial to understand its global circulation. In India, this process took place chiefly in the vernaculars. Of Estruscan origin, stemming from verna (‘home-born slave, native’), the term ‘vernacular’ was used in English in the

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\(^{20}\) Bayly is referring to the 19\(^{th}\)-century process by which nation-states and contending territorial empires took on sharper lineaments and became more antagonistic to each other, at the very same time as the similarities, connections, and linkages between them proliferated. Nevertheless, his proposition applies to our context, too. Christopher A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780-1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 2.

sense of Latin vernacula vocabula (‘native speech’ or ‘language of a place’) from the 17th century. While in an initial phase they preferred more pejorative markers such as ‘vulgar’ and ‘jargon’, British missionaries and officials of the East India Company, increasingly used ‘vernacular’ to distinguish between India’s spoken languages and the ‘classical Oriental languages’ (i.e. Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian). As Bernard Cohn has persuasively shown, the codification of South Asian languages in the late 18th and 19th centuries served to convert ‘indigenous' forms of textualized knowledge into ‘instruments of colonial rule’. Translation was an integral part of this project. Translational technology, in the form of language grammars and dictionaries, Cohn argues, enabled information gathering and the effective communication of commands, as well as the (at least partial) displacement of European dependence upon interlocutors of perceived dubious reliability. From the 1840s onwards the ‘great translation venture’, as Ulrike Stark has defined it, then expanded proportionally to the flourishing of vernacular print culture. The process was set off through the educational projects brought forward by three groups, often collaborating with each other: missionaries, scholars-administrators of the British East India Company and elite Indians. The missionaries, such as the British Baptists in Serampore, made their earliest sustained efforts for ‘native education’ and in printing in Indian vernaculars. Their project was to employ ‘modern science’ as a tool to make the ‘false edifice’ of Hindu religion crumble and thus pave the way for the spread of the Christian faith.

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24 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), p. 283. The transition from manuscript culture to print culture in Hindi and Urdu started relatively late, at the turn of the 19th century, but spread very rapidly between the 1820s and 30s. Christopher A. Bayly, Empire and Information, pp. 238-243. European missionaries and Indian reformers (at the beginning especially Muslim) played a chief role in the spread of printing technology. In North India a manuscript or scribal public sphere pre-existed the advent of print and persisted up to the Uprising of 1857. Margrit Pernau & Junus Jaffrey, Information and the Public Sphere: Persian Newsletters from Mughal Delhi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009). What Ulrike Stark has termed the ‘commercialization’ of the book trade in Hindi and Urdu, started around the 1840s. Stark, An Empire of Books, p. 4. Both Stark and Bayly characterize the adoption of print in India as a quantitative rather than a qualitative change. Ibid., p. 19; Bayly, Empire and Information, p. 243. Just as importantly, print was shaped by the Subcontinents’ thriving cultures of orality. Anindita Ghosh, ‘An Uncertain “Coming of the Book”: Early Print Cultures in Colonial India’, Book History 6 (2003), pp. 23-55.

25 The missionaries had to work from the Danish territory of Serampore until the passing of the 1813 Charter Act granted them access to the Company’s territories. M.A. Laird, Missionaries and Education in Bengal, 1793-1837 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972).


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Unlike the missionaries, the Company’s projects in Indian education had begun with an Orientalist fervour that privileged the classical languages, which was reflected in the establishment of institutions for traditional learning such as the Calcutta Madrasa (est. 1781) and the Banaras Sanskrit College (est. 1792). If some officials already knew Persian, ‘the language of politics’, they were eager to ‘discover’ Sanskrit, ‘the language of Hindu law and lore’. While the access to an imagined corpus of ancient laws would allow the British to govern more efficiently, the study of Sanskrit also fulfilled their desire to restore the ‘wisdom of the ancients’ to construct a history of the relationship between East and West, and locate their civilizations on an evaluative scale of progress and decay.

At that time, government initiative in vernacular education was directed at British civil servants, not Indians. This endeavour had begun in 1801 in collaboration with the Serampore missionaries with the establishment of Fort William College in Calcutta, which appointed local scribes to translate Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic classics into the vernaculars, and played a pivotal role in the establishment of Hindustani (Urdu) as the colonizer’s ‘language of command’.

The renewal of the Company’s charter in 1813, which removed the prohibition of missionary activities in British territories and set aside new funds for ‘native education’ gave rise to new educational debates. British administrators and educators as well as Indian elites increasingly embraced the idea of ‘improvement’ through the spread of ‘useful knowledge’ in the vernacular. Scholars have shown that the results of the Great Education Debate, which reached its peak in 1834, were more multifaceted than a straightforward victory of the Anglicists over the Orientalists and

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27 Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p.22, 25. At the same time Arabic was styled as the language of the laws of Indian Muslims. The implications of the process of translation from ‘ancient’ Sanskrit texts into English are explored in Michael S. Dodson, ‘Translating Science, Translating Empire: The Power of Language in Colonial North India’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47,4 (October 2005), pp. 809-835.

28 The ways in which racial theories were intertwined into this project will be discussed in Section Four of this chapter.

29 Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*, p. 33.

30 According to Bayly, this idea of ‘improvement’, which combined utilitarian and evangelical ideologies, reflected a wider change in the international division of labor and knowledge. Bayly, *Empire and Information*, pp. 223-224. Indian elites engaged themselves in government institutions such as the Calcutta School Book Society (est. 1817) and—as in the case of Serfoji II of Tanjore—also acted as direct financers and promoters of ‘useful’ education. On this last example see Indira Viswanathan Peterson, ‘The Schools of Serfoji II of Tanjore. Education and Princely Modernity in Early Nineteenth-Century India’ in Michael S. Dodson & Brian A. Hatcher, *Trans-Colonial Modernities in South Asia* (London/New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 15-44.
differed from region to region. In any case, the dominant educational policy of the period was the promotion of European knowledge through vernacular languages, with substantial aid (like in the Orientalist period) from indigenous literati.

By the second half of the century, translation into the vernacular was no longer confined to the initiative of government-funded educational institutions such as the Calcutta Schoolbook Society (est. 1817) and the Vernacular Translation Society of the Delhi College (est. 1844), but had turned into a widespread concern among learned individuals and indigenous voluntary associations. The earliest and largest of such ventures in North India was Sayyid Ahmad Khan’s Scientific Society, founded in Ghazipur in 1864, whose chief objective was to translate works from English and other European languages as well as ‘ancient Oriental manuscripts’ (provided they were not religious) into Urdu. In addition to this, new literary societies such as the Jalsah-e tahzib in Lucknow (est. 1868), the Satya Sabha (later Anjuman-e Agra), and the Bharat Bharshia National Association of Aligarh (est. 1878) put translation and diffusion of both ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ knowledge on their agendas. Large native publishing houses also made their massive contribution to the production of translations. The Department of Composition and Translation (Ṣu’ba-e taṣnīf va tarjumah) of the influential Naval Kishore Press was especially dedicated to translation, as well as manuscript edition, proofreading and emendation. Rather than making the translation of works in European languages his prime focus Munshi Naval Kishore (1836-1895) set himself the task to make Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic literature and knowledge traditions available to an audience of modern readers in Urdu and Hindi, who no longer had a sound command of these languages. Finally, as far as translation, readaptation and popularization of ‘Western science’ were concerned, an important role was played by vernacular periodicals, which were sometimes established by


34 Stark, An Empire of Books, pp. 145-151. While the Jalsah-e tahzib represented the Urdu culture of a Hindu and Muslim cross-section of Lucknow’s upcoming middle class and professional elite, the Bharat Bharshia National Association was overwhelmingly Hindu and later sustained the Hindu-movement.

35 Idem., pp. 281-285. Munshi Naval Kishore also participated in the work of the voluntary associations-cum-literary and scientific societies mentioned above, as member, co-founder or patronizer.
voluntary associations such as those mentioned above. As the last section of this chapter is going to show in detail, ‘Western science’ was regularly and assiduously discussed not only in newspapers specifically dedicated to this task but also in miscellaneous and literary monthlies, political dailies, and magazines ‘for women’. The degree to which bits of ‘Western science’ contained in periodicals were already transformed and adapted to the local context could vary from case to case. While some article authors provided references to sources (in the form of specific ‘scientists’ or works) many others did not.\(^{36}\)

### 3. Vernacularization

It has been emphasized that the readaptation of European forms of knowledge in South Asian vernaculars ought to be understood as a new creation, linked to the specific historical and linguistic context in which it was forged. A number of authors have referred to these complex processes as vernacularization. Analysing the example of one of the key figures of the Bengali Renaissance, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891), Brian Hatcher has described vernacularization as ‘a process of cultural convergence’ in which ‘European and Sanskrit idioms participate in the creation of a third, indigenous idiom’.\(^{37}\) Hatcher thereby emphasized the importance of the vernacular (in this case Bengali) for ‘affiliating alien discourse and practice with indigenous tradition’. The vernacular was the terrain, which made such an accommodation possible.\(^{38}\) More recently, Projit Bihari Mukharji has explored the fascinating history of the vernacularization of ‘Western medicine’ as practiced by Bengali daktars, a ‘political process’ through which indigenous medical practitioners ‘nationalized the body’.\(^{39}\)

Another way of approaching the question has been suggested by Harald Fischer-Tinè, who has

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\(^{36}\) The specific findings of this thesis regarding the ways in which European concepts or bits of knowledge were appropriated and readapted in vernacular texts are discussed in the epilogue.

\(^{37}\) Hatcher, *Idioms of Improvement*, p. 16.

\(^{38}\) Ibid., p. 9. He notices that the non-Bengali scholars who have preceded him have largely described the Bengal Renaissance through an exclusively English-language perspective.

described forms of knowledge that developed in colonial ‘contact zones’ as bodies of ‘pidgin-knowledge’ because they were multi-component in nature, and, like pidgin, subsumed a variety of ‘foreign’ and ‘local’ elements.\(^{40}\) The word ‘pidgin’ stems from the field of linguistics, where it defines a language of communication born in a multilingual context.\(^{41}\) Taking the history of medicine in India as an example, he shows how both British colonial medicine as well as Ayurveda can be described through the pidgin metaphor. As he points out, the concept bears two advantages. Firstly, it is apt to describe the combination of more than merely two identifiable components (as in the case of Homi Bhabha’s concept of hybridity), and secondly, it highlights the pragmatic, situational and purpose-oriented aspect of such forms of knowledge.\(^{42}\) In addition to that, looking at colonial medicine \textit{and} Ayurveda as pidgin knowledges effectively rules out the danger of positing the existence of culturally, religiously or ethnically defined knowledge traditions.

Nevertheless, while the forms of vernacular knowledge discussed in this thesis can certainly be defined as pidgin knowledges, I prefer to use the term vernacularization—instead of ‘pidginisation’—to describe the process of readaptation of science. In fact, one of the aims of the present work is to emphasize that the language in which knowledge was formulated mattered in crucial ways. Hindi and Urdu forms of knowledge often sharply differed from contemporary scientific discourses in English, which reflected the social construction of different intellectual communities.

The first aspect I want to highlight is that there were many instances in which the Anglo-Indian\(^{43}\) and the vernacular public spheres essentially ignored each other. As far as poetry and fiction were concerned, Francesca Orsini has used the word ‘amnesia’ to underline the fact that Anglo-Indian and English journals of the colonial period disregarded the presence of vibrant regional print and performance cultures in a variety of Indian languages.\(^{44}\) As Chapter Three is going to show in the


\(^{41}\) The origin of the term is still a debated subject among linguists. The most common version traces it back to the language of communication (designed as ‘pidgin-English’) used in the Southern Chinese Sea since about 1830, made up of English, Chinese and Portuguese elements. At a later stage the term was used to design mixed forms of English in other parts of the world. Ibid., fn. 21, p. 65.


\(^{43}\) While highlighting the instances in which vernacular scientific discourse distinguished itself from English-language scientific discourse I do not intend to downplay the significant differences between the uses of science made by British and Indian writers using the English language. See Gyan Prakash, \textit{Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India}, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

\(^{44}\) Francesca Orsini, ‘Whose Amnesia? Literary Modernity in Multilingual South Asia’, \textit{The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry} 2,2 (September 2015), pp. 266-272. A similar argument is made in
realm of ‘eugenic knowledge’ vernacular writers reciprocated the ‘amnesia’ expressed by English-writing elites.

Besides highlighting such cases of more or less reciprocal indifference, this work also seeks to emphasize gaps with regard to the actual content of the scientific discourses. Vernacular authors often adopted different scientific theories with respect to authors writing in English. Crucially, what counted as ‘Western science’ also changed according to context. For example, early-20th-century authors of Hindi advisory books on sex and reproduction often recurred to the theories of a 19th-century American ‘fringe scientist’ as ‘Western authority’ in support of their eugenic views. Critical pluralist perspectives on the history science, and medicine in particular, have emphasized that the narrative of a ‘scientific’ medical orthodoxy, which gradually established itself at the expense of so-called ‘folk science’, ‘fringe science’ or ‘quackery’, represented a powerful paradigm in Europe, but that this constituted only a partial reality.45 The same holds true for colonial India, as made evident, for instance, in the case of homeopathy. David Arnold and Sumit Sarkar, among others, have shown how homeopathy was largely adopted and re-adapted by mid- and late-19-century Bengali medical practitioners and deployed in the treatment of diseases against which colonial medicine seemed ineffective.46 In a different context, Katherine Pandora has used the expression ‘vernacular science’ to emphasize precisely the difference between ‘official’ and ‘popular’ forms of knowledge. Pandora has described the public enthusiasm for the ‘unofficial scientist’ Luther Burbank (1849-1926), a Massachusetts-born horticulturist, who formulated views on evolution, which he applied also to humans.47 Analysing texts by and about Burbank in the first half of the 20th century, she has emphasized the division between public acclaim and professional disdain for his theories. Official scientific opinion classified Burbank as ‘a doer, not a thinker’, and defined his approach to problem solving as ‘emotional’ and ‘inspirational’ rather than ‘objective’ and


s‘systematic’. Burbank’s success with the ‘vernacular public’, Pandora has argued, was largely due to the fact that he ‘sited science within the domestic sphere’. Her use of the expression ‘vernacular science’ aims at providing a sense of this ‘history of everyday scientific knowledge’, which existed outside official circles. If, as one American contemporary of Burbank remarked, ‘to the Brahmans of science Burbank was an Untouchable’ this thesis is going to show that to many Brahmans of India he was a ‘respectable Western scientist’. Along with those of other American ‘fringe scientists’, Burbank’s ideas were selected and readapted in the early 20th-century Hindi public sphere. As in Pandora’s case, therefore, the ‘vernacular science’ discussed in this work reflects the ‘everyday scientific knowledges’ of the Hindi- and/or Urdu-speaking middle classes, in which the ‘Western fringe’ could become the ‘local norm’.

These considerations notwithstanding, an approach that overemphasizes the separation between English and vernacular public spheres also has a few limits. Firstly, there were obvious differences between different vernaculars. The question in how far race and evolution were readapted in different ways by Hindi and Urdu writers builds up a subtopic of this thesis. Secondly, there were fundamental differences between middle-class-cum-upper-caste and low caste sections of vernacular literature. While the present work concentrates on middle class milieus it is to be

48 Ibid., p. 486. Parallels can be drawn with colonial evaluations of African science: Helen Tilley, ‘Global Histories, Vernacular Science, and African Genealogies; or, Is the History of Science Ready for the World?’, Isis 101,1 (March 2010), pp. 110-119. Tilley contrasts the ‘vernacular science’ of ‘Western experts’ with the ‘vernacular knowledge’ of local communities. This distinction is not adequate for the South Asian context, were vernacular authors themselves lent great importance to styling their views as ‘scientific’.

49 Irfan S. Habib and Dhruv Raina have used the expression ‘domesticating science’ to describe the cultural reception and legitimation of modern science in late colonial India. As I am going to show, the authors analyzed in the next chapter presented one important difference with respect to the late 19th and early 20th-century bhadralok discussed by Habib and Raina: they did not reject social Darwinism. Dhruv Raina (eds.), Domesticating Modern Science: A Social History of Science and Culture in Colonial India (New Delhi: Tulika Books, 2004), pp. 148-181.

50 Pandora, ‘Knowledge Held in Common’, 486.

51 Ibid., p. 487.

52 See for instance: Ramjilal Sharma, ‘Mānav-jātī ke unnāyak siddhānt’, Sarasvatī 8,4 (1907), pp. 167-168. For more on ‘Western fringe science’ in the Hindi public sphere see Chapter Three.

53 See section 3, Chapter Two.

54 I take up the expression ‘middle class milieu’ from Markus Daechsel. Taking up E.P. Thompson’s view that class is not a ‘thing’ but an effect, Daechsel has pointed to the problems involved in using the term ‘middle class’ in a meta-sociological sense, in South Asia and elsewhere. Unlike ‘middle class’, ‘middle class milieu’ does not necessarily imply a unitary political consciousness, and thereby avoids the necessity of some precise a priori definition. Markus Daechsel, The Politics of Self-Expression. The Urdu Middle-Class Milieu in Mid-Twentieth Century India and Pakistan (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 10-15.
assumed that its conclusions did not apply, for instance, to Dalit literature in Hindi. Finally, this work is going to deal with various instances in which people and ideas moved across English-language and vernacular communities. For instance, Gandhi’s ideas on sexual temperance, originally written in English, had special appeal to the Hindi public sphere, where they were omnipresent in literature on reproduction and birth control, whether the authors favoured or contested them.\textsuperscript{55} Another example, which has been recently analyzed by Douglas Haynes and Shrikant Botre was the Marathi sexologist R.D. Karve, who expressed radical ideas on sex and against brahmacārya in Marathi, but whose resonance nevertheless hardly extended beyond an English-reading elite.\textsuperscript{56}

4. British Ideas of Race in India and their Global Entanglements

Racial categories have been reinvented many times in history and in many places. European Enlightenment thinkers have been elaborating concepts of race based on physical appearance from the 17th century onwards,\textsuperscript{57} and developed methods and technologies to measure man from the 18th century.\textsuperscript{58} Yet, it was only with the establishment of evolutionism within Victorian anthropology and the discipline's gradual institutionalization in the 1860s and 70s that racial theories became definitely established as ‘science’.

The evolutionary turn was part of a larger paradigm change in which Darwin’s publication of the \textit{Origin of Species} was one major landmark.\textsuperscript{59} Another important scientific development that

\textsuperscript{55} See section 6, Chapter Three.


\textsuperscript{59} Today historians prefer to use the definition ‘evolutionary turn’ instead of ‘Darwinian revolution’. As shown by Peter Bowler, rather than Darwin’s materialist view of evolution based on natural selection, the core of 19th-century evolutionism was a ‘developmental model’ of evolution. By stressing the orderly, goal-directed, and progressive character of evolution this model preserved certain aspects of the traditional
preceded this event was provided by the geological and archaeological discoveries that allowed
dating back the beginning of human history to the time when mammoths and other prehistoric
animals had existed, which seriously challenged Biblical chronology.60
As Nancy Stepan has convincingly argued the theory of evolution did not bring about new racial
concepts but conferred scientific authority to already existing ones, which were reformulated in the
language of the new discipline of evolutionary anthropology.61 Thomas Gondermann has shown
that at the political-cum-institutional level, the scientification of race can be viewed as a result of
the fact that the promoters of the new evolutionary creed such as Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) and
John Lubbock (1834-1913) chose the ‘science of man’ as the main field to fight the ideological
battle against their opponents.62 At the institutional level, the evolutionists, grouped together in the
X-Club, had brought about the establishment of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and
Ireland (1871), which reunited the rival members of the Ethnological and Anthropological
Societies—the latter had split up from the former in 1863—under the new evolutionary creed.63
More importantly to our purpose, the new discipline of evolutionary anthropology appropriated
a particular kind of current racial theories, while discharging others. It thereby ratified substantial
changes that were already taking place in the ‘science of man’, namely the waning of the
‘philological school’ of ethnology and the development of a new ‘physical anthropology’.
Represented in England by Prichardian ethnology,64 the philological approach to human difference
chiefly used the comparison between ancient languages provided by Orientalist scholarship as its
teleological worldview. Peter Bowler, The Non-Darwinian Revolution (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University

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dealt with race in his The Descent of Man (1871) see Edward Beasley, The Victorian Reinvention of Race:

62 Thomas Gondermann, Evolution und Rasse. Theoretischer und institutioneller Wandel in der
viktorianischen Anthropologie (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2007), pp. 318-320. The conflict was also one
between two different social classes, that is, new professional scientists and amateur anthropologists of the
kind of James Cowles Pritchard (1786-1848), whose methodological approach will be discussed below.
Blackwell, 2008), pp. 53-55; Gondermann, Evolution und Rasse, pp. 140-70; and George W. Stocking,

63 Thomas Gondermann, ‘Die Etablierung der Evolutionslehre in der Viktorianischen Anthropologie. Die

64 James Cowles Prichard (1786-1848) is considered to be the founder of British ethnology. Prichardian
ethnology argued within a biblical framework and was concerned with furnishing proofs of the common
origin of human beings. This form of ethnology had already come under attack at the turn of the 19th

supreme methodological tool, and explained physical difference as a result of climatic influence and degradation of various kind. Highly illustrative of this view was the early version of the powerful Aryan myth. Elaborated by an early generation of Orientalist scholars in the late 18th century, represented by William Jones (1746-1794) and Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837), then further developed in the mid 19th century by Friedrich Max-Müller (1826-1900) the Aryan myth posited common origins of Indians and Europeans on grounds of linguistic similarities. Max-Müller, who developed the ‘brothering potential’ of the theory to its uttermost, defined European colonizers and Indian subjects as ‘Aryan brethren’ and justified colonial rule in terms of a ‘fulfilment’ of the ‘unfinished’ civilizational work of the ancient Aryans. While legitimizing colonial rule in terms of a ‘civilizing mission’ this formulation also called for a respectful social intercourse between the British and the ‘natives’. The assumption of the civilizing project thus conceived was that civility could be taught to savage individuals and groups. Margrit Pernau and Helge Jordheim have termed this as the ‘pedagogical’ view of civilization. Nevertheless, this civilizing project harboured a fundamental contradiction, namely the possibility that the colonized could become civilized like the colonizers, which would threaten the very foundation of the ‘rule of difference’. Accordingly, it required that the colonizers continuously readapted the means and mechanisms of self-legitimation.

Right from the beginning Orientalists set the supposed ancient century, especially from French ‘atheist scientists’ who questioned monogenesis. It also had its important opponents in Britain itself, such as John Crawford (see below). See Hannah F. Augstein, James Cowles Pritchard’s Anthropology: Remaking the Science of Man in early Nineteenth-century Britain (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999); and Stocking, Victorian Anthropology, pp. 46-77.


Margrit Pernau & Helge Jordheim, Civilizing Emotions, p. 15.

This concept has been coined by Partha Chatterjee to emphasize how the maintenance of difference was fundamental for colonial rule. Partha Chatterjee, The Nation and its Fragments. Colonial and Postcolonial Histories (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 16-18.

Mann, ‘“Torchbearers Upon the Path of Progress”’, p. 24. Mann sees this as an example of what Gyan Prakash has defined as colonial paradoxes, ironies, and gaps between rhetoric and practice. Gyan Prakash, ‘After Colonialism’ in Idem, (ed.), After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements
glory of the Indian Aryans against what they described as the ‘degenerate and abased’ status of contemporary Hindu society.\(^{71}\) The first widely used argument to explain the alleged ‘degeneration’\(^{72}\) was ‘miscegenation’\(^{73}\) with the ‘dark-skinned Dravidians’ of South India.\(^{74}\) A further argumentative tool was provided by what Harald Fischer-Tiné has described as ‘environmentalism’, the idea that Indians were different on the grounds of their constant exposure to a different climate.\(^{75}\) As shown by Mark Harrison, the most widely held idea of climatic influence among East Indian Company officials was that an individual’s physical constitution and ‘character’\(^{76}\) were (more or less direct) results of the combined effects of heat and moisture.\(^{77}\) The hot and humid climate of Bengal was abundantly cited as the cause of the ‘effeteness’ of the

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\(^{73}\) The early usage of the miscegenation theory proves Shruti Kapila’s argument that already in the ‘romantic Orientalist phase’ the ‘linguistic-civilizational typology’ was amalgamated with its ‘physiological-racial representation’. While taking her point against positing ‘a drift’ within European and Indian thought from an ‘enlightened classicism’ in the 18\(^{th}\) and early 19\(^{th}\) centuries to ‘a brief period of heightened racial awareness’ at the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century, this work nevertheless retains that important transformations in racial thinking did take place over the 19\(^{th}\) century. Kapila, ‘Race Matters’, pp. 471-513.

\(^{74}\) The Dravidians were thought to be the ‘original inhabitants’ of the Subcontinent. The ‘discovery’ of a Dravidian language group, which was unrelated to Sanskrit, made in 1816 by the East India Company official Francis Whyte Ellis (1777-1819) furnished the final ‘proof’ of the Aryan theory. It was supposed that the Aryans had invaded the Subcontinent, dominated, and gradually ‘civilized’ its original inhabitants. Thomas R. Trautmann, *Languages & Nations. Conversations in Colonial South India* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2006).


\(^{77}\) Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.182. This idea was promoted within ‘ethno-climatology’, a current of British anthropology that modernized ancient Greek medical theories, which were also part of Unani medicine. In an early phase British medical theorists noticed and built upon the similarities between the two knowledge traditions.
descendants of the Indian branch of the Aryan stock. However, as Mark Harrison has reminded us, prior to 1830 such climatological beliefs were coupled with a relatively malleable racial concept: if climate had immediate effects on Indians and British bodies, the latter were believed to be quickly adaptable to different environments, and thus not fundamentally different from each other. Between the 1820s and the 1840s the British developed a growing pessimism regarding the possibilities of environmental adaptation.

The advancement of essentializing concepts of race during the first half of the 19th century can be viewed as a result of the methodological shift in colonial knowledge, which Peter Pels has so aptly described as a reorientation ‘from texts to bodies’. A growing number of ethnologists, such as John Crawfurd (1783-1868) expressed their disaffection with comparative philology as the principal methodological approach to study human difference. They considered physical markers such as skin colour, hair texture and the measurement of skulls, noses and limbs as more reliable data for the study of human difference than the comparison between words of ancient languages. By relying chiefly on ‘measurable data’ they tried to fit ethnology (which later came to be called ‘anthropology’) into the parameters of a ‘natural science’. As Pels has emphasized, a pivotal role in the emerging of this new scholarship was played by the imperially marginal ethnographic tradition, embodied by scholars-administrators such as Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894) and Sir George Campbell (1824-92), who were preoccupied with looking for ‘Indian aboriginals’. While Campbell actively promoted the advantages of ethnology over philology within the Asiatic Society of Bengal, of which he became a member in 1861, Hodgson combined philological research with

78 The stereotype of the effeminate Bengali was further amplified and embellished with the hardening of racial concepts. The ‘othering’ of Bengali men was particularly important for colonial rulers, since they were the first Indians to ‘assimilate Western education’ and soon became a major political threat to imperial trusteeship. Indira Chowdhury, The Frail Hero and Virile History. Gender and the Politics of Culture in Colonial Bengal (Delhi: Oxford University Press,1998), pp. 120–49; Harald Fischer-Tiné, “‘Character Building’ and Manly Games’, pp. 432–55; and John Rosselli, ‘The Self-image of Effeteness: Physical Education and Nationalism in 19th -Century Bengal’, Past & Present 86 (1980), pp. 121–48.

79 Harrison, Climates and Constitutions, p. 56, 224.


81 John Crawfurd (1783–1868) was the President of the Ethnological Society from 1861 to 1862. Like many of his fellow ethnologists, he had collected many of his data in South Asia, where he had worked as a medical officer. Trautmann, Aryans and British India, pp. 178–81.

the measurement of skulls. He had collected 90 pieces of them in Nepal, which he presented the
British Museum in 1844. However, if the shift was never complete, in the 1830s and 40s race
became ‘a more self-sufficient idea’, as David Arnold has compellingly argued. As in the later
decades of the century the new language of evolutionary anthropology further strengthened its
scientific credentials.

The notion of ‘racial types’, with more or less fixed physical, intellectual, and moral attributes also
had far-ranging influences on the ‘civilizing mission’ ideology in the empire at large: the civilizing
potential of different societies was now linked to a postulated natural foundation. Pernau and
Jordheim have called this view the ‘biological’ view of civilization. As Henrika Kuklick has
shown, late-19th-century British anthropologist of different theoretic affiliations saw civilization as
something that had to be enforced by the superior races onto the weaker ones. The latter would get
civilized only as much as their biology allowed them to, and revert to a state of savagery if they
were not kept subordinate. In this context the Aryan myth was reformulated to convey the idea of
a centuries old ‘race war’ between Aryans and ‘aborigines’. Finally, as notions of race became more
self-explanatory, the discourse of extinction of the most ‘primitive races’, whose beginnings date
back to the turn of the 19th century, became a powerful subset of ‘scientific’ racial theory.

The British used the expression ‘race war’ to describe another conflict, which was much closer in
time: the Indian Uprising of 1857-59, which had shaken the Raj to its foundations. This brings us
to the political dimensions of race in the Indian Empire. As pointed out by Fischer-Tiné, ‘both
politically and ideologically, the long term process of consolidation of British rule also entailed a
greater vulnerability of the Indian empire’. If in the decades that followed the Rebellion, fixed,
measureable racial categories served to justify the creation of segregated spaces for the sahibs, such
as the ‘civil lines’ with associated cantonments and the ‘hill stations’, at the same time a more
sharply defined whiteness was more arduous to defend. Besides establishing fixed codes of

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83 David Arnold, Race, Place and Bodily Difference in Early Nineteenth-Century India’, Historical Research 77,196 (May 2004), pp. 254-273.
84 Pernau & Jordheim, Civilizing Emotions, p. 15.
87 Arnold, ‘Race, Place, and Bodily Difference’, p. 273.
behaviour for the ‘pucca sahib’ the performance of superiority also created the imperative to permanently segregate ‘half-breeds’ (Eurasians) and subaltern whites from the ‘native gaze’.\(^{89}\) Such measures to defend white superiority were particularly urgent towards the end of the 19th century, which saw the growth of Indian nationalism and anti-British dissent in many different forms, ranging from more moderate ‘constitutional’ bodies such as the 1885 founded Indian National Congress, to radical elite and popular protest movements that erupted in Bengal since the 1890s.\(^{90}\)

As Elizabeth Kolsky has argued, a further tool through which the British stabilized their imperial whiteness was the establishment of a racialized and unequal legal system that provided European British subjects with special privileges and exemptions.\(^{91}\)

Besides excogitating new ways to mark themselves off from Indian society, in the aftermath of the Revolt the British sought, ever most insistently, to order and control it. Among the institutions forged in these post-revolt decades were the Survey of India, founded in 1878, and the first Census of India, compiled in 1872 and carried out on an India-wide decennial basis from 1881.\(^{92}\) The massive accumulation of ethnographic data from the ‘museum of mankind’\(^{93}\) provided a vast pool of data from which to draw. In this context he most obsessively systematic use of race as a tool to ‘know the natives’ was made by Herbert Hope Risley (1851-1911), commissioner for the 1901 census, who formulated the racial interpretation of caste.\(^{94}\) Risley combined the Brahmanic

\(^{89}\) Ibid., pp. 36-43.


\(^{92}\) Bernard S. Cohn, ‘The Census, Social Structure, and Objectification’, in An Anthropologist Among Historians and Other Essays (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 224-254. The relevance of the colonial census for the politicization of caste will be discussed in the next chapter.


\(^{94}\) A discussion of the manifold implication of Risley’s theory is given in the next chapter. Risley had many precursors. The Orientalist view of varṇa already entailed the idea of a racial origin of caste. As seen in the
principle of ‘social precedence’, which established social rank on the basis of ritual distinctions with anthropometry. In his racialist view, India’s jātis were fundamentally the result of interactions between two racial ur-types, the Aryan and the Dravidian. In some regions the characteristics of a third type, the Mongolian, could also be found. Marriage restrictions developed around the two races and then were further elaborated around the groups that were born of mixed unions. Through the collection of anthropometrical data, such as different caste members’ ‘nasal index’, a unit of measure developed by French anthropologist Paul Topinard (1830-1911), Risley sought to prove that the supposedly ‘purest’ types could be found at the highest and the lowest ends of the caste hierarchy respectively, whereas the rest divided themselves into further five groups, depending on their degree of intermixture.

If Risley’s view of caste and its implementation in the 1901 census constituted a peak in the British racialization of Indian society, the turn of the century represented a period of high racial awareness also on a more global level. As Christian Geulen has argued, the development of racial thinking and ideologies between 1880 and 1940 can at least partly be seen as a reaction to the globalizing forces of the imperial age. Viewed from this perspective, they can be read as attempts to ‘envision a world order by means of science’ and new forms of collective belonging that could be fitted into an increasingly entangled and post-national world. Both colonizers and colonized took part in this attempt, although of course, mostly expressing conflicting positions.

As shown by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, by the turn of the 20th century new ideologies of white supremacy and practices to exclude ‘non-whites’ were sweeping the world and saw the last section, the idea that India’s ‘aboriginal tribes’ were incorporated into the caste system went hand in hand with the racialization of caste. Colonial officials of the pre-Risley era who insisted on this point were Sir George Campbell (1824-92) administrator in the NWP and the Punjab who sought to promote ethnology in the Asiatic Society, W. R. Cornish, census commissioner in Madras (1871), and C.A. Baines, all-India census commissioner for the same year. Peter Pels, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigines’, pp. 100-106; Dirks, Castes of Mind, pp. 205-207.

95 In the 1830s American polygenist anthropologists, among whom Philadelphian physician, Samuel George Morton (1799-1851) established anthropometry which they used as a tool to justify slavery. British officials in India also employed anthropometry as a physical ‘proof’ to fix the supposed innate criminality of particular ‘tribes’, which had already established through legislation and the census. Crispin Bates, ‘Race, Caste and Tribe in Central India: the Early Origins of Indian Anthropometry’ in Peter Robb (ed.), Race in British India, pp. 219-259.

mutual collaboration between self-styled ‘white men’s countries’ from South Africa, to North America and Australasia, actions that provoked a long international struggle for racial equality.\(^7\)

Another global movement that strengthened ideas of racial belonging was eugenics, a term coined by Victorian statistician Francis Galton in 1883 to designate a newly established ‘science’, which sought to achieve ‘racial upgrading’ of human groups through ‘selective breeding’.\(^8\) Using biographical reference works Galton sought to prove that high achievement run in families. He admitted that it was still a mystery how exactly traits were inherited. Nevertheless, readapting the theories on population growth, formulated by cleric and economist Thomas Robert Malthus (1766-1834), he noticed that civilized societies ‘restrained the natural culling process’, allowing those to survive and reproduce who in earlier ages would have succumbed to starvation, cold, and disease.\(^9\)

In order to reverse these trends, Galton proposed that humans should do for themselves what breeders did for plants and animals, that is, increasing the population of individuals with desirable traits (‘positive eugenics’) and decrease the proportion of those with undesirable ones (‘negative eugenics’). Galton’s influential disciple, Karl Pearson (1857-1956), a young professor of Mathematics from London put his theories on a more solid mathematical basis and introduced them into the contemporary political discourse. In the years before and after World War I, eugenic ideas and associations had spread to many parts of the world, including India, reaching their peak in the 1920s, before coming under considerable scientific criticism in the 1930s.\(^10\)

The history of eugenics in India and its global entanglements will be discussed exhaustively in Chapter Three. Eugenics suffered more disabling political criticism after World War II.


\(^8\) The term ‘eugenics’ derives from the Greek eugênes (‘well born’). As John C. Waller has pointed out, to consider Francis Galton (1822-1911) as the ‘father’ of eugenics is an oversimplification, as in Britain ideas of human heredity and concerns with hereditary disease have informed medical and lay debates on ‘fit marriages’ at least since the early decades of the 19th century. John C. Waller, ‘Ideas of Heredity, Reproduction and Eugenics in Britain, 1800–1875 (2001): Ideas of Heredity, Reproduction and Eugenics in Britain, 1800–1875’, Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences 32,3, pp. 457–489. In the US, the utopian Oneida community founded in New York in 1848 attempted to control reproductive unions among their members in order to produce only ‘fit’ offspring. Maren Lockwood Carden, Oneida: Utopian Community to Modern Corporation (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), pp. 61-64. In the second half of the 19th century the advent of Darwinism and the emergence of widespread nationalism fed into ideas of eugenics.


\(^10\) The history of eugenics in India and its global entanglements will be discussed exhaustively in Chapter Three. Eugenics suffered more disabling political criticism after World War II.
of an Asian nation belonging to the ‘yellow race’ against a major ‘white’ and Christian ‘Western’ empire. The Japanese victory represented a ‘global anti-Western moment’ and provoked exultancy across major centres of the ‘non-Western world’, including Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Vietnam, China, and India.\textsuperscript{101} In many ways Japan had been a model of national reform already since the mid-1890s, as reflected in the writings of Turkish, Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian reformist and nationalists.\textsuperscript{102} Yet in 1905 the references to Japan changed both in quantity and in quality. For Asian nationalist elites the Japanese victory delegitimized discourses of white supremacy and showed that ‘Eastern nations’ could successfully appropriate ‘Western modernity’. At the same time, Indian and other Asian nationalists also emphasized that the Japanese had intelligently selected the ‘useful’ and ‘essential’ aspects of ‘Western civilization’ without denying their own cultural heritage. As an article author of the Hindi journal Sarasvatī put it, Japan had ‘put Western civilization on a Japanese template’ (paścimī sabhyatā ko usne japānī saṁce maiṁ āṁla).\textsuperscript{103} Japan’s victory also fed into discourses that sought to define an Eastern civilization that was superior to the West’s. This task had been started already since the 1870s by authors like the Bengali novelist Bamkinchandra Chattopadhyay and the internationally better-known religious activist Swami Vivekananda, who had posited Hindu religion as being the basis of the spiritual superiority of ‘the East’, while accepting that the ‘West’ was more ‘advanced’ in the material sphere.\textsuperscript{104} As a matter of fact, the


\textsuperscript{103} N.a., ‘Japān kī jīt kā kāraṇ’, Sarasvatī 6,8 (August 1905), pp. 321-324, p. 322. For similar affirmations made by Urdu intellectuals see Nile Green, ‘Forgotten Futures: Indian Muslims in the Trans-Islamic Turn to Japan’, The Journal of Asian Studies 72,3 (August 2013), pp. 611-631.

Japanese victory also represented a turning point in the development of alternative or anti-Western visions, such as, for example, Pan-Islamist and Pan-Asianist ideologies, which played an important role in anticolonial struggles in India and other Asian countries.

Critiques of ‘Western civilization’ acquired further dynamism against the background of the ‘disenchantment with the West’ produced by World War I. Many prominent European intellectuals like Georges Duhamel and Paul Valéry described the human carnage produced by European technology in the war in terms of a reversion of the Europeans to a state of savagery, and thereby questioned the supremacist presumptions of their own civilization. This context created new receptiveness in the West for the critiques brought forward by Asian, Afro-American and African thinkers, raging from Rabindranath Tagore and Gandhi to W. E. B. DuBois and René Maran. As Kucklick has remarked, the disillusionment with ‘Western civilization’ also reflected itself on anthropology: post-war anthropologists emphasized that ‘savage impulses’ always remained ‘dormant in the heart of civilized man’ ready to ‘spring to life again’. Within this new paradigm, the notion of a global struggle had, to a certain degree, replaced the idea of manipulation and self-improvement. The evolutionary struggle itself seemed to be the only mechanism that determined the betterment of races. Nevertheless, while the Great War marked the peak of the crisis of the European ideology of the civilizing mission, the idea of race was destined to survive much longer.

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105 Pan-Islamism emerged as political ideology calling for socio-political solidarity among all Muslims between the 1860s and 1880s when Turkish intellectuals began discussing and writing about it as a way to save the Ottoman Empire from fragmentation. In India it had its peak after World War I, with the Khilafat Movement (1919-1924), which used Pan-Islamic symbols (the opposition to the abolition of the Caliphate) to forge a Pan-Indian Muslim constituency. While Asianism(s) refers to discourses and ideologies claiming that Asia can be defined and understood as a homogenous space with shared and clearly defined characteristics, ‘Pan-Asianism’ refers to the advocacy of a political alliance between the ‘Asian’ nations. Cemil Aydin has addressed the study of global anti-Western discourse by comparing Ottoman Pan-Islamic and Japanese Pan-Asian visions of world order from the middle of the 19th century to the end of World War II. Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in pan-Islamic and pan-Asian thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. For an overview on Japanese Pan-Asianist visions see Sven Saaler & Victor J. Koschmann, (eds.), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism, and Borders* (London: Routledge, 2007). For an overview several distinct concepts of Asia and pan-Asian designs in India during the struggle for Independence see Carolein Stolte & Harald Fischer-Tiné, ‘Imagining Asia in India: Nationalism and Internationalism (ca. 1905–1940), *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, 1 (2012), pp. 65–92. A still very valuable standard work on the Indian Khilafat movement is Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).


107 Kucklick, *The Savage Within*, p. 119. Nevertheless, she points out that, even before the war, anthropologists of every theoretical persuasion were starting to reappraise the role of emotions in social life.

Until racial theories were officially banned from international political discourse after 1945, they were being equally applied to totalitarian programs as well as to more optimistic and peaceful visions of world order.

5. Hindi and Urdu Public Spheres

What were the discursive spaces this work defines as Hindi and Urdu public spheres, and which voices within these spaces does this work seek to reconstruct? Some preliminary remarks on the study of ‘public spheres’ in South Asia are needed here.

In 1962 the German sociologist Jürgen Habermas has provided an influential definition of the concept of ‘public sphere’, which engendered a debate that lasted well into the 1990s. Habermas viewed the public sphere (Öffentlichkeit) as a historically specific formation that emerged in the late 17th century and declined in the late 19th with the rise of mass culture and modern bureaucracy.109 Writing many decades before the ‘imperial turn’ in historiography Habermas had omitted empire in his conceptualization of the ‘public sphere’. If political liberalism can be seen as a global ideology since at least the 18th century, so presumably, was the concept of the ‘public sphere’.110 More than two decades of scholarship has dealt with the history of South Asian publics. In a recent special issue of South Asia J. Barton Scott and Brannon D. Ingram have tried to critically describe the major research trends.111 As they observe, two principal methods have characterized this

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109 Habermas’s *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was translated into English only in 1989. There are many criticisms of Habermas’ work, of which only a few examples can be quoted here. Some scholars question the historical accuracy of his narrative: Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992). Others insist that his fundamental categories should be re-thought, as through feminist or queer theory: Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002).


111 J. Barton Scott & Brannon D. Ingram, ‘What is a Public? Notes from South Asia’, *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 38,3 (2015), pp. 357-370. The project of theorizing the public from South Asia has been started by Sandria Freitag’s influential 1991 special issue of the same journal, titled ‘Aspects of “the Public” in Colonial South Asia’: *South Asia* 14,1 (June 1991).
scholarship, both taking ‘North Atlantic notions of the public’ as a primary point of reference. The ‘typological approach’ tries to apply ‘the public’ as a generalisable concept to South Asian materials, whereas the ‘genealogical approach’, seeks to further historicize the concept and practice of the North Atlantic ‘public’ by asking how it traveled to South Asia and how it was adapted from within particular institutions and power structures. More in line with the genealogical approach, they suggest that the category of the public has been closely linked to the specifically Subcontinental history of political liberalism. All well-researched typological accounts have pointed out that South Asian public spheres were (and are) split along lines of religion, caste and gender. Neeladri Bhattacharya has defined colonial India’s public sphere as intrinsically segmented, since it was ‘a space where not just private individuals appeared as public’ but where ‘communities transformed community matters into common matters’. The public sphere comprised different levels of public discourse, including debates on community matters (for instance debates among ‘conservative’ and ‘radical’ reformers within a specific community), inter-community polemics (e.g. non-Brahmans against Brahmans) as well as a variously inclusive and exclusive nationalist rhetoric. All these idioms, Bhattacharya notes, to a certain extent mutually incomprehensible, were reinforced within the colonial public sphere and coexisted with the politics of consensus building. As Vasudha Dalmia has pointed out with respect to the early Hindi public sphere, the Hindu middle class, caught up with questions of language reform and caste, ‘partly constituted itself as such precisely by establishing ‘a public sphere, where alone its political opinions could form and represent itself’. There is one ‘split’ in Indian publics, which is of particular significance to our study, that is, the divide between Hindi and Urdu. The ways in which missionaries, Orientalists, colonial educationists, munšīs appointed by colonial educational institutions and Hindi literati such as Bharatendu Harishchandra have contributed to this process have been insightfully described in a

112 Scott & Ingram, ‘What is a Public?’, p. 359.

113 A work making this point for post-colonial India is Arvind Rajagopal, Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Public in India (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).


115 Ibid. 139-148.

variegated set of scholarly accounts and do not need to be reiterated here.\textsuperscript{117} In the 1860s, which build up the starting point of the present analysis, the processes of separate codification and politicization of the two languages had already set in. From the 1880s the nascent Hindi public sphere in which Hindi was championed as ‘the language of the Hindus’ was in growing competition with the already established Urdu public sphere and the developing of Urdu institutions. The court language controversy helped to ‘coalesce two separate linguistic and cultural identities and competing vernacular public spheres in the same region’.\textsuperscript{118} The period under scrutiny (1880-1930) was marked by the substantial growth of the Hindi movement, which by the 1940s was able to stake its claim as the national language of the whole of India. While in the world of journalism the proportional growth of Hindi publications was relatively slow,\textsuperscript{119} the turn of the Hindu readership towards Hindi reflected itself in a substantial increase of printed books in that language in the first two decades of the 20th century.\textsuperscript{120}

However, as Francesca Orsini and Ulrike Stark have reminded us, the divide of the two languages and their readership did not rule out that—at the level of publishing—Hindi and Urdu were part of an ‘osmotic literary system’.\textsuperscript{121} With the shift of the Hindu readership’s linguistic allegiance from

\textsuperscript{117} While Hindustani/Urdu and Hindavi/Hindi were differentiating before the advent of colonialism, the distinction between them had little to do with religion of the people who used it, or with script alone. If there was a separation, it was the urban-rural divide. Literary historians have asked to what extent Hindi has been ‘created’ by the British. Vasudha Dalmia has formulated one of the most precise answers: ‘Though a certain “Hinduisation of Hindi” had set in before the advent of the British, it was the British who institutionalized Hindi as the language of the Hindus. But they went further and claimed that they had, in fact, created it’. Ibid., p. 148. For a detailed bibliography of scholarly literature (in Hindi and English) on the development of Hindi as a distinct language and a summary of the different positions see Ibid., pp. 147-148. For an insightful account of the political contestation over Hindi and Urdu as distinctive language formations, see David Lelyveld, ‘The Fate of Hindustani’ in Carol Breckenridge and Peter Van der Veer (eds.), \textit{Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia}, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). For the development of the Urdu public sphere a valuable reference is Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, \textit{Early Urdu Literary Culture and History} (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001). See also Idem, ‘A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part 1: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture’ in Sheldon Pollock et al (eds), \textit{Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia} (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp.805-863.

\textsuperscript{118} Orsini, \textit{The Hindi Public Sphere}, p. 4. The court language controversy had started in 1835-37 with the abolition of Persian as the official language of government, which was replaced by Hindustani (Urdu). In 1900 Devanagari was finally introduced for official communication alongside the Perso-Arabic script.

\textsuperscript{119} Urdu printed journalism had started in the late 1820 and was flourishing by the 1860s. Hindi journalism started in the 1870s but commercially viable Hindi newspapers only appeared in the first two decades of the 20th century. Nadir ‘Ali Khan, \textit{A History of Urdu Journalism, 1822-1857} (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1991), p. 125; Orsini, \textit{The Hindi Public Sphere}, pp. 52-68.


\textsuperscript{121} Orsini, \textit{The Hindi Public Sphere}, p. 68.
Urdu to Hindi, transliterations/translations from one language to the other were willingly undertaken whenever it was perceived that there was a market on the other side. One case in point was the Urdu armchair travelogue *Dunīā kī sair* (1898) written by the little known Pyarelal, zamindar of Barautha, republished in Hindi at the turn of the century. In 1900 the same author published a Hindi treatise on sex and ‘fit reproduction’, a genre that had no counterpart in Urdu. Another, more famous author who switched from Urdu to Hindi was Raja Shivaprasad of Benares (1823-1895), public intellectual, man of letters, historian, and eminent educator. Shiva Prasad was a central participant in the highly contentious Hindi–Urdu debate, and his positions have been subject to scholarly controversy. While he heavily criticized government’s preference for Urdu he pronounced himself against the artificial substitution of Persian and Arabic words with Sanskrit words as practiced at Fort William, which in his view, excessively distanced the language from its users. The question arises, whether the switch of language—and audience—of authors such as Pyarelal influenced their selective adoption of fragments of ‘Western science’ and their readaptation of racial concepts. While the scarcity of sources has not allowed me to research this point thoroughly, some insights will be discussed in the next chapter. Having said this, let us now look at the different socio-political contexts within the Hindi and Urdu public spheres, which this work has tried to explore.


123 Urdu version: Zamindar az Baroutha, Pyarelal, *Dunīā kī sair* (Barauṭha: Maṭha’ Vidya Sāgar Press, 1897). Hindi version: Pyarelal Zamindar Barauthaji, *Duniyā kī sair. Customs and Costumes* (1902). Information on the printing press, edition, and place of publishing cannot be read due to the scarce quality of the copy. This work and the racial concept it contained are discussed in the next chapter.


125 Prasad was a direct descendant of the famous banker Jagat Seth (the principal financier of the late Mughal state who allied with the East India Company). Following his education at Benares College, he took on an impressive range of positions that included ambassador of the Raja of Bharatpur, an intelligence officer for the colonial state in the North-Western Provinces and Punjab, the mīr munšī (chief clerk) of the Simla Agency, the founder of the first Hindi newspaper, *Banaras Akhbaar* (est.1845), and the first non-British inspector of schools in the North-Western Provinces and Awadh) directly responsible for the supervision and regulation of a large staff of subinspectors, textbook authors, and teachers. See Ulrike Stark, ‘Knowledge in Context; Raja Shivaprasad as Hybrid Intellectual and People’s Educator’ in Dodson & Hatcher, *Transcolonial Modernities*, pp. 68-92.

The authors considered in this thesis reflected the concerns of a set of North Indian middle class milieus, which—unlike their bilingual counterparts in Calcutta—in the second half of the 19th century remained prevalently influenced by local traditions of learning. The Hindi texts analyzed in this work were those of authors, mostly men, coming from the ranks of the educated Hindus (or Jains) of North India who had started to use and promote Khari Boli Hindi as their public language from the second half of the 19th century onwards. As Francesca Orsini has pointed out:

The champions of Hindi belonged to small zamindar or even peasant families whose fathers and grandfathers had sometimes diversified into teaching, law, the lower echelons of government service or the army; they could be from families that still served local landowners and worked as village clerks (patwaris and kanungos); or they could be scholarly or priestly Brahmins, educated in Sanskrit, who performed ritual duties in the village and sometimes taught in village schools (pāṭālās); and finally they could belong to Agrawal and Khatri merchant families. It was these higher and middle castes, of once diverse linguistic competencies that compacted around Khari Boli Hindi.

The subsection of authors analyzed in this work printed their books and journals from presses that stretched from Lahore to Calcutta in the North and to Bombay in the West, reflecting a growing Hindi publishing industry extending beyond the ‘Hindi heartland’. If most writers themselves stemmed from or lived in important Hindi publishing centres such as Allahabad or Benares, some among them lived and wrote their books from more provincial places. Many of the Hindi writers analyzed in the following chapters were either directly involved or influenced by what Mohinder Singh has described as the ‘entanglement of the early 20th-century Hindi intellectual world with Victorian political thought’. He is referring to the adoptions and adaptations of Victorian philosophers and public moralists such as Samuel Smiles, William Davenport Adams, John

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127 Part of this tradition consisted of a shared Persian and Indo-Persian knowledge, comprehending the Persian classics, both in poetry and in prose. For an overview of the works that made up in this common cultural baggage see Margrit Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’, p. 170. Pernau emphasizes that these texts crucially impacted the ways in which Urdu writers discussed and readapted ‘Western’ concepts in the late 19th century.

128 Orsini, The Hindi Public Sphere, p. 4 (emphasis added). Francesca Orsini notes that this social group did not change significantly after 1920: over half of the Hindi literati, men and women, were Brahmins, including a few Bhumihars, while the rest were Kayasthas, Agrawals, Khatrises, and Thakurs. Ibid. This caste composition is reflected in the caste magazines included in this work.

129 Two important examples were Chimmanlal Vaishya (1854-1933) from Tilhar (UP) and Hiralal ‘Jalori’ (1888-1944) from Kota (Rajasthan), whose views are analyzed in Chapter Three.

Lubbock, John Stuart Mill, and Herbert Spencer by the Hindi movement’s first two generations in Allahabad and Benares, which includes pioneering figures, directly connected to the Bharatendu circle, such as Balkrishna Bhatt (1844-1914) and Pratapnarayan Mishra (1856-1894) as well as later stalwarts such as Syamsundar Das (1875-1945), Mahavir Prasad Dvivedi (1864-1938), and Ramchandra Shukla (1884-1941). Bharatendu and his followers belonged to the sanātan dharma (lit. ‘eternal law/religion’) current,\(^{131}\) which—while promoting their own reform agendas—tried to defend ‘orthodox’ Hinduism against the challenge posed by ‘opposing’ reform movements, in particular the Arya Samaj. The followers of the latter related the social reform they promoted to the question of religious reform and grounded both in a reworked theology of Hinduism as outlined in Satyarth Prakāś (‘Light of Truth’), the magnum opus of its founding father, Dayanand Saraswati in 1875. However, the ideologies and socio-political practices of Sanatanists and Arya Samajis had much in common: the major difference between them lay in their selection of reform projects and the degree of emphasis they lent to social change.\(^{132}\) Of particular relevance for the present study is Singh’s emphasis on the fact that both sets of groups shared an emphasis on the ‘degenerate’ state of the existing Hindu society’ and called for social regeneration, which they styled in revivalist terms, as ‘for both groups the ancient heritage became a source of pride and emotional strength useful against the backdrop of current situation of being a conquered nation’.\(^{133}\) Also highly important is that authors belonging to both currents largely shared the European sources of inspiration for their revivalist projects. As shown by Harald Fischer-Tiné, Victorian evolutionists and degeneration theorists such as Herbert Spencer and Benjamin Kidd bore a fundamental influence on the ideologies and educational practices promoted by the Samaj.\(^{134}\) Finally, although


\(^{132}\) Singh, ‘Spectres of the West’, p. 191.

\(^{133}\) Fischer-Tiné, ‘From Brahmacharya to “Conscious Race Culture. This work includes the texts of a few Arya Samajis, like those of the already mentioned Chimman Lal Vashiya and the miscellaneous journal for women Pāncāl Paṁditā, bilingual Hindi-English journal for women founded in 1897 (only in Hindi from
their different attitudes to the caste question could be reason of much quarrelling, Charu Gupta has highlighted that ‘Hindu publicists’ of both currents eagerly sought to set themselves apart from lower castes and Muslims.\(^{135}\) The emphasis on degeneration coupled with a call for social regeneration, the adoption of evolutionism, and the setting of a sharper demarcation from low castes and Muslims built up three important cornerstones for the readaptations of race in Hindi.

Among the periodicals that emerged from within the circles of the early Hindi movement this work looks at the monthlies *Hindī Pradīp*, established by Bhatt in 1877, and *Sarasvatī*, started in 1900 by Mahavir Prasad Dvivedi (1864-1938),\(^{136}\) both printed from Allahabad.\(^{137}\) A relative of Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946), Bhatt was sent to the Yamuna Mission School after having been educated in Sanskrit and Persian literature at home. A nationalist and an admirer of Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920),\(^{138}\) he worked as a teacher in various schools, among whom the Allahabad Kayasth School, from which he resigned in 1908 for his political activity.\(^{139}\) He founded his monthly, *Hindī Pradīp* (1877-1910) one year before the passing of the Vernacular Press Act (1878) which provided the government extensive rights to censor ‘seditious material’ published in the 1901), which included articles on hygiene, healthy diet and childcare but, as we will see, also contained reports on savage people from across the world.

\(^{135}\) Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, p. 11.

\(^{136}\) For information on this author, see below.

\(^{137}\) The flourishing Hindi literary sphere of Allahabad was strongly influenced by the growth of the city as a center of ‘Western education’, journalism and publishing, of provincial administration and nationalist politics. Nevertheless, the Hindi and English public spheres remained largely divided both geographically (between the University area and the civil lines on one side and the town and Daraganj on the other) and intellectually. As noticed by Francesca Orsini, even in the center of nationalist politics, represented by Nehru’s residence, Anand Bhavan, Hindi remained ‘a slightly and largely alien presence’. Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 37. Hindi-English. Karine Schoemer, *Mahadevi Varma and the Chayavad Age of Modern Hindi Poetry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 135.

\(^{138}\) Malaviya and Tilak were both eminent figures in the Indian National Congress and Hindu nationalists. Founder of Benares Hindu University (1916) and member of the Hindu Mahashaba (est. 1915), Malaviya was one of the main actors of the Hindi movement. This works includes the journal *Brahmacārī into the analysis, which was the mouthpiece of the Riśikul Bharhmacarya Aśram of Haridwar, another educational institution established by him in 1906. Tilak, the lokamānyaya (‘leader revered by the people’), is known as an agitator of the radical wing of the Congress, and for being one of the first to adopt the strategy of mass politics in his home region, Maharashtra, in which he ‘recruited’ religious symbols to forge a Hindu national identity. See Cashman, ‘The Political Recruitment of God Ganapati’.

indigenous press. Bhatt nevertheless often criticized the government through an extensive use of satire. Two other major themes in his writings—essays, advisory manuals, short stories, and plays—were the call for social progress or improvement (unnati) and the critique of ‘retrograde customs’ such as child marriage, the polygamy of kulīn Brahmans, the segregation of women and the lack of family planning. Yet he also attacked what he considered the ‘superficial imitation of Western civilization’ practiced by the anglicized bābūs.

Bhatt also participated in the activities of the Nāgarīpracārinī Sabhā (‘Organization for the Spread of the Nāgarī Script), founded in 1893 by a number of students of the Queen’s College in Benares. The Sabhā sought to gain influence in the Text-Book Committees of the Education Department, founded its own publishing house and library, the Aryabhāṣā Pustakālaya. Its members also started many book series dedicated to a variety of ‘useful’ topics, which also comprehended the translation of English books. Monika Freier has emphasized the society’s role in the promotion of Hindi advisory literature, which would ‘morally uplift their readers and firmly codify Hindi as a language of literature and moral expression’.

‘Character building’, which

140 Hindī Pradīp was a one-man initiative, whose purpose was not commercial but to favour the development of the language. A readership for this kind of publications did not exist in Hindi at that time. Other authors of the Bharatendu circle founded similar journals.


144 Singh, ‘Spectres of the West’, p. 189.


146 Most of the advisory manuals discussed in Chapter Three belong to this library.

comprehended individual self-disciplining of mind, body and soul in a variety of forms was a major concern of this endeavour. As Chapter Three is going to discuss in detail, Hindi advisory literature also built up a major channel for the spread of eugenic ideas. The turn of the 20th century saw the gradual development of santati-śāstra, a highly popular genre and form of knowledge, which taught married couples how to produce ‘fit offspring’.

A further landmark—both in the standardization of Hindi and in the vernacularization of ‘Western science’—was the founding, in 1900, of Sarasvatī, the first commercially sustainable journal in Hindi, sponsored by the powerful Indian Press owned by Chintamani Gosh. Dvivedi, its first editor was known for making rigid selection of ‘useful’ knowledge and literature one of his major concerns. Another miscellaneous monthly founded in 1909 in Benares was Indu, which was innovative from the literary viewpoint (in so far as it published some genres that Sarasvatī would not admit on its pages) and also, like Sarasvatī, regularly dedicated some pages to ‘scientific knowledge’. Unlike these two, Vijnān, the Hindi monthly of the Vigiān Parisad, founded in 1913 by Satya Prakash, a Chemist at Muir Central College (later Allahabad University) was specifically dedicated to the discussion and popularization of ‘Western science’ in Hindi. Unlike Allahabad’s quite well-researched literary sphere, the ideologies and activities of the Parisad, have attacked little scholarly attention so far. In addition to that, this thesis includes a set of later monthlies into the analysis: Maryāda (Allahabad, 1910-1922), Chāṁd (Allahabad, 1922-1941), and Mādhurī (Lucknow, 1922-50). The first was a political and miscellaneous paper launched by Madan Mohan Malaviya and edited by his nephew, Krishnakant Malaviya. Chāṁd, whose first editor was Ramrakh Singh Sahgal (1922-1933), was dedicated to a female readership and included political news, social analyses, poetry, and fiction.

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150 His biography is furnished in Chapter Three, in the section discussing Hindi authors’ attitudes to birth control.

Mādhurī set a new trend in Hindi journalism because of its openness, including a much larger variety of voices and styles into its pages.152

The first generation of Urdu writers considered in this thesis mostly stemmed from the Hindu-Muslim class of Persian-educated gentry, officials and law professionals that was predominantly urban and had traditionally served government.153 They mostly wrote and printed their books and periodicals from the cities of the North Western Provinces (from 1902 United Provinces of Agra and Awadh) and the Punjab, as well as Hyderabad. While by the turn of the 20th century a growing number of Hindus belonging to this class—like Raja Shivaprasad and Pyarelal—switched to Hindi, and coalesced around the new identity of a ‘language of the Hindus’, their Muslim counterparts, too, gradually developed a new identity.

In this process, the term they used to refer to themselves, šarīf (pl. ašrāf), or ‘noble’, underwent a subtle change in meaning. Originally the term distinguished those ‘noble’ Muslim families, who could claim ancestry from the heartlands of Islam from ‘common’ Indian converts (ajlāf). Such (often fictional) genealogical claims were made either by people who lived on land revenues or on their erudition and learning, excluding the merchant classes. This changed after the demise of the Rebellion of 1857 when the Mughal court nobility lost its political power. This situation saw the emergence of a new ‘bourgeoisie’,154 which still comprehended groups living on their learning—now working either for the colonial government (as administrators, professors and teachers), on their own (as lawyers and doctors) or for the community (mullahs)—as well as merchant classes. This heterogeneous group coalesced around currents of reformist Islam and a new definition of the term šarīf, which in Urdu writings of the late 19th century increasingly came to designate ‘noble’ in the sense of ‘proper conduct’, that is, the ability to husband scarce resources and manage time, education in ‘useful’ subjects, and religious piety. The new šarīf culture is best illustrated through a number of texts belonging to different ideological currents that advocated the ‘reform of women’s customs’ such as Nazir Ahmad’s novel Mirāt ul-‘Arūs (‘The Bride’s Mirror’) and Ashraf Ali

152 Mādhurī became the most important forum for literary production and discussion in Hindi. Orsini, The Hindi Public Sphere, pp. 55-60.

153 The continuities and changes with respect to this class in the years of Mughal decline and British expansion, before and after the Revolt of 1857, is discussed in Christopher Bayly, Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars (3rd ed., New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012).

154 Margrit Pernau has shown the ways in which this class can be compared to he German bourgeoisie. Margrit Pernau, Bürger mit Turban: Muslime in Delhi im 19. Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). See also her Ashraf into Middle Class: Muslims in 19th-Century Delhi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013).
Thanwi’s bestselling advisory book Bihisti Zevar (‘Heavenly Jewels’). Very much like in the case of their Hindu counterparts who forged the nascent Hindi public sphere, the protagonists of this shift largely defined the new šarīf values through a selective appropriation and readaptation of Victorian values of ‘character building’. In this case the accent was set on distinguishing one’s group not only from below but also from above, though the critique of the wasteful navābī lifestyle.

One of the iconic figures, representing the generation who lived through this shift and established one of the two major ideological trends that would grow out of this milieu, was Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) or Sir Sayyid as he was mostly referred to after he had been awarded the title of Companion of the Star of India for his loyalism during the Rebellion of 1857-59. Deeply marked by the psychological turmoil of this experience, and the British resentment against Muslims that marked the years to follow, Sir Sayyid matured the conviction that intellectual and political reconciliation with the British was the only way to reconstitute Muslim prosperity in India. Consequently he made the harmonization of ‘Western knowledge’ and Islam his main objective, even though his own education had been largely traditional, having acquired the English language in adult life through self-study. Translation and readaptation therefore were key features of his political project. Besides his numerous monographs, he promoted his views through a journal, to

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156 On the British shifting attitudes and discourses on Indian ‘nabobs’ see Fischer-Tiné, Low and Licentious Europeans, pp. 26-35.

157 Thanks to his family’s ties with the East Indian Company he had gradually worked himself up to the position of chief assessment official, and was posted in Bijnore at the outbreak of the revolt. A bibliographical overview on the ample secondary literature on Sir Sayyid is provided in Sheila McDonough, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide (Oxford University Press, 2010). A study on the religious thought of Sir Sayyid that remains a reference work to this day is Christian W. Troll, Sayyid Ahmad Khan. A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978).

158 This was reflected in Scottish statistician and Indian Civil Service member William Wilson Hunter’s anti-Muslim manifesto, The Indian Mussalmans: Are They Bound in Conscience to Rebel Against the Queen? (London: Trübner & Co., 3rd ed., 1876).

159 He wrote a Tafsīr al-Qur’ān (exegesis) for this purpose. The pre-eminence he gave to the laws of nature, he won him and his followers the derogatory name necari (‘naturalist’).
which he significantly assigned the double title *Tahzib ul-akhlīq* / ‘Muhammedan Social Reformer’. Along with some like-minded contemporaries he founded the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh (1875), which was to become a key institution in the forging of the English-educated Muslim colonial elite by the turn of the 20th century. Aligarh’s political loyalism was formalized with the foundation of the Muslim League in 1906. After Sir Sayyid’s death in 1898 the post of honorary secretary of the College was taken over by Sayyid Mehdi Ali (1837-1917) from Etawah, who had earned the title of Navab Muhshin ul-Mulk in the Princely State of Hyderabad, where he had risen to the highest positions in the government service.

Besides Sir Sayyid’s *Tahzib ul-akhlīq* and the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* this work discusses the views expressed in a further set of periodicals based in Hyderabad and Delhi, whose founders were all involved in the Aligarh movement, although they held different political positions vis-à-vis the colonial government.

The first figure was Muhib Husain (18??-1930), another member of the Muslim service elite from Etawah who had found employment at the Nizam’s court in the 1870s, working as a translator in the Revenue Department. Husain, who did not share the loyalist position of Sir Sayyid and Mehdi Ali (although the latter was his patron in Hyderabad) edited two journals, *Mu‘ālim-e Šafīq*, which was a political and literary monthly (later weekly) and *Mu‘ālim-e nisvān*, which was dedicated to the ‘betterment’ and education of women. He translated books on many different subjects from English into Urdu and his two periodicals were replete with ‘scientific reports’, an article category, which I will define below.

Another Hyderabad-based author (who worked in the Nizam’s education service) was the Aligarh-educated political worker, writer, poet and noted journalist Maulvi Zafar ‘Ali Khan (1873–1956) editor of the *Dakkan revīū*, in which he had published a play that celebrated the Japanese victory

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160 To this day one of best analyses of the institution and the individual lives of the figures involved with it is Lelyveld, *Aligarh’s First Generation*.


over Russia in 1905 only two months after the war.\textsuperscript{164} He later edited the important Urdu newspaper \textit{Zamindar} of Lahore (1910-1954).

In addition to Muhib Husain’s \textit{Mu’allim-e nisvān}, the analysis includes a further miscellaneous periodical dedicated to the cause of women’s reform and social uplift, namely \textit{Tamaddun} (1911-1915), founded by Rashidul Khairi (1868-1936), one of the most prolific Urdu novelists of the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century also known by the ironical nickname \textit{muṣāvvir-e qham} (‘painter of sorrow’) because of his tearful accounts featuring women as patient and long-suffering victims of men’s injustices. Unlike his literary monthly for women, ‘\textit{Ismat} (est. 1909), \textit{Tamaddun} was specifically dedicated to a male audience in order to further male awareness of women’s rights.\textsuperscript{165}

Finally, this study includes the influential political daily \textit{al-Hilāl} founded in Calcutta in 1912 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888-1958). Scholar, and intellectual, president of the Indian National Congress from 1939 to 1946, outspoken opponent of Jinnah and Partition, he represents a symbol of Hindu-Muslim alliance in a secular India. His biography significantly differs from those of the authors considered so far. The son of a renowned Sufi scholar from Bengal who had married an Arab wife, Azad was born in Mecca, were his father’s family had migrated after the demise of the Revolt of 1857. The family returned to Calcutta in 1890. During his youth Azad had been attracted to Sir Sayyid’s theology and for a short period even leaned towards atheism.\textsuperscript{166} A combination of brief travel to the Middle East and his Arabic reading also exposed him to the reformist and anti-imperialist ideas of the Egyptian thinkers Sheikh Abduh and Mustafa Kamil. By the end of 1909 Azad then had an emotional/mystical experience that renewed his faith in religion and galvanized his personality in a dramatic way. The founding of \textit{al-Hilāl}, which linked together Islamic spirituality, Pan-Islamic cosmopolitanism, critique of the loyalist position of the Aligarh movement, and call for India’s independence, marked the take-off of Azad’s political career.

\textsuperscript{164} Green, ‘Forgotten Futures’; Aqeel, ‘Japan and Haiderabad’.

\textsuperscript{165} Rashidul Kahiri was born into a family of literate functionaries in Delhi, renown for Islamic learning, and had acquired some English education. Khairi was a ‘cautious’ promoter of women’s rights who ‘would have been scandalized if women demanded their own rights but he wanted men to recognize those rights’. Gail Minault, \textit{Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India} (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 138.

Finally, this work has considered a later periodical, which can also be traced back to the Aligarh movement, namely *Sa’ins* (‘Science’) started in 1928. Specifically dedicated to the discussion and popularization of ‘Western science’ (like its Hindi counterpart, *Vijñān*) this quarterly was founded by the Anjumān-e Taraqqī-e Urdu (‘Society for the Advancement of Urdu’), established in 1903 as part of the All-India Muslim Educational Conference associated with Aligarh University to counter Hindi advocates in North India.\(^{167}\) Urdu-speaking natural scientists and laymen regularly contributed articles from across the Subcontinent. One of the journal’s major aims was to standardize a scientific language in Urdu. Each number of *Sa’ins* contained a list of scientific vocabulary of up to ten pages in the end, which contained the scientific key words used in that issue’s articles.\(^{168}\)


As pointed out Indian readaptations of ‘Western science’ were not simple translations but new creations. However, matters become somewhat more complex if one tries to discern the different ‘stages’ of this process. While it has been emphasized that readaptations usually implied attentive selection, adaptation, and transformation\(^ {169}\) it has also been noticed that readapted discourses are not always ‘traceable through translations of and references to British texts’, or ‘through explicit negotiation or rejection of the colonial language and concepts in any specific manner’.\(^ {170}\) How can we trace readapted concepts when the authors transformed them so much that the ‘original’ was no more recognizable and they did not provide any reference to it?\(^ {171}\)

\(^{167}\) Founded in Aligarh, in 1913 the society shifted to Aurangabad under the patronage of the Hyderabad princely state in 1913, then to Delhi (1938), and finally to Karachi (1949) following Partition. Andrew Amstutz (PhD candidate at Cornell University, New York) is currently working on a project, which tries to explore the trans-regional contours of the Urdu language movement led by the Anjumān.

\(^{168}\) See for instance the issues 1 (1928), 5 (1932), and 7 (1934).

\(^{169}\) Fischer-Tiné, ‘Herbert Spencer und das *Satyayuga*’, p. 123.


\(^{171}\) I owe the stimulation to reflect on this aspect to Margrit Pernau, who has asked this question in a commented draft to the quoted paper.
When trying to explore the different ways in which racial concepts were readapted in the mentioned literary milieus, this work has come across many instances of a genre, which I define as ‘scientific reporting’. Most of the analyzed Hindi and Urdu periodicals regularly published columns that described and discussed specific fragments of ‘Western science’. Such reports could contain more or less ‘direct’ translations from English scientific texts, reproductions of already existing vernacular translations, as well as texts created ad hoc, that is, summaries and commentaries of specific ‘scientific’ theories or disciplines. It is to be assumed that many readers of the journals might not have had access to the English-language ‘originals’ quoted in these reports, but adopted ‘Western science’ directly through such compendia.\(^{172}\) Importantly, such reports were contained not only in newspapers specifically dedicated to the discussion of ‘Western science’ (such as Vijñān and Sa’īns) but also in miscellaneous monthlies and political dailies. Early specimens were provided in Husain’s Mu'allim-e Šafiq. In one issue, for example, the editor wrote a long article in which he described the life of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) and the discipline of phrenology.\(^{173}\) In another, much shorter article, he provided a ‘scientific’ description of human skin and its various functions.\(^{174}\) A prolific publisher of ‘scientific reports’ in Hindi was Dvivedi. Sarasvatī hardly brought out an issue that did not contain at least one piece dedicated to ‘science’. Some ‘scientific reports’, such as Mānav-rahasya (‘The Mistery of Mankind’) by Mahendulal Garg,\(^{175}\) were actually

\(^{172}\) M. Asaduddin has stressed the fact that Indian authors often adopted ‘Western’ ideas ‘at second, third, or fourth hand’ and has called for further research on this aspect. M. Asaduddin, ‘The West in the Nineteenth-Century Imagination: Some Reflections on the Transition from a Persianate Knowledge System To the Template of Urdu and English’, Annal of Urdu Studies 18 (2003), pp. 45-65, p. 53.

\(^{173}\) Muhib Husain, ‘Falsifah-e ‘aqīlah ‘ianī Phrenology’, Mu’allim-e Šafiq (1881), pp. 9-20 (month, volume, and issue number missing). Gall had suggested that different mental functions were located in different parts of the brain and that these could in turn be ‘read’ by examining the shape and size of a head, revealing information on an individual’s supposedly innate intellectual aptitudes and character traits. On British and Bengali promoters of phrenology in the first half of the 19\(^{th}\) century see Shruti Kapila, ‘Race Matters’, pp. 488-502.


\(^{175}\) Mahendulal Garg (1870-1942) was part of the native regiment under the British Army that was dispatched to China during 1899-1900, where it joined the Joint Foreign Expeditionary Force and fought the Boxers. As pointed out by Kamal Sheel, in his writings on Boxer China, Garg highlighted the ‘brotherly affinities’ between the Indians and the Chinese. See Kamal Sheel, ‘China in Subaltern Indian Images: Travel Narratives of Thakur Gadadhar Singh and Mahendu Lal Garg during the Boxer Rebellion’, Abstract written for the Guest Lecture at the Copenhagen Business School, October 23, 2013 [http://www.cbs.dk/node/258791. Accessed April 25 2016]. Garg also wrote a book that celebrated the Japanese victory over Russia in 1905 (see Chapter Two). Mahendulal Garg, Japāṇdarpaṇ (Prāyag: Indian Press, 1907). Finally, Garg published an advisory manual for women, in which he explained how to become an ideal pativrata. See Charu Gupta, ‘(Mis)Representing the Dalit Woman: Reification of Caste and Gender Stereotypes in the Hindi Didactic Literature of Colonial India’, Indian Historical Review 35 (2008), pp. 101-124, p. 112.
long essays published in series. In the latter example Garg explained the ways in which the theory of evolution (translated as parināmaṁavād) applied to man. In the first article of the series he clarified that humans descended from apes. To prove that the latter’s intelligence came close to that of humans he provided a concrete example from everyday life, a fact he had himself observed at the bazar in Mathura: a monkey came to the bazar and touched a little calf; when he tried to chase it away it threw shoes at him. In other periodicals ‘scientific reports’ discussed knowledge at a more abstract level. A case in point was the miscellaneous Urdu monthly Adīb, founded in 1910 in Allahabad under a joint Hindu-Muslim editorship made up of Naubat Rai ‘Nazar’, Pyarelal ‘Shakir’ and Hasser Azimabadi. One issue contained an article, titled ‘Ulūm-e tajrībah (‘Applied sciences’), which was an account of the emergence of ‘science’ (sā’īns) from the beginnings of human history, down to Auguste Compte, Karl Pearson, and Herbert Spencer. Finally, the political daily al-Hilāl had a specific column, called Muzākirah-e ‘ilmīyyiah (‘Scientific debate’), which offered its readers a new scientific report every day. To this day the role of vernacular periodicals as arenas for the selective appropriations and adaptations of ‘Western science’ has received relatively little scholarly attention. As illustrated by the quoted examples, ‘scientific reports’ usually offered more or less explicit references to the sources being readapted. Therefore, this kind of text can help determine which bits of ‘Western science’ were selected in particular vernacular contexts. It allows us to make suppositions on probable ‘sources’ in the cases in which the authors did not mention them. This is perhaps even more relevant in the instances in which a specific author or group of authors did not use particular


177 Amaresh Datta (ed.), Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature, Vol.2 (Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 3rd ed., 2005), p. 1899. Some suppositions on the reasons why this periodical has not very proved fertile for the present research are made in the epilogue.


bits of ‘Western science’ for their ideological and political projects although they were ‘at hand’ in their intellectual milieu.\footnote{A few such concrete examples will be discussed in the next chapters.} For all these reasons then, scientific reports in vernacular periodicals build up an important historical source for the study of transcolonial flows of knowledge, whose research potential has just started being explored.
Chapter II

From Beasts and Demons to Inferior Races?
Civilization and the Shifting Ideas on Human Difference in the Hindi and Urdu Public Spheres

Introduction

Perhaps not surprisingly, one context in which Indian authors adopted and readapted ideas of race was the discussion on the concepts of civilization and civility, along with their opposites, barbarism and savagery. The previous chapter has identified a number of major shifts in British discussions on these concepts. The first was the gradual albeit never complete move away, in the second half of the 19th century, from the pedagogical view of civilization, which had originally constituted the ideological basis of the colonial civilizing mission. In contrast to this, the biological view of civilization questioned human’s universal ability to progress and grounded on a more ‘fixed’ concept of race, which survived the World War of 1914-18 almost unharmed. At the same time, the first global conflict had brought about the disillusionment with ‘Western civilization’, which conferred new popularity to ‘alternative’ models of civilization.

To Indians, nationalist elites in particular, the question of civilization was a major concern, so much so that in the early decades of the 20th century one can rightly speak of ‘an endless yearning for civilization’.1 The latter was produced at least partly as a response to Britain’s colonial ‘civilizing mission’, a project, which ‘only ambivalently conferred the mantle of civilisation on India, reserving it for certain select periods—invariably of high antiquity—and for certain select folks—the ancient Aryans in particular’.2 As recent scholarship on this field has shown, the concepts of ‘civilization’ and ‘civility’ have been appropriated since at least the middle of the 19th century and readapted in different Indian regions and languages—for example, Bengali, Hindi, and Urdu—

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1 Sumathi Ramaswamy has used this expression with reference to the ways in which North Indian and Tamil intellectuals employed the archaeological ‘discovery’ of pre-historic ruins in the Indus valley of 1924 to refashion different nationalist projects. Sumathi Ramaswamy, ‘Remains of the Race: Archeology, Nationalism, and the Yearning for Civilization in the Indus Valley’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 38,2 (2001), pp. 105-145.

2 Ibid., p. 130.
where they underwent further shifts that were specific to each public sphere. My interest in this chapter is to look at the Hindi and Urdu public spheres conjunctly, focusing on one particular aspect of Hindi and Urdu speakers’ negotiation of civilization and civility, namely, their global maps of civilizational hierarchy. Subho Basu, who has interrogated Bengali geography textbooks for schools published between 1845 and 1880, has shown how the authors of these texts gradually developed a theory of race in order to establish a link between India’s supposed high location on the ‘scale of civilizations’ and its claim to self-government. Yet, while emphasizing that the process of readaptation of European racial concepts was dialectical and selective, Basu has refrained from engaging in a close analysis of the shifts in meaning, which it implied. Also, while highlighting that racial classifications became more ‘scientific’ he remains silent about how fixed authors conceived race to be. In one respect, this chapter draws on Basu’s work, showing how his assertion on the link between racialist theories of civilization and claims of nationalist self-assertion can be applied to Hindi and Urdu writers between 1860 and 1930. At the same time, by including the early decades of the 20th century into the analysis, this study further expands the field to explore how vernacular authors’ uses of race changed against the background of global shifts in the discourses on civilization and savagery. Can we distinguish stages of a development in which the biological view of civilization gradually superseded the pedagogical view, as it was the case in British colonial discourse? What does the analysis of the shifting uses of race in the Urdu and Hindi public spheres add to our understanding of the reception of race in South Asia?

The study also seeks to compare Urdu texts with Hindi texts. The analyzed time frame coincided with the creation and actual implementation of the ‘invented tradition’, which framed (‘Hindu’) Hindi and (‘Muslim’ or secular) Urdu as two separate and competitive languages. Consequently, from the early 20th century onwards, Urdu texts and Hindi texts indeed often—albeit not always—reflected two different intellectual milieus. In how far did they influence the authors’ ideas on human ranking?

3 See the chapters on the Urdu, Hindi, and Bengali public spheres by Margrit Pernau, Mohinder Singh, and Rochona Majumdar in Pernau & Jordheim, Civilizing Emotions, pp. 169-230.

4 Subho Basu, ‘The Dialectics of Resistance’.

5 In the 1860s race concepts had already entered the public spheres, along with the temporalization of the concept of civilization and the first receptions and readaptations of Darwinian evolution and social evolutionism. Early colonial educational books in Urdu, which divulged Darwinian evolution were Atmore M. Sherring, (ed.). Mirzapore Educational Books; Urdu Series No. III. Tażkirat ul-‘āqlīn, Mirzapore: Atmore Sherring, 1861, Mirzapore Educational Books; Urdu Series No. VI. Nizām-e haivānāt, Mirzapore: Atmore Sherring, 1864. An example of a periodical article was Mażhar ul-‘ulām (Ghazipur), n. 108 (1877).
As far as the sources are concerned, the main focus of this chapter is on the periodical press. Nevertheless, the analysis also includes armchair travelogues and geography textbooks (Section One) as well as treatises discussing the origin and usefulness of caste (Section Four).

Each of the four sections of this chapter focuses on specific ways of dividing up humanity and describing civilizational otherness used by Hindi and/or Urdu writers in one or more literary genres during a specific period of time. The first section concentrates on the last four decades of the 19th century, showing how, while racial concepts had already entered the Urdu and Hindi languages, their meanings were (still) neither uniform nor fixed. The second section focuses on what I have identified as ‘the showcasing of the wild’, an early-20th-century-discourse in Hindi, whose authors ‘exhibited’ savages from different parts of the world to their readers. If these authors used race more coherently, they still majorly expressed the conviction that civilization was not dependent on it. Looking at this discourse through a gender lens, I try to explain why the fluid race concept was functional to a particular form of (Hindu) masculinity, which this discourse incorporated and sought to reaffirm. I also try to make sense of the absence of an equivalent discourse in the Urdu public sphere. Section Three, again, looks at the two public spheres together exploring two contexts in which the biological view was favoured over the pedagogical view of civilization. It tries to compare the ways in which, between 1900 and 1930 Hindi and Urdu authors readapted the Darwinian concept of the ‘struggle for existence’ and eugenic thought. Finally, the last section tries to explore how, during the same period of time, the nature-nurture debate characterized the discussion on caste. In particular, it seeks to investigate the extent and the ways in which upper-caste Hindi writers used the comparison or equation between race and caste.

1. The Civilized and the Uncivilized: Dividing the World in the Late Nineteenth Century

In order to reconstruct Hindi and Urdu speakers’ global maps of civilizational hierarchy and explore their usages of racial concepts in the second half of the 19th century I have looked at three different genres, which I shall very briefly describe and contextualize. The first one was made up of essays, speeches and periodical articles discussing the questions, ‘what makes a people civilized?’ and, ‘how can we—Indians/Hindus/Indian Muslims—advance on the scale of civilization’. In the last three decades of the 19th century two particularly prolific divulgators of this type of text were Sir
Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Balkrishna Bhatt. Secondly, I have looked at armchair travel accounts contained both in periodicals and monographs. A first subtype of such accounts was the magazine article describing examples of ‘non-Western’ civility, which served as allegedly alternative models to the self-civilizing mission. Another subtype was the armchair travelogue expressing popular fascination with the exotic. Finally, I have looked at geography textbooks for primary and secondary schools. The introduction of geography in school curricula did not only play a pivotal role in the establishment of a colonial pedagogical order, it also allowed vernacular authors to ‘reconfigure colonial space as national property’. Moreover, as Basu has shown, geography introduced race as a systematic theme in understanding human civilization as hierarchical.

In all three of the analyzed genres the pedagogical view of civilization, and, at times, a combination between the pedagogical and the environmental views, constituted the most often used lenses through which authors explained civilizational difference. Some authors expressed the pedagogical creed simply in so far as they omitted any reference to the biological view. Examples are provided by the armchair travel accounts published in Mu’allim-e Nisvān describing the ‘civility’ of women in other parts of the world. Since the critique of pardah (female seclusion) was one of the main goals of this magazine, many articles described societies (in and outside the Muslim world), in which the absence of female seclusion was ‘indigenous’, and not a consequence of the ‘Western influence’. The race discourse was completely absent in these texts. That is, nowhere did the

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6 While travel writing in both languages has received some scholarly attention, armchair travel accounts to this day remain largely unexplored. For a brief survey travel literature in Hindi see Sisir Kumar Das, History of Indian Literature, 1911-1956. Part One: Struggle for Freedom and Tragedy (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy, 1995), p. 252. Two commented travel accounts by Urdu writers, one of the early 19th century and the other of the early 20th are Mushirul Hasan & Nishat Zaidi (trans.), Between Worlds: The Travels of Yusuf Khan Kambalposh (New Delhi: OUP, 2014) and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley & Sunil Sharma (eds.), Atiya’s Journeys: A Muslim Woman from Colonial Bombay to Edwardian Britain (New Delhi: OUP, 2010).

7 Bayly, Empire and Information, pp. 300-302.


9 Basu, ‘The Dialectics of Resistance’.

10 Aziz Mirza, ‘Ek be-pardah musulmān qaum’, Mu’allim-e nisvān 8,11 (1895), pp. 6-13. The author, a politically engaged student of the M.A.O. College in Aligarh, presented the West-African Tuareg as a Muslim people, which did not practice female seclusion, and described the high social roles and customs of Tuareg women. It can be observed that, while such articles contested the place a certain society was ascribed in the global hierarchy, they did not contest the European (or more specifically, the Victorian) definition of civility. Indeed, John Stuart Mill saw ‘the fair treatment of women’ as one of the pillars of civilization. Articles on women in other parts of the world expressing similar views were ‘Tibet kī aurateñ’: front page of Mu’allim-e nisvān 10,5 (1896); and ‘Ithiopīā kī aurateñ’: front page of Mu’allim-e nisvān 11,5, (1897). For
authors present their accounts of ‘non-Western’ forms of civility as examples of ‘non-white civility’. Their discussions on societies’ different social customs regarding women grounded in the presumption that civilization based on education, not race.

In other instances, authors expressed their pedagogical creed by openly condemning the biological view. With the pungent tone that was typical of Bhalkrishna Bhatt’s journal, the author\textsuperscript{11} of an article titled ‘The Different Manners of People of Different Countries’, published in \textit{Hindi Pradīp} in 1884condemned the biological view of civilization as an expression of European arrogance:

‘The conduct (ācara) of a ragged badmash and a honest pandit in India will never be the same. Likewise, the conduct of a debauched scoundrel and a reverend priest in Europe will never be the same. In the latter case, only the vanity (abhimān), deriving from the fact of being born within a civilized people/race (sabhya jātī) and in a civilized country (sabhya deś) will be the same. Or can the debauched scoundrel really be called ‘civilized’ only because he was born in a civilized country? Never! To me only those who care about their mental development (mānsik unnatī) and moral growth (sadācār pālan) deserve to be called civilized.\textsuperscript{12}

Urdu articles on civilization often pointed out the existence of an innate ability to progress, which was the basis of civilization, and which was and had always been present in all human beings.\textsuperscript{13} In Sir Sayyid’s \textit{Tahżīb ul-akhlāq} the author\textsuperscript{14} of an article titled, ‘Siviliześan ya tahżīb’ wrote that a nation’s (qāum)\textsuperscript{15} or group’s (gūroh) civilization was the result of the collective desire for change (majmu‘ī khvāhīš-e tabādalah) of the individuals that were part of it. Civilizational differences between nations or groups were caused by the fact that the idea of good and bad, and thus the object

information on Aziz Mirza see David Lelyveld, \textit{Aligarh’s First Generation. Muslim Solidarity in British India} (Delhi: OUP, 1996).

\textsuperscript{11} Although the article was not signed I assume that the author of the article was Bhatt himself.

\textsuperscript{12} N.a., Bhinn bhinn deśoṁ meiṁ logoṁ ki bhinn bhinn ācaranpaddhattī’, \textit{Hindi Pradīp} 17, 5-6-7 (January-February-March, 1884) p. 17. Similar views were expressed in N.a.; ‘Samāj ki bhinn bhinn avasthā’, \textit{Hindi Pradīp} 11.12 (August 1888) pp. 7-11. Similar views are expressed in N.a., ‘Īndiyā ko samhal kar phir uṭhne kē kyā bhī āśā hai’, \textit{Hindi Pradīp} 23, 5-6-7 (January-February-March 1890), pp. 1-5. See also the later article: Lala Biharlal Vijha, ‘Sabhyatā’, \textit{Brahmacārī} 4,2 (August 1918), pp. 39-45.

\textsuperscript{13} For example N.a., ‘Siviliześan ya tahżīb’, \textit{Tahżīb ul-akhlāq} (n.y.), pp. 119-20; Sayyid Ahmad Khan, ‘Adna’ḥālāt se a’lā ḥālāt par insān kē ārāqqī, in \textit{Maqālāt-e Sir Sayyid} Vol. 4, p. 46. The same idea was expressed by Muhsin ul-Mulk in an address to the Anjuman-e Islām in Bombay, which was published in the \textit{Aligarh Institute Gazette} in 1906, the journal \textit{Tahżīb ul-akhlāq} merged with in 1881. See Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’, p. 173.

\textsuperscript{14} In this case, too, I assume the author to be Sir Sayyid himself.

\textsuperscript{15} The term \textit{qaum} (‘community’) still reflected a very fluid concept at that time. As Pernau put it, ‘it hovered between the ethnic, the religious, and the national, but, whatever its boundaries, it had started to lay claim to the primal loyalty of its members’. Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’, p. 175.
of the universal desire, changed from place to place. Unlike Bhatt, he stated that there were usually no civilizational differences between individuals of the same qaum.

[...] usually the people of one human group (gāroh-e insān) live together in the same place and therefore their needs, nourishment, knowledge, ideas, likes, and dislikes are the same. Therefore they build of the same idea of good and bad. And their desire to change from bad to good, too, is the same.¹⁶

Nevertheless, although at a theoretical level most authors expressed the belief that civilization depended on education, when they discussed differences between the civilized and the uncivilized they sometimes recurred to race. By the 1860s racial categories had already entered Hindi and Urdu language, and that, too, in many different ways.

A first way was the simple transliteration of English ‘scientific’ racial markers, such as ‘Mongolian’ (mongolien) or ‘Negro’ (nīgro), into Hindi and Urdu.¹⁷ Although this type of adoption of race might at first sight seem little creative, the authors’ use of these categories was not always in line with contemporary Victorian ‘race science’. An example is provided by the description of the Burmese, Japanese and Koreans found in the Urdu armchair travelogue Dunīā kī sair, written by Pyarelal, zamindar of Barautha in 1897. Of the Burmese he wrote that

The men are very strong. No one is as good as them in sports. They have dense hair [on their head] but are completely without beard and moustache. Their facial features are between that of the Chinese and the Malay.¹⁸

The Japanese were described as follows:

They are of the Chinese race (cīnē nasīl). They are extremely beautiful, strong and of yellow colour. They have very little hair on their faces and they are not tall. The women are very small and extremely beautiful. Their voices are very sweet and their manners lovely (difīrīb). [However,] Once they have acquired young age their skin [already] starts to get old.¹⁹

¹⁶ N.a., ‘Siviliześan ya tahźīb’, p. 120. As this section is going to show, Sir Sayyid’s standpoint on the question was actually slightly more ambivalent.


¹⁸ Zamindar az Baroutha, Dunīā kī sair, p. 29.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 49.
As for the Koreans, he stated that:

Their features are like those of the Japanese. […] The men there are extremely beautiful and strongly built. Their [skin] colour is white (gorā). They are rightful, virtuous and faithful. They drink a lot of alcohol and smoke a lot of tobacco.20

Contemporary British colonial officials would probably not have classified Koreans and Japanese as ‘white’ nor associated moral virtues and physical strength with indulgency in drug consumption. A second way in which racial concepts were adopted was the use of pre-colonial markers of difference, which were either infused with or completely substituted by a racial meaning. A first example of a term, which had acquired a racial dimension, while at the same time maintaining some aspects of its original meaning, was rāksasa. Bhatt used this term in the already quoted article in order to highlight the differences in behaviour (ācaraṇī) between a civilized and an uncivilized people in specific social situations, such as greeting and saying goodbye. He observed that Europeans wove a handkerchief, which in their eyes, was more civil with respect to the joining of hands practiced by Indians. But, Bhatt considered the Indian way of greeting as being still by far superior to the custom of the members of, ‘a wild people (janglī jātī) from Africa, called Bāṭākan’, who walked backwards, kneeling, holding their tights and making horrendous sounds.21 In order to emphasize their uncivil state with respect to Indians, the author called Africans rākṣasas.22 In the Vedas, Puranas, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana the term designated demonic beings, which were feared and fought by the Vedic Aryans and by the protagonists of the different epics, but which could also in exceptional cases, turn human through godly or Brahmanical intercession. As with the term ārya23, the historicization of the use of rākṣasa in classical Hindu texts has been fraught with polemics. Romila Thapar has suggested that it referred to Indian tribal people. It highlighted their beastliness and monstrosity and was linked to the concept of mleccha

20 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
21 Bhatt pointed out that Victorian explorer and missionary David Livingstone (1813-1873)—who was his source for the accounts on ‘African savages’—was horrified when he saw this. N.a., ‘Bhinn bhinn deśōṁ meṁ logoṁ ki bhinn bhinn ācaraṇapaddhatti’, pp. 20-21.
22 [...]Isī taraḥ harass ko ham log sadhārāṁ ṛiti se pragaṭ karte hein kintu Afrikā deś ke rakṣāsoṁ main ek bhinn ṛiti he [...] ‘Therefore we express gladness in a modest way, whereas the rākṣasas of Africa have a different way of expressing it’. Ibid., p. 19.
23 The wealth of existing research on this term and its usages through history is discussed in Chapter One.
(‘barbarian’), defining those outside the dominant community. Not surprisingly, colonial ethnographers were quick to reinterpret these references to tribals in racial terms. From tribals the term was then transferred to external inferior others. In his seminal work *Satyarth Prakāś* (‘Light of Truth’) the Hindu reformer and founder of the Arya Samaj, Dayanand Sarasvati drew a parallel between the ‘inhabitants of the regions South of Aryavarta’ (described as *rākṣasas* by Manu) and the ‘horrifying appearance’ (*bhayaṁkar svarūp*) of present-day ‘Negroes’ (*habśī log*). In Dayanand’s view this similarity proved that Manu had referred to the progenitors of present-day Africans. We can therefore assume that in the context of the discussion on civilization in which Bhatt participated, the reader associated the terms *rākṣasa* and ‘African’ to the same semantic fields of ugly appearance and savagery. If through this juxtaposition *rākṣasa* had assumed a racial meaning, at the same time it also retained its original meaning, thereby adding a touch of the monstrous, non-human dimension of the demons of Hindu mythology to the otherness of the ‘savage African’. The term *rākṣasa* thereby made this otherness more meaningful to the local context than a simple adoption of an English racial term such as ‘Negro’ (*nīgro*).

Dayanand Sarasvati’s use of the word *habśī* for ‘Negro’ in *Satyarth Prakāś* has revealed an important example of the second way in which racial categories had entered the language, that is, by completely substituting the original meaning of a pre-colonial marker of difference with a ‘scientific’ racial marker. Deriving from the Arabic *ḥabaşī* (‘Abyssinian’) through its Persian form, the word had originally referred to Abyssinian and African merchants, and in particular, slaves, many of whom had been employed by the chiefs of Muslim India from at least the 13th century and some of whom became generals or even independent rulers who established their own princely

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24 Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1978), pp. 152-192. Also 19th-century-geography-textbook-authors used the term for Indian tribals, See Basu, *The Dialectics of Resistance*, p. 56. According to Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya in Vedic times the term was also used to designate the sections of the Anarya ruling class who refused co-optation into the Arya ruling class. Jayantanuja Bandyopadhyaya, *Class and Religion in Ancient India* (New Delhi: Anthem, 2007), pp. 40-43. In an analysis which purposely refrains from historicizing the term, Sheldon Pollock has suggested that, especially in the Ramayana, the *rākṣasa* might be regarded as ‘the Other in essence’, ‘the fantasized alien’, who both repels and fascinates because it reflects two primary instinctual aims—the libidinous and the aggressive—of one’s one Self. Sehldon Pollock, ‘Rākṣasas and Others’, *Indologica Taurinensia* 13 (1986), pp. 263-281.


states. However, in 1875 Dayanand did not use the word in this older, ethnocentric sense but in a racial sense, that is, as a translation of the English ‘Negro’. With the increasing adoption of ‘scientific’ race categories from the 1860s onwards, the racial use of ḥabštī gained more and more currency. A first example was provided by Sir Sayyid, in an article, titled Sivilīześan ya’nī šā’īstāgī aur tahżīb’, published in 1868. In this instance the author asserted that ‘race’ (nasl) constituted one among the five factors, which influenced a society’s progress towards civilization. He divided humanity into three races, the ‘black race’ (kālā nasl), the ‘Mongolian race’ (mongolien nasl) and the ‘white race’ (safed nasl), each of which included different ‘peoples’ or ‘nations’ (qaumeñ). He recognized that the ability to achieve civilization varied among these three races. In particular, he was sure that ‘blacks/Negroes’ (ḥabštī) were less capable to achieve civilization with respect to the other two. He deemed most attempts to demonstrate the contrary as unconvincing. ‘If they aren’t inferior in intellect and wisdom (aql-o danāʾī)’, he asked, ‘then why are they in a state of perpetual wildness (davamī vaiḥṣat)’? He contended that the only people within the African continent, who had achieved some degree of civilization, such as ‘the Muslims’ and the Ethiopians, actually descended from people of the white race. Unlike the black race, Sir Sayyid believed that the Mongolian race (which included the Chinese, the Japanese and the inhabitants of ‘the other countries East of India’) had achieved some considerable degree of progress, which, he pointed out, was in large part the product of Indian influence. Yet, as the Chinese example illustrated, the people of this race got

27 An early famous ex-slave who rose to high rank in the Delhi Sultanate was Jamaluddin Yaqoot, who became a close advisor of Razia Sultan (1213-1239). During the Mughal period the most famous ḥabštī chief was Malik ‘Ambar from Ahmadnagar. See Richard M. Eaton, A Social History of the Deccan, 1300-1761: Eight Indian Lives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 105-128. See also Helene Basu, Habshi-Sklaven, Sidi-Fakire: Muslimische Heiligenverehrung im westlichen Indien (Berlin: Das Arabische Buch, 1994). In Western India the Siddhis of Janjira—sidī, deriving from ‘sayyid’ was another term for Africans in India—commanded the fleet of the Bijapur sultan and became independent chiefs. They defied the Marathas and in 1670 transferred their allegiance to the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. They accepted British supremacy and maintained their state until 1948, when it was integrated with the Bombay state of the new Indian union. A more recent book offering biographies of various prominent ḥabštīs between the 15th and 20th century is Kenneth X. Robbins & John McLeod (eds.), African Elites in India: Habshi Amarat (Ahmedabad: Mapin, 2006).

28 In Urdu, the Arabic word nasl (coming from the verb nasala or ‘to breed’) was (and still is) the most frequently used term to translate the English ‘race’.

29 The first four were: environment and climate, exchange with other peoples vs. isolation, religion, and government. Khan, ‘Sivilīzešan ya’nī šā’īstāgī aur tahżīb’, p. 174. Sir Sayyid did not refer to any source, from which he took the idea.


31 He gave no further explanation on this point. He also stated that the Mongolians had spread as far as America, where they had ‘civilized’ (šā’istah kyā) Mexico and Peru. Ibid., p. 156.
stuck in their stagnant cultural traditions. Therefore they did not progress further in their movement towards civilization and remained in a ‘semi-civilized’ state. The third of the world’s three racial groups, that is, the ‘white race’, was the one who, according to the author, had played the biggest part in spreading civilization in the world. The overall message of Sir Sayyid’s text remained ambivalent. In the essay as a whole he considered race just as one among five factors who influenced people’s degree of civilization, (the others being climate, communication, religion, and politics) and in the final lines he reiterated that all humans were naturally inclined towards progress. Nevertheless, his statements on habšīs clearly suggested that blacks were pre-empted from getting civilized by their supposedly inferior racial origin. Therefore, in this case the racial usage of habšī was combined with an endorsement of the biological view of civilization. However, this was not always the case. A decade after Sir Sayyid’s article, Munshiram Prasad, Second Master of the Normal School of Lucknow published a Hindi geography textbook in 1878, titled Bhūgol varṇan, which alongside descriptions of each continent’s climate, soil, and water, also contained brief passages on the populations residing there. Munshiram’s description of the inhabitants of Central Africa deserves to be briefly quoted:

The people of Central Africa (Madhya Āfrikā) are black (kālāvarṇ); they have thick lips and kinky hair. Their common name (sāmānya nām) is habšī. There are big differences among them in conduct

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32 He considered the Chinese as the most ‘advanced’ among the people of the Mongolian race and yet he felt the need to put their progress into context. He admitted that the Chinese had introduced important innovations such as gunpowder but due to their cultural inertness their discoveries did not help them to progress further. Only the contact with Europe could get them out of their stagnation.

33 In his definition of the ‘white race’ Sir Syed offered a version of the Aryan theory, which included the Arabs in the Aryans’ sphere of influence. Without ever mentioning the term ‘Aryan’, he stated that the ‘men of the white race’ first lived in India and on mount Qaf, and then spread ‘radiations of knowledge and art’ to Iran, Sham, Caldea and Fenicia, who in turn passed them on to Greece and Italy. The translated excerpt is reproduced in the appendix of this thesis.

34 Sir Sayyid did not mention any sources from which he might have taken inspiration in order to formulate the theory of the five factors determining civilization and the classification of humanity into three races.

35 Khan, ‘Sivilizeṣān ya’nī śā’istagī aur tahḍīb’, pp. 187-188.

36 Raja Shivaprasad, too, expressed a leaning towards the biological view of civilization in his geography textbook, titled Bhūgol hastāmalak (1864). Shivaprasad emphasized that, while sharing a common origin from the same progenitor, different human groups became deeply influenced in ‘conduct’ (cāl dāl aur vyavahār) and ‘form’ (sūrat) by the climatic zones in which they settled down when humanity spread out on the earth. His concept of ‘form’ also included mental characteristics: the people of West Asia and Firingistan were more intelligent (buddhimān) than the rest. Raja Shivaprasad ‘Sitar-e Hind’, Bhūgol hastāmalak Or The Earth as (a Drop of) Clear Water in Hand 3 Vols., Vol. I, (Lakhnāū: Navalkiṣor, 1897), p. 12.

37 Munshiram Prasad, Bhūgol varṇan (Lakhnau: Muṅśī Navalkiṣor, 1878).
(cāl) and nature (svabhāv). Some peoples (koś koś jātī) are earnest (gāṁbīr), fit for education (śikṣā yogya), and hospitable (ātitheya), whereas others are extremely hostile (vipārī) to these things.  

Munshiram’s statement that habšī was the ‘common name’ for the people he described suggest that by the late 1870s the racial use had already firmly established itself in the language, although, in this case, the author subscribed to the pedagogical view of civilization. Nevertheless, further examples show that this substitution occurred only gradually: not only did the racial usage still coexist with the older ethno-geographical usage, but there was a third usage as well. Although being quite at odds with the fact that, in a not too distant past, highly civilized habšī princes like Malik ‘Ambar had sponsored fine arts and literature, in the second half of the 19th century a number of authors in different contexts associated the term with savagery. The same Sir Sayyid provided an example. In a speech he delivered in Benares in 1867, titled ‘The Progress and Education of the Indians’ (Ahl-e Hind kī taraqqī-o tarbiat) he used habšī not as a noun but as an adjective, which applied to different ethnic or racial groups. He observed that there were some groups of people, which up to his days never had the chance to hold the torch of civilization in human history. The Africans (excluding the Egyptians) were one case in point, whereas other examples were ‘the people living on India’s North-Western and North-Eastern frontiers, as well as beyond them, such as the Afghans, Burmese and Bhutanese’. These people, Sir Sayyid wrote, were all ‘habšī, vaihšī and jahīl.’ It is not quite clear what exactly the adjective habšī referred to in this text. Did Sir Sayyid classify all these people as ‘black’ or did the word assume a different

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38 Ibid., p. 57. This excerpt was part of a chapter on Africa. After the quoted description the author mentioned that Europeans had enslaved habšīs, and that they still did not enjoy the same rights as the former. He also mentioned that Kafirs and Hottentots were particularly stupid but that even they could get civilized. Right before the part on Central Africa the same chapter the author also described the Egyptians and the Berbers, without using racial categories.

39 The author reiterated this view in the section on Europe, in which, like Bhatt, he emphasized internal differences between people: if the elites (kulin log) had advanced a lot (barī vriddhi kī hai) because they were civilized (sabhya hone ke kāraṇ), on should not forget that, even in Europe, there was an uncivilized underclass (is deś ke bahut manuṣya asabhya aur dāsa hein). Ibid., p. 44.


41 The word is used as an adjective up to this day to mean ‘black’, especially to designate particular dishes of that color: habšī halva (a sweet), habšī gośt (a Hyderabady lamb dish).


43 Since the text reproduced a public speech, we should consider that there was a margin of error in the reproduction of Sir Sayyid’s words. Even in this case the choice of words is significant.
meaning here? Whatever the author meant by using habšī in this context, the word was associated with the terms ‘wild’ (vaihšī) and ‘stupid’ (jahīl). According to the author all three characteristics were typical of uneducated, that is, uncivilized people; they were shared by India’s frontier people, Afghans, Burmese and Bhutanese, and associated all of them to Africa’s savages. A contemporary example in which the word habšī was associated to savagery can be found in a completely different context, namely in the review completed by Sir Charles Elliott in 1865 of the oral Hindi poem Ālhā khanḍ (‘Alha’s volume’), consisting of ballads describing the brave acts of 12th-century Rajput heroes, which was sung by minstrels from Kanauj during the 1860s.\footnote{44} The poem enumerated the parties summoned for battle at the marriage of the hero, Alha, that is 36 different Rajput clans, ‘the fierce Durrani’, and, finally, the ‘habšī savage who feeds on man’. Here the word habšī referred to Abyssinian mercenaries, not to ‘Negroes/blacks’. The characterization of the habšī as ‘savage’ was probably meant to emphasize their violence on the battlefield. In any case, the example shows that habšī could also be associated to savagery in contexts in which the term still carried an ethno-geographical and not yet a racial meaning. Finally, in the last decade of the 19th century, some authors considered both savagery and race as defining characteristics of being a habšī. Pyarelal’s quoted Urdu armchair travelogue of 1897 contained a drawing (see figure 1) displaying ‘The facial features of people of the black world’ (Kālī dunīā ke insān kī cehrah kī vaḍa’), which included ‘uncivilized’ as well as ‘civilized’ black people. While the first were designated as habšī, the latter were described as ‘civilized inhabitants’ (muḥazzab bāsīnde) of a particular place. This suggests that for Pyarelal, when a black person was civilized, the term habšī was no longer appropriate. At the same time, he used habšī only for uncivilized people of ‘the black world’, and not for savages of other ethnical background, however uncouth their appearance and manners might be.\footnote{45} This usage of the word went against the dominant trend of the time, which equated habšī with the English ‘Negro’, and would be completely discarded by the early decades of the 20th century.\footnote{46}

\footnote{44} Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking India’s Oral and Classical Epics: Draupadi Among Rajputs, Muslims and Dalits*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999, p. 301. Elliott’s review was the basis of the first printed edition of the poem (1871).

\footnote{45} A case in point were the ‘wild men’ (jaṅglī ādmi) of an aboriginal minority population in Japan, which distinguished themselves from the civilized Japanese, in so far as they had hair on their whole body, joined eyebrows and a beard that grew in all four directions, covering their whole face. Ibid., p. 49.

\footnote{46} The word is still used in this sense today, although it is sometimes also employed to refer to the Siddis as an ethnic group without necessarily carrying a racialist/racist prejudice. Early 20th-century examples in which the word is used as a translation of the English ‘Negro’ can be found in articles on the blacks in the US. For example: Saint Nihal Singh, ‘Amrikā ke kṛṣān-vārṇ habšī kyā kar rahe heini’, *Sarasvatī* 12,6 (June, 1911), pp. 253-258; Shri Vishvanath Sethi, ‘Goroṁ ke aspriśaya habšī harijan’, *Viśvamitra* 4,5 (August 1934), pp. 514-518. These articles drew parallels between the discrimination suffered by blacks in the US and Dalits in India. For more on this topic see Section Four.
Nevertheless, it is significant because it highlights an important way in which Pyarelal distinguished himself from the other authors analyzed in this section. The geography-textbook-author Munshiram as well as Sir Sayyid combined a more fixed and ‘scientific’ use of the word *habšī* with the expression of paternalistic civilizing intentions towards uncivilized people of the world.\(^{47}\) Pyarelal, on the other hand, used a fluid racial concept, while his presentation of uncivilized ways and customs was conceived chiefly as an account on exotic curiosities. He did not address the question if and how savagery might be abandoned in future. In this respect Pyarelal’s armchair travelogue also set itself apart from later texts on savagery, which will be discussed in the next section. While the display of uncivilized bodies and manners became a very prolific genre in early-20th century-periodical literature in Hindi, it was usually accompanied by formulations of the hope that the mantle of civilization would eventually be conferred upon savages by members of more advanced societies.

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\(^{47}\) As we have seen, Sir Sayyid first stated that blacks could not get civilized but eventually concluded that all uncivilized people of the world would some day ‘naturally’ embrace civilization.
This section discusses what I identify as a specific Hindi article genre, which emerged and flourished during the first decades of the 20th century, and which, for reasons, which will be discussed, had no counterpart in the Urdu periodical press. The authors of the genre described and commented the modes of living, social customs, and physical appearance of different ‘uncivilized people’ (asabhya jātiyān) from across the whole world, including India, and mostly illustrated their
descriptions with pictures. The prominent monthly Sarasvatī, founded in 1900, issued such accounts regularly right from the first years of its publication. Later monthlies, founded between 1910 and 1930, such as Prabhā (1913-), Cāṇḍ (1922-), and Viśāl Bhārat (1928-1938) continued to feature such articles well into the 1930s. As this section will show, these articles usually reported facts about ‘uncivilized’ societies as ‘rare curiosities’, often emphasizing those aspects of their appearance and social customs, which were most bizarre and even ‘horrifying’ to the eyes of the ‘civilized observer’. These articles built up a discourse, which I call the ‘showcasing of the wild’. This discourse stretched beyond the periodical press and continued well into the 1940s.

So far the scholarly discussion on savagery in colonial India has mostly focused on the manifold discourses and practices concerning the adivāsīs of India, whom colonial and Indian officials, anthropologists and ethnographers have been constructed as the country’s ‘internal savages’, separated from and opposed to ‘civilized society’—images, which, as some scholars point out, have not yet been fully ‘decolonized’.48 After the demise, between the late 18th and mid 19th centuries, of a number of adivāsī revolts in different parts of the country, colonial officials and missionaries started conceiving ‘aboriginals’ as distinct entities. Guided by the preoccupation of establishing worldwide racial taxonomies, British ethnographers, with the help of Indian assistants49, categorized


49 The views of Indian anthropologists and ‘ethnographic assistants’ working under colonial rule and the ways in which they converged with and differed from those of their colonial masters represents a fascinating topic, which, has not yet received enough scholarly attention. Kalpana Ram, for instance, has raised the question of the location/habitus of the Indian anthropologist in relation to colonial authority on one hand and the people brought under his gaze on the other. Kalpana Ram, ‘Anthropology as “Ananthropology”: L.K. Ananthakrishna Iyer (1861-1937), Colonial Anthropology, and the “Native Anthropologist” as Pioneer’, in Patricia Uberoi, Nandini Sundar & Satish Deshpande, Anthropology in the East: Founders of Indian
adivāsīs according to anthropometrical measurements and, recapturing them within the Orientalist Arya-Dasyu dichotomy, positioned them at the bottom of the civilizational ladder. As pointed out by Peter Pels, the pan-Indian surveys, titled ‘Tribes and Castes’, which were compiled from the late 1860s onwards, ‘made tribes into the evolutionary zero point’ of a pan-Indian classification\(^5\), which also contributed to the racialization of caste.\(^6\) This knowledge production was coupled with policies, which sought to ‘civilize’ the specimens of the supposedly ‘aboriginal races’.\(^7\) At the same time, colonial officials also felt the urgent need to ‘preserve’ their race and culture. The motif of racial preservation was linked to Social Darwinist discourses on extinction, which reached their apex around the turn of the 20\(^{th}\) century.\(^8\) The idea of cultural preservation,\(^9\) instead, had its roots in the romanticist current within the Orientalist understanding of India, which idealized the nobility, independence and childlike innocence of the tribes.\(^10\) Such attitudes sometimes led colonial officials to adopt adivāsī practices. For instance, colonial forest officials, who were often also hunters, internalized their methods of hunting. Nevertheless, such acquaintance was premised on domination and eventually led to the brutal eviction of adivāsīs from the forests in a phased manner to serve the

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\(^6\) This aspect will be discussed in section four.


\(^8\) Satadru Sen has analyzed colonial discourses and practices of savagery on the Andaman Islands on the background of this larger shift. The Andaman Islanders, who were first seen as adversaries to the colonial ‘civilizing mission’, later became specimens of scientific enquiry and protégés from civilization. Sen has also emphasized that the permanence of a savage threat allowed the civilizers themselves to behave in an uncivilized manner, for example burning villages, practicing man-hunts and using harsh physical violence, from which, he has argued, they derived the pleasure of displaying superiority. Stadru Sen, *Savagery and Colonialism in the Indian Ocean: Power, Pleasure, and the Andaman Islanders* (London & New York: Routledge, 2010).


forest conservation agenda of colonial rule. The early 20th century witnessed a renewed phase of romanticism, which ethnologists such as the Austrian Christian von Führer-Haimendorf (1908-1995) and the ‘non-official Englishman’ Verrier Elvin (1902-1964) combined with the use of the method of participant observation when they carried out field-work in central and southern India. In the late colonial and early post-Independence period the latter supported the so-called conservationist approach, which depicted adivāsī society as exclusive and isolated and warned that every external intervention would cause devastation of their simple and naturalistic life. By contrast, the nationalist agenda adopted by Indian sociologists-cum-anthropologists such as Govind Sadashiv Ghurye (1893-1983) from the 1920s onwards promoted the assimilationist approach. Ghurye rejected the terms adivāsī and ‘indigenous’ and stuck to the colonial designation ‘tribe’ instead, which could be ‘more readily subsumed, organized and governed within the parameters of national modernity’. Like his approach to caste, (which will be discussed in section four), Ghurye’s analysis of adivāsī societies was influenced by Hindu nationalist ideology: every inhabitant of the Subcontinent was to be considered a Hindu by birth. Endorsing the racialist Orientalist origin myth of Indian history, he stated that the ancient Aryan Hindus had gradually civilized savage tribal

56 Skaria, Hybrid Histories, p. 201; Philip, Civilizing Natures, pp. 54-79.


58 The problem of the relationship between sociology and social anthropology has been repeatedly addressed in the Indian context. In Western academy the two disciplines are often separated, both institutionally and as far as theories and methodology are concerned. Conventionally, sociology is understood as the study of ‘modern’ industrial societies, whereas anthropology is conceived as the study of the ‘other cultures’ of Western imaginary. This division has largely been reproduced in India. For further references on this debate see Patricia Uberoi, Satish Deshpande and Nandini Sundar, ‘Introduction: The Professionalisation of Indian Anthropology and Sociology—People, Places and Institutions’, in Patricia Uberoi et al., Anthropology in the East, pp. 6-11.


peoples. Therefore he designated the latter as ‘backward Hindus’, who ought to be further assimilated into the Hindu fold through state intervention.61  

Expanding upon the theoretical insights of Kumkum Sangari, Sudesh Vaid and Mrinalini Sinha62, Ajay Skaria has analyzed the ideals of masculinity and femininity inherent in colonial and nationalist representations of tribal ‘others’ in Western India. One of the expressions of the romanticist idealization of the savage, he notes, was the British ascription of an immature form of masculinity to the Bhils, which carried gentlemanly ideals of truthfulness, courage, but also the impulsiveness and thriftlessness typical of the English public school boy, and therefore required the protection of the ‘mature’ colonial gentlemen.63 Bhil women, on the other hand, were constructed as ‘responsible helpmates’, mitigating the Bhil man’s unruly spirits when appropriate.64 By contrast, the depiction of Kols as masculine by Bengali middle class authors was part of an attempt to recover masculinity for themselves, while the sexual objectification of Kol women served as a counterpart to the middle class and high caste Bengali woman as a de-sexualized model of motherhood and sacrifice.65 As Charu Gupta has shown, early-20th-century-didactic literature and domestic manuals for middle-class high-caste women in Hindi established a similar binary between the pativrata (‘ideal wife’) and the Dalit woman, who was over-sexualized in terms of a kuṭnī


62 It has been a major strength of gender studies in South Asia, starting with the collection of essays edited by Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid under the title Recasting Women (1989), that they went beyond women’s history and looked at changes in the norms of gender and the family in relation to colonial encounters and nationalist reform projects. While women became, in Lata Mani’s words, a crucial ‘site’ for constructing cultural identities, rhetorical strategies of ‘demasculinization’ and re-claiming masculinity were important for legitimizing and challenging colonial rule. These studies have revealed the multiple and complicated ways in which gender is entangled with other structures of domination as well as projects of empowerment. Kumkum Sangari & Sudesh Vaid, Recasting Women: Essays in Indian Colonial History (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989); Lata Mani, Contentious Traditions: the Debate on Sati in Colonial India (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Tanika Sarkar, Hindu Wife. Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001); Mrinalini Sinha, Colonial Masculinity: the ‘Manly Englishman’ and the ‘Effeminate Bengali’ in the Late Nineteenth Century (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1997).

63 This process that went hand in hand with the feminization of castes (in note: this went hand in hand with feminizing the colonized subject, especially Bengalis who early on appropriated Western education and nurtured nationalist aspirations who was potentially threatening: Sinha, Sangari & Vaid. There also existed British constructions of colonized masculinities that enabled and sustained imperial domination: Sikhs, Gurkhas: articles on martial races: masculine because non-Hindu).


‘vamp’), and depicted as greedy, cheating, practicing witchcraft, and possessing animalistic tendencies. Nevertheless, it should also be noted in this context, that, while the negation of sexuality to the middle-class woman certainly represented one aspect of the nationalist discourse on femininity in late 19th and early 20th century (not only among Hindu authors), at the same time, the new possibilities offered by print capitalism also led to a new proliferation of sexualized representations of middle-class women. As far as adivāsī women were concerned, Skaria has noted that the emphasis on their sexuality and the supposed ‘sexual freedom’ of adivāsī society continued in the writings of Indian nationalist anthropologists of the late colonial period, such as Ghurye, Thakkar Bappa and Verrier Elwin. Nevertheless, their depiction of adivāsī men was different with respect to late 19th-century-Bengali authors: whatever their stance in the assimilation vs. protection debate, they denied masculinity to them because they equated being masculine with being modern.

It is within this scholarly landscape that I will undertake my interrogation of the uses of race in ethnographic reports on ‘savages across the world’ in the Hindi periodical press. Building upon Skaria’s research I wish to show that, to a certain extent, the equation of masculinity with civility and modernity, which he has identified in the discourse of nationalist anthropologists of the late colonial period, was present already in early-20th-century ethnographic reports in Hindi newspapers. The discourse on the ‘showcasing of the wild’ employed the same trope on a global scale. The ‘civilized’ observer confirmed his own manhood by expressing on the one hand his abhorrence, and on the other his benevolent, and at times paternalistic, civilizing intentions towards savage people.


67 Contemporary Muslim authors expressed similar concerns regarding middle-class woman. An overview of the positions of different authors is provided in Gail Minault, Secluded Scholars: Women’s Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998). For an analysis of similar views among Sikh and Hindu authors in the Punjab see Anshu Malhotra, Gender, Caste, and Religious Identities: Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 116-163.


70 Skaria, ‘Shades of Wildness, pp. 741-742. Prathama Banerjee has noted how in Bengal, bhadraloks extended this denial of modernity from Santals to women, Muslims and low castes. Banerjee, Politics of Time.
all around the world. In addition to this, I wish to show that in this context, at least in the
descriptions of savage men, race remained a relatively malleable concept: it was conceived as fixed
when it served to emphasize their otherness but it became fluid when the authors expressed their
global civilizing intentions. On the other hand, for reasons, which will be explained, the race of
savage women was conceived in slightly more rigid terms.

Before I start the analysis, let me very briefly comment on the form of the articles and on the
sources the authors drew upon. With the exception of some cases, which will be discussed, the
articles were styled as ‘scientific reports’, that is, they reproduced information given by an authority
‘from the field’. Sometimes the source of information could be a British colonial official. The
articles on Africa, for instance, often quoted long bits of books by ‘Stanley Sahib’, that is, Henry
Morton Stanley (1841-1904), the famous Victorian explorer of ‘Darkest Africa’.71 The accounts on
India’s own ‘savages’ too, were sometimes also taken from British colonial officials’ or their Indian
informants’ reports. Other times the reporter coincided with the author himself, some articles
stemming from private ‘amateur ethnographers’ who wrote directly from ‘the field’. One author
named Sitaram Singh, for instance, was a soldier posted in Manipur who reported his observations
on the Nagas and Manipuris to Sarasvatī.72 In other cases the author reported ethnographic accounts
by Indian amateur anthropologists residing elsewhere in the world: the author on an article on the
people of East Africa, for example, stated that his source of information was ‘an Indian gentleman
living there’.73

Although there still were exceptions, with respect to the texts analyzed in the previous section in the
genre of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ the racial characterization of the savage was usually more
‘scientific’, that is, more in line with Victorian ‘race science’.74 For example, in an article on the
Todas of the South Indian Nilgiri Mountains, a female author, identifying herself as ‘a lady from
Bengal’ (ek Baṁgnārī) stated that:

deh kharvākār jangī manuṣya’, Sarasvatī 5,2 (February 1904), pp. 67-70.
73 N.a., ‘Pārvī Afrikā kī do cār bateīn’, Sarasvatī 5,7 (July 1904), pp. 235-238.
74 An example is provided by the author of Assām kī nagn nāgā-jāti (‘The Naked Naga People of Assam’),
who simply wrote that the Naga’s color was white, without mentioning any racial category such as
‘Mongolian’, as Victorian race science would have had it. Being a soldier posted in Manipur, the author
probably did not have the same access to ‘race science’ as amateur ethnographers working as clerks in the
All inhabitants of India’s mountains are either of the Mongol or the Negrito race (jāti). But looking at the Todas one can see that they are of a higher degree than the Mongol and Negrito races. [...] they are, in fact, a Dravidian race (jāti).\textsuperscript{75}

In another article on the Andamanese the same author even used anthropometry. Drawing on the colonial report by M. V. Portman ‘A History of our relations with the Andamanese’ (1899), she furnished many anthropometric details on Andamanese men and women: their body temperature, their average height, their pulse, and the number of breaths they took per minute. In their body temperature in particular, she emphasized, the Andamanese represented an astonishing difference with respect to ‘the people of Aryan descent’ (arya jāti ke manushya ke apeksha).\textsuperscript{76}

Nevertheless, despite their ample use of ‘scientific’ race concepts, the majority of authors still openly subscribed to the pedagogical view of civilization: whatever their race, savages could become civilized through proper education. For example, after having characterized different East African people such as the Vakambe and Masai as ‘savage Negro people’ (jaṅglī habśī jātiyāṁi) whose skin colour was ‘black like a tavā\textsuperscript{77} and whose hair resembled sheep wool, one author concluded that there was ‘one extraordinary quality’ which united all savages of East Africa: ‘They are able (lāyaq) to learn the qualities of the civilized’.\textsuperscript{78} Other authors expressed the pedagogical belief in terms of a hope that the savage people they described might soon become ‘civilized’. They also often invoked the initiative of the colonial government in this direction. As the author on an article on the ‘Non-Aryan Baiga people’ of Madhya Pradesh wrote:

If they were given education they would probably abandon their savage customs (jaṅglī ādatem) and become somewhat civilized (thorā bahut sabhya). Those in charge of the education department should make efforts in this direction.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{75} Ek Baṅgnārī, ‘Nīlārī parvat ke nivāśī Ṭoḍā log’, Sarasvatī 5,4 (April 1904), p. 137. The article was a translated and shortened version from the Bengali monthly Pravāśī. The Todas were the most studied people in the Nilgiris and were the subject of various theories on their supposed racial origins. See Dane Kennedy, ‘Guardians of Edenic Sanctuaries: Paharis, Lepchas, and Todas in the British mind’, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 14,2 (1991), pp. 57-77.

\textsuperscript{76} Ek Baṅgnārī, ‘Aṅḍaman Dvīp ke nivāśī’, Sarasvatī 5,3 (March 1905), p. 93. Satadru Sen has provided a highly nuanced analysis of Portman. Sen, Savagery and Colonialism.

\textsuperscript{77} Flat iron pan used to prepare chappatis.

\textsuperscript{78} N.a., ‘Pūrvī Afrikā’, p. 238.

Therefore, we can conclude that, even if they resorted to racial classification rather systematically, and emphasized the differences in the degree of civilization among different races, the authors of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ genre still believed that the existing differences could be bridged and each race possessed the abilities to progress.

If not through race, the authors highlighted the otherness of the ‘uncivilized’ through another stratagem, namely by dwelling on the strangeness of their customs and modes of living, which were often depicted in a very negative light. More precisely the modes of living of the uncivilized aroused curiosity, abhorrence and contempt in the mind of the civilized observer-cum-reporter. Let me first comment upon the curiosity. The kind of curiosity, which arose in the civilized observer, when he/she saw savage people, was described as thrilling. Quite tellingly, a word, which authors often used when they described savage customs was kautuk, meaning ‘eager curiosity’ but also ‘show’ or ‘spectacle’. The author of an article on the Pacific Islanders, for instance, wrote that, in origin,

The inhabitants of the Samoa islands were completely naked, except for their private parts, which they used to cover with leaves. Yet, when they participated in big celebrations and religious gatherings, they wore a long robe. Their religious dancers used to wear a very high kind of hat when they danced. When the civilized men saw this they found it incredibly curious (Use dekh kar sabhya ādmiyoṁ ko bare kautuk hotā tha).  

But accompanying this thrilling feeling of curiosity, was a sense of horror, and even of contempt. Indeed, the same author established the general rule that, when seeing the strange dances and leaps of the Polynesians, ‘horror’ (bhay) and ‘hatred’ (ghriṇā) arise together in the civilized person’s mind.  

However, it was precisely the most ‘horrifying’ aspects of the primitives’ lifestyle, which the civilized reporter saw as the most deserving to be written about. Cannibalism, for instance, was so much written about in early-20th-century-Hindi newspaper articles that it almost constituted an

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81 Ibid. The combination of ‘curiosity’ and horror in the authors’ description of savages’ customs can also be found in 19th-century-British ethnographic writing, such as, for instance, accounts of the Todas’ funeral custom (kedr). Nevertheless, as noted by Deborah Sutton, in that specific case, such descriptions underwent a crucial transformation. While early ethnographies described kedrs as ‘horrid sights’, later ones characterized them as skilful, masculine displays by ‘performers’, symbolizing the honourable encounter between man and nature. This change, Sutton argues, had been achieved through colonial surveillance of the kedr. Although not failing to provoke resistance, colonial superintendence had confined the thrill of the macabre and the exotic within ‘the exonerating parameters of science and moderation’. Sutton, ‘Horrid Sights’, pp. 54, 57.
article genre per se. Interestingly, the beginning of this theme can be found already in the late 19th century. During the first decade of the 20th century, cannibalism then reached its apex in popularity. It was not only written about in various articles on particular uncivilized people, but also as a general object of ‘scientific’ discussion. In an article published by in Sarasvatī in 1911, Vrajvihari Shukla attempted to write a history of the custom of cannibalism. He explained that both in past and present, cannibalism was principally practiced by uncivilized societies. There were a few exceptions, though: the ancient Romans, for instance, ate the flesh of their prisoners as part of a religious ceremony in honour of Jupiter. Other articles reported ‘fresh news’ on the ways in which a particular uncivilized people practiced cannibalism. One author reported that on the island of Haiti there was a female priest who had sacrificed five boys to a deity and then ate them: ‘in her house marmelade of human flesh had been found in a can.’ Since local law officially prohibited cannibalism, the woman was immediately arrested.

As this last example reveals, alongside descriptions of uncivilized societies that were styled as ‘scientific’, some newspapers, Sarasvatī in particular, also published what we might term as ‘splatter-articles’ on savage life. Another example from the same journal was an article, which reported an extract of an account of one ‘Mayar Sahib’ who imported the ‘strangest exemplars of savages’ from across the whole world into Europe, in order to exhibit them in shows. The article described the Sahib’s fearsome adventures during his visit to Amazonia were he had sought to catch ‘savage men with long lips’ (lambe haunth vāle jaṅglī ādmī), that is, Amazonian men with pierced lips, wearing of lip plates. The popularity of ‘splatter articles’ such as the ones mentioned here raise some important questions. Was this kind of article not out of place in a journal like Sarasvatī, whose editor aimed at the construction of a literary corpus in Khari Boli Hindi, which should represent a modern Indian nation? How can we explain the authors’ particular interest in describing those aspects of ‘savage life’, which appeared ‘most appalling’ to the ‘civilized’?

Following Skaria, I shall argue that, the displaying of savage violence and irrationality, as forms of savage otherness, were important to Hindi literati’s ideal of masculinity. As they equated being a

83 Vrajvihari Shukla, ‘Narbhaṃkār manushya’, Sarasvatī 12,3 (March 1911), pp. 118-122.
86 Mahavir Prasad Dvivedi was the editor of Sarasvatī for nearly two decades (1903-1920). His important role as a modernizer of Hindi is briefly discussed in chapter one.
man with being modern, they confirmed their own masculinity by expressing abhorrence and contempt towards the world’s savages. Furthermore, I argue that the authors’ fluid concept of race can partly be explained on the same grounds: when they emphasized the possibility and the hope that savages would finally get civilized, they ‘forwarded’ the colonial civilizing mission to them, and thereby further emphasized their own superiority and manhood. Within the analyzed articles ‘uncivilized’ men’s lack of masculinity was variously described in terms of lack of self-control, rationality, and physical strength. Savage men were able to get ‘civilized’ (despite their racial otherness) but only with the help of ‘modern men’, like the authors themselves, or their imperial masters—as we have seen, sometimes imperial intervention in this direction was invoked. In this sense then, the malleability of the authors’ racial concept was functional to the expression of their global civilizing intentions, which in turn constituted a pillar of their ideal of masculinity. Indeed, the social Darwinist discourse on extinction, which rested on a more fixed idea of race and excluded any possibility of improvement for ‘doomed races’, was largely absent in this genre. If uncivilized men were considered no real men because they were not modern, uncivilized women were highly sexualized. Some article authors emphasized the sexual freedom of women in different savage societies, dwelling on the fact that in uncivilized societies’ young men and women chose their partners freely, and could have sexual relations before marriage. A second recurrent theme was the uncivilized woman’s absence of modesty (saṅkoc) or shame (lajjā), which was seen as a direct implication of her nakedness. Yet the absence of shame was usually not described in terms of a conscious display of sexual extravagance but more in terms of an innocent, primitive ignorance of shame. Translating bits of Henry Morton Stanley’s expedition diary, one author described Stanley Sahib’s encounter with an African ‘Pygmy princess’ in the following terms:

She was naked (nagna). On her neck she wore very thin necklaces made of polished iron, which were rolled-up at both ends. She wore three big iron earrings on each ear. Even her bracelets were made of iron. Her colour was brown. Her mouth was an opened ball. The eyes were very big. Her lips were small but full. Around her waist she wore a small leather cloth. She was naked, but her face nevertheless expressed decorum (śālintā).


88 It might be a coincidence: the only one among the analyzed authors, who did mention racial extinction, was a woman! Ek Baṅgnārī, ‘Aṇḍaman Dwīp ke nivāsi’, pp. 91-92;


90 Ibid., p. 442.
was quiet from every point of view. Her height was about 4 inch. She was probably about 19 years old. She was a very beautiful picture to look at.

Stanley’s companion, Surgeon Parke has adopted such a woman. She has remained a faithful servant to him.\(^9\)

This quote depicted the uncivilized woman as highly erotic and sexually available to any civilized master. Her sexuality was characterized as primitive but not vulgar: her body was naked but the civilized observer red ‘decorum’ in her facial expression. The emphasis placed on the fact that she was faithful to her new master even seemed to indicate that she possessed a certain ‘sexual morality’.

\(^9\) N.a., ‘Afrikā ke kharvākār jaṅgī manuśya’, p. 68.

FIGURE 2. Drawing of the ‘Pygmy princess’ (kharvākā rājā ki rānī) described in the article. N.a., ‘Afrikā ke kharvākār jaṅgī manuśya’, Sarasvatī 5,3 (March 1904), p. 68.
If in this particular case the uncivilized woman’s sexuality was displayed through a verbal description, with the only visual support of a small drawing (see figure 2), most other article authors opted for less detailed descriptions but compensated their verbal scarcity with large pictures, occupying entire pages. Indeed, pictures of savage women, often sexually appealing ones, such as the Polynesian woman, the South Indian Ezhava women, and the Malayali girls reproduced underneath (figures 3, 4 and 5) were more frequent than pictures of savage men. Sarasvatī in particular, published many such images, although the journal was otherwise rather prudish. Dvivedi was highly critical of erotic literature, which was flourishing in the Hindi public sphere at that time, and had made it a principle that such literature (and pictures) would not enter the pages of his journal. But in the ‘scientific’ context of the ethnographic report female sexuality could be displayed without calling into question the journal’s respectability.


92 Orsini, The Hindi Public Sphere, pp. 54-55.
I argue that, in this context, the racialized ethnographic account could also serve to display and valorize the ‘superior beauty’, and more refined sexuality of the ‘Aryan woman’. I want to show this through the example of an article that appeared in 1928 in Chāṁd. It was a widely illustrated article on the people of Ceylon, published under the column ‘Men and women of the world’ (Sansār ke strī-puruṣ), containing pictures of Sinhalese and Tamil women, in which gender, race, ‘degree of civilization’ and class were deeply intersected. Let me first describe the pictures of the Sinhalese women. The first one (see figure 6) showed a ‘Sinhalese girl’ (sinhāli bālikā). Its caption read:

‘This Sinhalee girl is a descendant of those Arya people who came to Lanka in ancient times. Her exquisite beauty and her beautiful bodily structure (sangathan) are the proof of this fact’. 93

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Other two pictures showed ‘pubescent Sinhalese beauties’ and laid emphasis on Sinhalese women’s refined ornaments and dress.\(^{94}\) In contrast to this, a picture of a Sinhali woman titled ‘A mountain-beauty’ (parvatiya saundarya) showed a woman clad in a simple loincloth, covering her body from her beast to her feet, wearing no ornaments, with her hair loose. The caption read:

‘On the mountains Sinhali women mostly wear unicolor loincloths (ekragi dhotiyām). Their eyes are beautiful and bright, their teeth pure white, their hair long and satin. Their demeanour (vyavahār) is exquisite (utkaraśṭ) and fully civilized (sabhyatāpūraṇ).\(^{95}\)

As far as Tamil women were concerned, the article contained three pictures. The first one displayed two upper-caste (ucc-kul) Tamil women wearing precious ornaments. Although no comment was

\(^{94}\) Ibid., pp. 197, 199.

\(^{95}\) Ibid., p. 197.
made on their facial features, they, too, were defined as ‘beauties’ and emphasis was laid on the refinement of their jewellery. The other two pictures of Tamil women represented women working in tea plantations. The captions’ texts described their work in the tea plantations, emphasizing its difficulty. Yet the tea gatherer’s sexual attraction was also emphasized: the first picture was titled ‘A rural beauty’, whereas the other one, titled ‘Tamil women’s tea-plucking’ work (see figure 7) consisted of a romanticized drawing, showing a beautiful young girl at work with one shoulder uncovered.

We can thus assert that the author displayed a series of women as sexual objects, but their sexual appeal was clearly put into a hierarchy, according to race, ‘degree of civilization’ and class. The analyzed examples bring us to the following conclusion. Since the uncivilized or semi-civilized woman was made a sexual object, race played a more important role in her case than in the case of her male counterpart: it served to establish different degrees of sexual attractiveness. In the case of Sarasvatī, it was precisely her racial otherness that permitted her to be displayed in pictures. In the example drawn from Cānd the context of the ethnographic comparison between races and classes permitted the showcasing of a variety of women: the ‘racially high’ civilized woman (the Sinhalese girl), the racially high uncivilized woman (the Sinhalese mountain girl), the ‘racially lower’ but socially high civilized woman (the upper-class/caste Tamil girl), and the ‘racially’ and socially lower civilized woman (the working-class Tamil girl).

Of course, like in the case of men, the authors’ subscription to the ideology of the ‘civilizing mission’ required that savage women—such as the ‘Pygmy princess’, the Polynesian woman and the Ezhava women displayed in Sarasvatī—were reformable, in spite of their belonging to inferior races. But, as the analyzed articles have shown, in the case of women this aspect was not much insisted upon. Therefore, we can conclude that in the case of ‘savage’ women, racial otherness was slightly more fixed than in the case of savage men because it confirmed the superior and more refined beauty and sexual appeal of the Aryan woman.

To conclude, now that I have furnished an analysis of the ‘showcasing of the wild’, I want to try to look at the genre on the background of the major shifts that characterized the discourse on civilization in the Hindi public sphere. Mohinder Singh has emphasized the transformation, around the turn of the century, of the initial attitude of imitation of the West into one of critique. This change was grounded on the dichotomization of ‘Western materialism’ vs. ‘Eastern (Hindu) spirituality’. Its promoters—the most famous being Vivekananda— theorized a ‘universal division of labour’, which accepted the material superiority to the West but reclaimed a role of global spiritual leadership for the East (that is, the Hindus). As discussed in the previous chapter, this discourse resonated with the global disenchantment with ‘Western civilization’ during and after WWI. As one author put it in 1915, the war demonstrated that the technologically most advanced European nations ‘had reached the very limit of barbarism’ (asabhya jātiyāṁ).97

96 For example, the already quoted author of ‘Praśānt mahāśāgar ke ṭapuoṁ kī kuch asabhya jātiyāṁ’ wrote that on those Pacific Islands, on which civilization had already progressed, women covered their breasts. N.a., ‘Praśānt mahāśāgar ke ṭapuoṁ kī kuch asabhya jātiyāṁ’, pp. 443-444.

97 This expression is used in Fischer-Tiné, ‘Deep Occidentalism?’, p. 189.
Hindu intellectuals adopted various different strategies to counter claims of Western superiority and to recuperate a masculinity that was severely damaged by colonial ascriptions of effeminacy. Besides the establishment of the spiritual East/materialist West dichotomy, a further widely used argument was that all standards of present-day ‘Western civilization’ had already been reached in a glorious Hindu past. By contrast, the discourse of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ did not counter Western superiority in any domain, neither in present nor past. Its authors only claimed superiority over those societies, which were lower on the civilizational scale, thus assuming the role of modern observers and would-be civilizers of savage societies across the world. This strategy might arguably be considered as little creative, since it simply adopted ‘anachronistic thought’ and the civilizing mission of colonial ethnography. Yet the originality of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ lay precisely in the fact that its authors continued to express confidence in the pedagogical view of civilization and the idea of a global civilizing mission of the most ‘advanced’ people or races—in which they wished to take part side by side with the colonizers—in an era, (the early decades of the 20th century), when these views started to be reconsidered both in the colonial discourse as well as in coeval nationalist discourses of colonized and Afro-American elites.

Why was there no equivalent to the ‘showcasing of the wild’ in the early-20th-century Urdu public sphere? Francesca Orsini has shown that in the early decades of the 20th century Hindi journals addressed ‘a not-yet-too-clearly-defined “Hindu Hindi” readership’. This implies that—if the ‘showcasing of the wild’ was not necessarily styled as a ‘Hindu’ discourse—it flourished within a

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98 Gorishankar Mishra, ‘Sabhyatā aur yuddh’, Indu 6,2 (July 1915), p. 5. The sentence was referred to Germany’s conduct in war.


100 This expression is used by Ajay Skaria, as a reformulation of Johannes Fabian’s ‘denial of coevalness’. Skaria, ‘Shades of Wildness’. See Johannes Fabian, Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

101 Michael Adas, ‘Contested Hegemony’.

102 Orsini. The Hindi Public Sphere, p. 52.
self-styled Hindu Hindi context. Of course, this did not exclude that Muslim authors writing in Hindi newspapers could also take part in it.\textsuperscript{103} The fact that the ‘showcasing of the wild’ developed within a Hindu milieu is further confirmed by the fact that, its roots can be tracked already in some late-19\textsuperscript{th}-century Hindu authors’ texts on human ranking. As shown in the first section of this chapter, some late-19\textsuperscript{th}-century Urdu texts, such as Pyarelal’s travelogue, as well as early Hindi newspaper articles, such as those in \textit{Hindi Prad\u{u}p}, already manifested an interest into displaying the customs of the savages of the world. Moreover, in the Hindi public sphere the discourse on the ‘showcasing of the wild’ was present also beyond the periodical press. For example, already in the early years of 1900 elements of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ discourse can be found in travelogues.\textsuperscript{104} Likewise, newspaper articles on uncivilized people were sometimes republished in book form, because of the great interest they had arisen in the readers. This was the motivation the popular Hindi novelist Vishvambharnath Sharma Kaushik gave for the publication a book titled ‘Uncivilized Women of the World’ (\textit{Sans\u{a}r k\u{i} asabhya j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{i} striy\u{a}m}), published in 1941, which contained collected articles on ‘women of the uncivilized nations (j\u{a}tiy\u{a}m) of the world’, drawn from the monthly \textit{Prabh\u{u}}.\textsuperscript{105} Hindi readers’ interest in classifying the world’s people was manifested also in a ‘dictionary of people’ (\textit{j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{a} ko\u{s}}), published by the \textit{Bhugol K\u{a}ry\u{a}laya}, Allahabad, a press specialized in geography books.\textsuperscript{106} As these examples suggest, the interest into the modes of living of the world’s savages continued well into the 1940s, and perhaps even further. Indeed, we can find the rhetoric of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ in books for schoolchildren, as, for instance, in a book titled ‘These Are Humans, Too: An Illustrated Introduction to Chosen Savage, Uncivilized, and Half-Civilized Primitive People of the World’ (\textit{Yeh bh\u{i} m\u{a}n\u{a}v hein\u{m}: sans\u{a}r k\u{i} chun\u{i} h\u{i}\u{a} jaangl\u{i}}, asabhya aur arddhsabhya \u{a}dim manu\u{s}ya-j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{a} sac\u{c}itr paricay), whose cover page is reproduced in figure 8.\textsuperscript{107} If—unfortunately—a detailed analysis of these sources is beyond

\textsuperscript{103} See for instance Nizam Shah, ‘M\u{a}riye aur Muriye’, \textit{Sarasvat\u{i}} 10,8 (August 1909), pp. 354-357.

\textsuperscript{104} Gangaprasad Gupta, \textit{La\u{n}k\u{a} t\u{a}p\u{u} k\u{i} s\u{a}r}, K\u{a}\u{si}: B\u{h}\u{a}rat\u{a}van yantr\u{a}laya,1904.

\textsuperscript{105} Vishvambharnath Sharma Kaushik, \textit{Sans\u{a}r k\u{i} asabhya j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{i} striy\u{a}m}, K\u{a}npur: Prak\u{a}\u{s} pustak\u{a}laya, 1941.

\textsuperscript{106} Ramnarayan Mishra, \textit{j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{a} ko\u{s}}, Vol. 1, Allahabad: Bhugol K\u{a}ry\u{a}laya (n.d.). The entries of the dictionary varied greatly in length and content. Some were very brief, such as for instance: ‘Kun\u{a}\u{m}\u{a}: Sudanese-speaking people of South Eritrea’. Others were more detailed, and contained racialized physical descriptions, such as ‘E\u{f}\u{a}: Negroses (\textit{hah\u{s}\u{i} log}) of the Philippines, living in the mountains. Their hair is coarse like wool and they are black. Their nose is more wide than long. […] They are very faithful (\textit{m\u{a}n\u{d}\u{a}r}).’

\textsuperscript{107} N.a., \textit{Yeh bh\u{i} m\u{a}n\u{a}v hein\u{m}: sans\u{a}r k\u{i} chun\u{i} h\u{i}\u{a} jaangl\u{i}}, asabhya aur arddhsabhya \u{a}dim manu\u{s}ya- j\u{a}tiyo\u{m} k\u{a} sac\u{c}itr paricay, Lakhn\u{a}u: Hind\u{\i} Vi\u{s}\u{a}-bh\u{h}\u{a}rat\u{a} K\u{a}ry\u{a}lay (n.d.). Judging from the design, the book was probably published either in the late 1940s or even the 50s. The book contained descriptions of 25
the scope of this chapter, these titles at least give us a hint at the fact that, within the Hindi press, the interest in the world’s savages’ modes of living was present in different genres, and continued over a considerable period of time.

Let us now briefly look at early-20th century Urdu newspapers, which, on their part, by then, more and more addressed a specifically Muslim audience. We can see that in this context, too, some authors ‘forwarded’ the colonial civilizing mission to the less civilized societies of the world. The author of an article on ‘Islam in Africa’, published 1907 in the Dakkan Revīū, for instance, emphasized the ‘civilizing effect’ of Islam on the uncivilized habūs.108 Another article in Tamaddun emphasized that Islam had played a pivotal role in civilizing savages all over the ‘uncivilized’ people from India and across the world. Following the work of British physician and ethnologist Charles Gabriel Seligman (1873-1940) in the introduction the author divided up the world’s population into six ‘original races’. The influence of Seligman’s ‘Hamitic hypothesis’ is visible even in the ‘People’s Dictionary’ mentioned earlier.

108 N. a., ‘Afriqah meīīn islām kī isā’īat aur mojūdah āhālat’, Dakkan revīū vol. 1 (no. not indicated), (September-October 1907) pp. 161-177.
Nevertheless, we cannot identify the existence of a specific article genre on the ‘savages of the world’, comparable to the ‘showcasing of the wild’ with respect to both frequency and content. Pernau has suggested that Urdu writers did not ‘somatize self-improvement’ until around 1930, that is, they did not consider the pursuit of civilization and civility through changes in the body, and were, in this respect, ‘latecomers’ if compared with Bengali and Hindi writers. Whether the accent was put on knowledge and education as in the case of the Aligarh-movement, or on religious-cum-nationalist ardour, as in the case of Abdul Kalam Azad, the road towards civility and civilization, Pernau contends, was not defined in terms of training of physical strength or genetic improvement. Since the ‘showcasing of the wild’ highlighted the comparison between civilized and savage bodies it would make sense to assume that this kind of comparison was less relevant in a context in which the accent was put on intellectual rather than physical education. At the same time, the ‘showcasing of the wild’ was not a discourse on racial improvement and the very concept of race was rather fluid in this type of literature. Therefore, the absence of a similar genre in the Urdu public sphere does not allow us to draw any definite conclusions on this point. In order to test Pernau’s thesis further the next section will look at other two article genres within Hindi and Urdu periodical literature, which were coeval to the ‘showcasing of the wild’, that is, articles employing the Darwinian concept of the ‘struggle for existence’ to explain early-20th century global political developments and articles discussing the new ‘science’ of eugenics.

3. ‘Struggle for Existence’ and Eugenics: a Comparison Between Hindi and Urdu

The expression ‘struggle for existence’ represents one of the most famous examples in which a metaphor, having its origins in everyday language, was first moved into the realm natural science,

109 Ilias Qureshy, ‘Islām aur Tamaddun’, Tamaddun (November 1915), pp. 23-27 (vol. and no. not indicated). The author emphasized how in the Middle Ages, even Europe had come out of darkness thanks to Islam, an argument which resonates with arguments of Hindu superiority.

110 Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’, p. 182. For post-1930 instances of somatisation of self-improvement in the Urdu-speaking middle classes in the Punjab see Daechsel, The Politics of Self-Expression. Pernau’s argument does not rule out that at the Muslim Anglo-Oriental College physical training, especially in the form of team sports, was part of the curriculum. See Lelyveld, Aligarh’s First Generation, pp. 254-271.
where Darwin assigned it a specific meaning in the context of his theory, and afterwards ‘transferred back’ into everyday use, while leaving an impact also on the historical and social sciences.\textsuperscript{111} As Mike Hawkins has pointed out, the success of Social Darwinism was favoured by its flexibility, that is, its transferability to a whole spectrum of ideological positions.\textsuperscript{112} This was caused by the existence of a series of indeterminacies in Darwin’s scientific work, which opened it up to different interpretations by social theorists. One such field of indeterminacy was the unit of evolution upon which natural selection acted. Darwin tended to see this as the individual organism but sometimes presented the group as the evolutionary unit. This opened up the possibility of variable interpretations of the unit of selection: individual, species, tribe, nation, and race. The concept of the ‘struggle for existence’ constituted another such indeterminacy: it could be interpreted as violent struggle and warfare, or—in keeping with Darwin’s own suggestions about the attenuation of struggle in civilized nations—warfare could be confined to primitive stages of social evolution, to be replaced by industrial competition or perhaps the battle of ideas as civilisation progressed. How did Hindi and Urdu writers interpret the struggle for existence, and how did they use the concept to make sense of the political, social and economic reality that surrounded them?

The idea of a competition between nations and races was already present in the late-19\textsuperscript{th} century article or essay on civilization. In \textit{Siviliześan ya’ni śā’istagī yā tahźīb} (1868) Sir Sayyid had described the competition between the ‘Mongolian’ and the white race in the march towards progress. As shown by Singh, this trope continued into the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century. For instance, in an article published in 1906, titled ‘Bustle’ Bhalkrishna Bhatt analyzed the present epoch as ‘age of competition’, opposing it to an imagined ancient age of peace, in which India’s sages could dedicate themselves exclusively to metaphysical contemplation.\textsuperscript{113} As shown in the previous chapter, the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century saw two political events—the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, and the outbreak of WWI—which had, in different ways, deeply influenced the ways in which Indian authors saw the world around them. The Japanese victory over a European opponent invalidated the

\textsuperscript{111} This point has been made by Peter Weingart in an analysis of the appropriation of Darwin’s ‘struggle for existence’ in the German context, Peter Weingart, ‘Struggle for Existence: Selection, Retention and Extinction of a Metaphor’ in Aldo Fasolo (ed.), \textit{The Theory of Evolution and its Impact} (Heidelberg & London: Springer, 2012), pp. 69-82.

\textsuperscript{112} Mike Hawkins, \textit{Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1946} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

belief of a ‘natural’ superiority of the white race. In the Hindi public sphere, some authors, such as Mahendulal Garg, dwelled on the relationship between the political and technological achievements of the Japanese and their ‘racial makeup’. Garg pointed out that, although all inhabitants of Japan belonged to the ‘Mongolian race’, they were divided into two groups, a higher one, whose members had yellowish skin and slim noses and a lower one, whose members had darker skin and larger noses. The first group was the one that held political power and had made the nation progress.114

Besides offering inspiration for the construction of racial theories on the Japanese, the Russo-Japanese war also testified that it was still possible to catch up with the West in what was more and more perceived as a ‘struggle for existence’ not only between the individuals of every living species, but also between nations and races. In the Hindi periodical press, different journals ranging from the scientific magazine Vijñān, or the political monthly Maryādā, to the caste magazines Osvāl and Caturvedī brought out a sequence of articles that all bore the same title: jīvan saṅgrām (‘struggle for existence’).115 In the Urdu periodical press, such one-to-one translations were less frequent. Nevertheless, Urdu writers, too, often referred to the ‘struggle for existence’.116 Interestingly all these articles slightly preceded the publication of commented translations of important oeuvres of European evolutionists such as Ramchandra Shukla’s monumental Hindi rendering of Ernst Haeckel’s Welträtsel117 as well as other manuals on ‘the theory of evolution’, which commented and discussed different evolutionist ideas.118

The descriptions of the ‘struggle’ in the analyzed periodicals indeed reveal one major difference between Urdu and Hindi writers, which confirms Pernau’s stance: while the first mostly described the ‘struggle’ in abstract terms only, Hindi writers usually spelt out its physical consequences. Ahmad Sultan, writing for Tamaddun in 1915, for instance, stated that the nations who were devoid of ‘national feelings’ (qaumī jazbāt) were ‘not able to stay steady […] in this world of conflict’ (kaś

114 Garg, Japāndarpañ, p. 25. Although he did not refer to it explicitly, the author was clearly influenced by the Aryan myth, which classified Indians into two distinct races, i.e. Aryans and Dravidians. Besides this example, I have not found further instances of such racial theorizations on the Japanese.


117 Shukla’s dense and long introduction to his own translation is analyzed in Horstmann, ‘Zwischen Indischer Tradition und Europäischen Ideen’.

118 Two examples were Mushtaq Ahmad Vajidi, Irtiqā (Aligarh: Mabātah-‘e Muslim Universiţ, 1931) and Shri Rameshvar, B. S. C., Manusya-vikās (Lakhnaţ: Navalkiśor Pres, 1939).
He did not give further detail on what the ‘conflict’ exactly consisted of, which nations were leading in it, and what happened to those nations who did not manage to ‘stay steady’. In contrast to this, Hindi article authors usually furnished concrete information as to which nations or races were involved in the struggle and how each of them had fared on the battlefield in past and present times. Many of them gave detailed descriptions of the on-going wars between nations, and then explained that all these conflicts proved that a ‘struggle for existence’ (similar to the one among biological species) was going on among nations. Others described the struggle among species of plants and animals, and then compared it to present-day wars among nations. In both cases the authors vehemently emphasized the violence involved in the struggle. They also repeatedly pointed out that those jātis, who had lost in the struggle, such as the aborigines of Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand, were necessarily deemed to extinction. As one author, signing himself as vidyārthī (‘student’) put it: ‘They did not even have sufficient intelligence to grasp the quickness of the wheel of time, and so, they were crushed by it’. The struggle for existence had already reached such speed and vehemence that ‘the losers’ had lost the opportunity to take active part in it once and for all.

Despite this major difference, Hindi and Urdu writers’ descriptions of the ‘struggle’ also presented a few similarities. Firstly, the emphasis of spiritual rather than physical characteristics as fundamental factors making a nation or race ‘fit’ to survive (as seen in Azad’s case) was not an exclusive characteristic of Urdu writers. Actually, both groups of authors lent more emphasis to the soul than the body in their definition of ‘fitness’. The author of an article titled ‘Jīvan saṁgrām’,


120 Ramchandra ‘Japan’, ‘Sabhyā jātiyōṁ kī ghurduār’, Maryādā 5,4 (February 1913), pp. 244-249. The fact that this author chose ‘Japan’ as a pen name confirmed, once more, how the country had become a model to emulate for Indian nationalist intellectuals. Other articles that glorified Japanese might in Sarasvatī were: ‘Japān k jīt ka kāraṁ’, Sarasvatī, 6,8 (August 1905) pp. 321-324; ‘Japānīom kī imāndārī’, Sarasvatī 8,10 (October 1907), pp. 400-401; ‘Japān-sāgar ke vijayī vīr’, Sarasvatī 6,5 (May 1905), pp. 342-348.

121 Prof. Lajjashankar, ‘Jīvan saṁgrām’.


123 The Darwinian and later Social Darwinist term ‘fitness’ was usually translated as yogya (Hindi), śaksam (Hindi) and qābil (Hindi and Urdu) and was conceived both in physical and spiritual terms. Even in its English usage the concept could imply a broad array of meanings. An interesting example is provided by the Y.M.C.A.’s ‘scientific-cum-democratic fitness scheme’ for India, which has recently been analyzed by Harald Fischer-Tine. The program based on the American fitness ideology, which, beyond sportive performance, pursued the larger aim of creating better citizens and more moral men. In India (as well as Ceylon and Burma) this ideology was rearranged in a type of fitness education, which combined physical culture, training of self-control, hygiene, and sanitation. In this larger project of societal improvement the
published in the caste magazine *Caturvedī* in 1916, for instance, listed exclusively ‘spiritual’ qualities as winning factors in the ‘struggle’:

The stronger the principles of hope (āśā), perseverance (adhyavasāy), concentration (ekāgratā), honesty (satyanīṣṭhā), fellow feeling (sahānubhūti), national feeling (jatiyātā) and religiosity (dharmaṃbhāv) are in our heart, the more successfully are we going to struggle. From the mentioned qualities a divine force (divyasaktī) is going to emerge, through which we can get immensely strong and achieve victory in the struggle for existence (jīvvan samgrām).124

This excerpt strongly resonated with the ‘struggle for existence among souls’ theorized by Azad.125 Besides the emphasis on ‘spiritual fitness’, some Hindi writers also emphasized that different human characteristics had been winning factors in the struggle at different moments in history. The already quoted Vidyarthi, writing for *Maryādā* pointed out that at the dawn of human history, when man was still uncivilized, physical strength had been his main weapon in the struggle for existence. Man’s progress, which had gradually given birth to the great civilizations of the past, was therefore not a result of his conscious action but simply of his physical force. In contrast to this, when the author described the passage from ‘ancient civilization’ to ‘new civilization’ he mentioned ‘intelligence’ (buddhi) as the determinant factor, which had permitted some nations (jātiyām), such as Britain, Germany, France, Russia, Austria, Japan and America to accomplish this step with success. This kind of ‘intelligence’ was not the exclusive feature of specific nations or race but depended on two circumstances, which favoured its development. Firstly, those jātis, which were bearers of ancient civilizations, assimilated the new trend more easily, and were usually able to survive in the struggle. Secondly, being in close contact with civilized societies could also help a people to assimilate to the new trend, and kept it ‘fit’ to struggle: the blacks (nīgro jātī), who had

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been brought to America as slaves, (although not being bearers of ancient civilizations) had gained great benefit from the opportunities that the ‘civilized’ United States had offered them.\textsuperscript{126}

Although most analyzed authors emphasized ‘spiritual fitness’, I do not subscribe to Christopher Bayly’s statement that Indians interpreted and readapted evolution and evolutionism mainly in a spiritual sense, majorly emphasizing ‘inherited characters of a spiritual kind’.\textsuperscript{127} While this contention certainly applies to the ways in which the English-speaking elite nationalists analyzed by Bayly, the Bengali bhadraloks discussed by Habib and Raina, and the authors quoted here discussed the evolution, it does not account for the strong concern over physical degeneration and the success of eugenics on the Subcontinent to which the next chapter will turn. In particular, authors of popular advisory manuals in Hindi developed a highly practice-oriented form of eugenics, which instructed newly married middle class couples on how to transmit spiritual \textit{and} physical hereditary qualities to their progeny.

Last but not least, a further similarity between Hindi and Urdu writers in their description of the ‘struggle for existence’—beyond their positions vis-à-vis the nature-nurture debate—was their ambivalence regarding the historical time to which the theory could be applied: was it a new phenomenon or one, which had \textit{always} characterized the relationship between nations (as it was the case with biological species)? Some, like the quoted Ahmad Sultan described it as a phenomenon, which had come all of a sudden.\textsuperscript{128} Similarly, the author of an article titled \textit{Sabhyā jātiyoṁ kī ghurdaṛ} (‘Racecourse among civilized nations’), published in 1913 wrote that:

\begin{quote}
‘The quiet times when man sat alone at the shores of a river or on a mountain, seeking ātma and parmātma, have now gone once and for all. We are now in the difficult era of the struggle for existence (jīvan saṁgrām). In this era a nation (jāti) must either live or die.’\textsuperscript{129}
\end{quote}

The author seemed to imply that the ‘struggle for existence’ was a characteristic of the present age, and not one inherent in nature, which had always governed the world of biological species, and similarly, the world of nations. However, most authors admitted that some form of competition had always characterized the relationship between nations. Vidhyarti even described ‘the great empires

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{126} Vidhyārthī, ‘Jīvan-saṁgrām’, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{129} Ramchandra ‘Japan’, ‘Sabhyā jātiyoṁ kī ghurdaṛ’, p. 244.
\end{flushright}
of the past’, such as India, Rome, Greece, Persia, Babylon, Assyria, Egypt and China, as ‘winners in the struggle for existence in past times’. Therefore, the authors’ emphasis of the suddenness of the struggle should rather be interpreted in the sense that the ‘struggle for existence’ between people, nations or races—which had always been there—had become faster and fiercer in the present epoch, due to technological progress. As Vidhyarti put it: ‘The pace of the struggle for existence does not get lower, quite the contrary, thanks to the new (technological) inventions it has assumed even a more horrible aspect’.

Let me now consider Hindi and Urdu writers’ positions regarding eugenics. As far as the Urdu public sphere is concerned, David Lelyveld has highlighted that some authors engaged in the nature-nurture debate already in the 1880s in the *Aligarh’s Institute Gazette*. In a discussion among students on the question if all men were equal by birth, college student Ahmad Husain Khan quoted Alexander Bain’s view that certain races were superior to others, whereas Aziz Mirza (the author of the article on *pardah* mentioned in section one) made an analogy with animal pedigrees. Other students such as Sajjad Husain fiercely rejected such comparisons and criticized the British idea that there were ‘martial races’ in India. Early-20th century discussions on eugenics in Urdu can be found in *al-Hilāl*. A number of issues in 1913 displayed a discussion on the question if ‘morals’ (*akhlaq*) were hereditary and, if yes, to what extent. The discussion was launched in an article titled ‘al-*Akhlāq*’ by Fazl Sahib. The latter first exposed and commented upon the different ‘types of morals’ (*nau’e akhlāq*) established by Kant and Dewey, and then discussed the ‘sources of morals’ (*caṣmahā-e akhlāq*). He came to the conclusion that, along with natural and cultural influences, heredity (*virāsat*), played a part in determining the morals of individuals. In the ‘comment and critique’ page of a later issue of the journal, Fazl’s position was refuted. Masud Ahmad Abbasi, the author of the critical comment, stated that morals were the outcome of the interplay of a person’s different senses (*havās*), which in turn depended on external influence (*haiṣāt-e cākrānah*), and on what the English called ‘mind’. The outcome of this interplay was different in every individual

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131 Ibid, p. 293. The same view was expressed in Ahmad Sultan, ‘Jazbāt al-aqvām’, p.8.

132 The Scottish empiricist Alexander Bain (1818-1903), author of works on education, logic, and psychology and founder of the journal *Mind* (1876) played an important role in linking the ideas of associationist phycology (according to which individuals learned by association) with physiology and phrenology. Lucy Hartley, *Physiognomy and the Meaning of Expression in Nineteenth Century Culture* (Cambrige: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 123.


simply because external factors could never affect two individuals exactly in the same way. This was the only reason why every individual had different morals.\(^\text{135}\) If morals were not hereditary, the responsibility for the future generations relied on education alone. The reason why some researchers had been wrongly induced to think that heredity played a role in the shaping of \(\text{akhläq}\) was that it was practically impossible that two people’s upbringing be exactly the same.\(^\text{136}\)

Fazl Sahib did not fail to reply to Abbasi’s critique. In an article titled ‘\(\text{akhläq-o ädäb mein maurousi aśr}\)’ (‘The influence of heredity in morals and etiquette’) he accused the latter of being ignorant of the views of European scientists and their latest discoveries on the topic, in particular those of Karl Pearson, whom Abbasi had wrongly quoted as a supporter of the nurture argument. Fazl then summarized the research on heredity conducted by Pearson and Galton.\(^\text{137}\) From their work he inferred not only that morals were hereditary, but also, that science had not discovered any method to eliminate the influence of heredity so far. To illustrate his stance further, he quoted evidence of the medical experts from the ‘Report of the British Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble Minded’ from 1904, and ended the article with a list of suggestions for further English readings on the topic.\(^\text{138}\) This article was the last one in the series. The position expressed by Fazl represented a relatively early instance of adoption and readaptation of eugenics in the Urdu public sphere. In \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) articles on eugenics became slightly more frequent only in the late 1920s\(^\text{139}\), and even beyond this newspaper concrete references to eugenics before that stage were rare.\(^\text{140}\) In addition to that, the quoted articles were exceptional also in so far as they contained a \textit{debate}, while \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) usually approached eugenics and evolutionist theories in ‘scientific reports’.


\(^{136}\) Ibid., p. 266.

\(^{137}\) N.a., ‘\(\text{akhläq-o ädäb mein maurousi aśr}\)’, \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) 2,23 (11 June 1913), pp. 402-406.


\(^{139}\) See for instance N.a, ‘Qāblīyat kā miqīās-o mīzān’, \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) (1 July 1927), p. 6-8; N.a., Muzākirah-e ‘ilmiyiah: Insān kī takhlīq-o zaḥūr kā āvvalin maḥād, \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) (1 & 8 July 1927), pp. 4-8; ‘Nazariyyah-e irtiqā kā gum shodah halqah’, \(\text{al-Ḥilāl}\) (5 August 1927), pp. 2-6.

\(^{140}\) In the opening to \(\text{Ṣa’ir al-’ajam}\) (1920) Shibli Nu’man asserted that, if Islam was spread among many different people (\(\text{qaumeñ}\)), it flourished only where the necessary ‘abilities’ (\(\text{qāblīyat}\)) were already present—the greatness of Persian poetry provided an example of this. Shibli Nu’mani, \(\text{Ṣa’ir al-’ajam. Ḥiṣṣah-e avval. ‘Abbas Murūṣi se Niğmī tak} \) (2\textsuperscript{nd} edition, A’āzāmgarh: Maṭbū’ah ma’āraf Press,1920), p. 1. I thank Muhammad Sajjad for suggesting me to look at this text.
with little critical comment by the authors.\textsuperscript{141} Beyond \textit{al-Hilāl}, another Urdu periodical, which dedicated long articles to these themes, was \textit{Sā’ins}, the Urdu monthly of the Anjumān-e Taraqqī-e Urdu. Nevertheless, up to 1930 \textit{Sā’ins} mainly published articles on human evolution\textsuperscript{142}, whereas eugenics became popular only after that date.\textsuperscript{143}

Let me now consider the Hindi periodical press, and the Hindi public sphere more generally. Unlike Urdu periodicals, Hindi journals featured articles on eugenics already from the first decade of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. We can find them in magazines specifically dedicated to ‘Western science’, such as \textit{Viṣṇu} (the Hindi monthly of the Viṣṇu Pariṣad), as well as in a variety of other periodicals, such as \textit{Chāṇḍa, Sarasvati}, and \textit{Indu}. Some articles contained in these journals, reported specific theories related to eugenics or even genetics. For example, an already mentioned article in \textit{Sarasvati}, published in 1907 referred to the ‘eugenic’ theories of the American botanist Luther A. Burbank.\textsuperscript{144} Two further articles that appeared in \textit{Viṣṇu} in 1917 explained and discussed Mendel’s theories.\textsuperscript{145}

Yet most authors did not mention any specific eugenic or genetic theory, while supporting arguments broadly in line with Galton’s definitions of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ eugenics. Many criticized Hindu caste marriage, arguing that it promoted dysgenic reproduction.\textsuperscript{146} Besides the periodical press, there were Hindi books specifically dedicated to eugenics. A successful book titled \textit{Deś-darśan} by Shivanandan Singh\textsuperscript{147}, for example, which had first appeared as a series of articles in

\textsuperscript{141} See for example the article on Russell Wallance in N.a., ‘Mazhab-e noś-o irtiqā kā ek saññē. Dākhtar Rassal Vels [sic!], \textit{al-Hilāl} 3,17 (17 December 1913), pp. 420-421; and N.a., ‘Moźu-e ilm-e insan, \textit{al-Hilāl} 3,4 (16 July 1913), p. 49. The latter was a longer text that appeared in a series of articles.

\textsuperscript{142} For example, the first volume of the year 1928 was exclusively dedicated to evolution and contained short paragraphs or slightly longer pieces on various subthemes, such as, for instance, ‘heredity and evolution’, ‘man’s descent from apes’, ‘evolution of the mind’, ‘Darwin’s idea of evolution’, and ‘the birth of new characters’. Dr. Muhammad Ehsan Khan; ‘Varaṣa-ato irtiqā’, \textit{Sā’ins} 1, (1928), pp. 332-334, N.a., ‘Insān namā bandarōn se hamārī salālat ke sabūt’, \textit{Sā’ins} 1, (1928), pp. 97-98; N.a., ‘Insānī dimāgh kā irtiqā, \textit{Sā’ins} 1, (1928), p. 99; N.a, Irtiqā ke muṭa‘alliq Dārvin ke tāṣavvur kī tavagehī, , \textit{Sā’ins} 1, (1928), pp. 101-102; N.a., ‘Na’i sīnfoñ kī pedā’īs’, \textit{Sā’ins} 1, (1928), pp. 102-103.


\textsuperscript{144} Ramjīlal Sharma, ‘Mānāv-jāti ke unnāyak saddhānt’.


\textsuperscript{147} Shivanandan Singh, \textit{Deś-darśan athvā bhārāt-jantā kī adhogatī aur usse uṭhne ke upāya} (Bambaī: Nāthūrām Premī, 3\textsuperscript{rd} ed., 1922). It should be noticed that the book also came out in Urdu and Gujarati. Ibid., p. 4. Before the appearance of the consulted edition, chapters of this book had been published in a series.
the periodical *Indu*, offered an analysis of India’s ‘degenerated’ social and economic conditions based on Malthusian premises. One chapter discussed the issue of hereditary transmission and drew a comprehensive ‘state of the art’ exposition of British and American social Darwinist theories, including Galton’s ‘eugenics’.

However, while in the periodical press references to eugenics were quite frequent, monographs specifically dedicated to this topic such as Shivnandan Singh’s, were rather uncommon. Much more widespread was the type of literature which I describe as *santati-śāstra* (lit. ‘science of the progeny’ or ‘progeniology’), which started around the turn of the century and which will be discussed in the next chapter. Based on a variety of sources, this new form of ‘scientific’ knowledge contained a different ‘eugenic rationality’, which can be compared with but not subsumed into eugenics.

In conclusion, the attempted comparison suggests that there was indeed a temporal gap in the adoption and readaptation of eugenics in the Hindi and Urdu public spheres, which, if put together with Hindi writers’ major emphasis on the physical consequences of the ‘struggle for existence’, adds strength to Pernau’s argument of a relatively late somatization of the civilizing self-improvement on the part of Urdu writers. In addition to that, what is perhaps more striking than the temporal gap is the substantial quantitative gap between the two public spheres: as this brief overview has shown, Hindi uses and reinterpretations of the ‘struggle for existence’ and eugenics were much more frequent in number and varied in genre. The implications of this finding are discussed in the epilogue of this thesis. The last bit of this chapter turns to another context, within the Hindi public sphere, in which the nature and nurture debate raged most fiercely, namely, the manifold discourses concerning caste.

titled *Santān śāstra* in the periodical *Indu*, founded in Benares in 1909. The book was dedicated to Gandhi, which shows how eugenics could be combined with the most diverse ideologies.

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150 As I am going to show, the same Shivnandan Singh quoted *santati-śāstra* literature and discussed its theories. Ibid., pp. 267-269, 320. See Chapter Three.
4. The Nature-Nurture Debate on Caste

It is certainly no exaggeration to state that caste represented the most fertile terrain for colonial and postcolonial knowledge production on India. A long history of writing—ranging from the voluminous treatise on caste by French Catholic missionary Jean-Antoine Dubois in 1816 to the highly controversial structural analysis of caste subsumed under the catchword *Homo Hierarchicus* propose by French anthropologist Louis Dumont in 1966—caste has been identified as the major trope of Indian society. To use an oft-quoted expression by Nicholas B. Dirks it has become a synecdoche for India’s essence and a metonym for its fundamental difference.\(^{151}\) If colonizers did not ‘invent’\(^{152}\) caste the colonial regime definitely redefined, channelled, and, as we are going to see, *politicized* caste.\(^{153}\) The question of how racial concepts entered the debate on caste, which this section seeks to address, constitutes a sub-aspect of this larger process. European official understanding of caste underwent important changes with the gradual establishment and enlargement of colonial rule. During the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) and early 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century the nascent colonial administration heavily relied on the information provided by Indian scribes, who were able to negotiate between Europeans and the local population.\(^{154}\) European merchant companies usually entrusted such work upon people who would be able to demonstrate Brahman or Vashya ancestry. While further hardening demarcation lines and channelling important amounts of money to upper-caste families, this process assigned the upper castes and Brahmans the role to define what caste was in this early stage of colonial dialogue.\(^{155}\) A further major enhancement to the caste-based


\(^{154}\) Christoper A. Bayly, *Empire and Information*.

\(^{155}\) Susan Bayly has referred to this process as ‘Brahman Raj’. S. Bayly, *Caste, Society and Politics*, pp. 66-
understanding of Indian society came with the gradual establishment of the ethnographic state, and, in particular, the decennial censuses, started in 1871. The enumeration of caste was an ambitious endeavour and census commissioners were not unanimous about which criteria of classification the administration should work with. While the 1871 and the 1881 censuses privileged varna, the 1891 census favoured occupation, based in large part on the functional models established by John C. Nesfield’s and Sir Denizel Ibbetson’s classification of caste in the NWP, the Punjab and Awadh. The latter mode of classification had little contemporary utility, since, except for the lowest groups, the means of subsistence of the castes varied largely from those they took their name from. It was partly as a response to this lack that Herbert Hope Risley (1851-1911), commissioner for the 1901 census, formulated the racial interpretation of caste. Risley combined the Brahmanic principle of ‘social precedence’, which established social rank on the basis of ritual distinctions, with anthropometry, Orientalist knowledge, and a real obsession with race. This system gave rise to an explosion of petitions and memorials by specific jātis who asked to be ranked higher in the established hierarchy: the politicization of caste had thereby reached its zenith. Not surprisingly, the number of caste associations, organizations that aimed to define the unity and promote the interests of their respective jātis as defined in the census, exploded in this period. As noticed by Dirks, Risley’s blindness towards movements of social reform was suggestive of the way in which anthropological imaginary dominated colonial knowledge at this time. In his racialist view, India’s jātis were fundamentally the result of interactions between two racial ur-types, the Aryan and the Dravidian. In some regions the characteristics of a third type, the Mongolian, could also be found. Marriage restrictions developed around the two races and then were further elaborated around the groups that were born of mixed unions. Through the collection of anthropometrical data,

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156 Bernhard Cohn, ‘The Census, Social Structure, and Objectification’.

157 Dirks, Castes of Mind, p. 211.

158 Risley had many precursors. The Orientalist view of varna already entailed the idea of a racial origin of caste. As seen in the last section, the idea that India’s ‘aboriginal tribes’ were incorporated into the caste system went hand in hand with the racialization of caste. Colonial officials of the pre-Risley era who insisted on this point were Sir George Campbell (1824-92) administrator in the NWP and the Punjab who sought to promote ethnology in the Asiatic Society, W. R. Cornish, census commissioner in Madras (1871), and C.A. Baines, all-India census commissioner for the same year. Peter Pels, ‘The Rise and Fall of the Indian Aborigines’, pp. 100-106; Dirks, Castes of Mind, pp. 205-207.

159 Ibid., p. 221.
such as different caste members’ ‘cephalic index’ and ‘nasal index’, Risley sought to prove that the supposedly ‘purest’ types could be found at the highest and the lowest ends of the caste hierarchy respectively, whereas the rest divided themselves into further five groups, depending on their degree of intermixture. Risley’s ethnological report on the 1901 census of India was republished as The People of India in 1908 with an important addition on ‘Caste and Nation’ in which Risley explained why a caste-ridden society like India was unable to form a nation. Not surprisingly, his views stirred up responses by high-caste Indian nationalist of different ideological affiliation. The period under scrutiny was one of active social reform movements across India, which saw also the emergence of low-caste movements that systematically attacked the caste system. Whether their strategy consisted of fighting for representation within national politics like in the case of Dr. R. B. Ambedkar (1891-1956) or in separatism, as promoted by ‘Peryar’ E. V. Ramasamy (1879-1973), Dalit and non-Brahman politicians openly denounced the Brahmanic domination of the Indian National Congress and other national institutions. In this context, Risley’s stance of the incompatibility of caste and nation touched a sensible nerve. Indeed Brahman nationalist responses to Risley were numerous. Rejecting the latter’s sevenfold classification of

160 The cephalic index, first introduced by the Swedish professor of anatomy Anders Retzius (1796-1860) was a proportion between different measurements of the head, which had originally been used to analyze ancient human remains. Topinard’s nasal index, mentioned in Chapter One, classified people on the basis of the proportion between the width and the height of the nose.


163 Besides Rubbe’s book on the Bengali Muslims quoted in the introduction two further examples were: Chaitanya Krishna Nag Varma, Criticisms on Mr. Risley’ Articles on Brahmans, Kayasthas & Vaidyas as
the races of India, Shridhar Venkathesh Ketkar (1884-1937), a Brahman from Pune who had obtained his PhD from Cornell University claimed that all Indians—Aryans as well as Dravidians—were of the Caucasian race. In his History of Caste in India, which appeared in 1909, just one year after Risley’s magnum opus, he conceded that the term ārya might have had racial connotations in the Vedic age but highlighted that Brahmans were (and still should be) the leaders of society not because descendants of a superior race but people of ‘noble qualities and culture’. Ketkar thereby expressed his dislike for the ‘shift from texts to bodies’ as a methodology in the study of caste. Nevertheless, while he discarded the equation of caste and race as supposed biological units, he expressed the view that the two were indeed comparable forms of social hierarchy. Like Ketkar, G. S. Ghurye, another Maharashtrian Brahmin whose influential positions have already been discussed with respect to the adivāsī debate, was similarly concerned about the maintenance of Brahmanic authority. Yet unlike his forbearer, in his Caste and Race in India (1932) Ghurye criticized only specific features of Risley’s theory and methodology, and concluded that the correlation between caste and race posited by him existed only in the Punjab and certain parts of UP, in which Brahmans revealed physiognomic indications of their hereditary connections with the Aryan invaders of the subcontinent. Everywhere else, and for all other caste groups miscegenation had eroded any racial distinctiveness to caste. As pointed out by Carol Upadhya, Ghurye accepted Risley’s overall framework of racial categorization, and in fact, even proposed new racial categories

Published in His ‘Tribes and Castes of Bengal’ (Faridpur: Arya Kayastha Samiti, 1893); Promatha Nath Mullick, The Origin of Caste (Calcutta: K.P Mookerjee, [1899] 1902).

164 Ketkar’s disaffection with this shift is noticed in Dirks, Castes of Mind, p. 233.

165 Already since the 1870s century comparison between caste oppression in India and racial discrimination against blacks in the US was a much dwelt-on subject among Indian writers of different social background and political affiliation. Low caste-activists from Phule to Ambedkar employed the transnational analogy in order to oppose the plight of Dalit-Bahujans in India. By contrast, an ideologically diverse set upper-caste Indian nationalists ranging from Tagore to Lala Lajpat Rai and Gandhi used it as an argumentative tool to castigate American racism and relativize caste injustice in response to Katherine Mayo’s scathing portrayal of caste in her infamous bestseller Mother India. See Nico Slate, ‘Translating Race and Caste’, Journal of Historical Sociology 24,1 (March 2011), pp. 62-79; and the same author’s Colored Cosmopolitanism. The Shared Struggle for Freedom in the United States and India (Harvard University Press, 2012). I am going to come back to this topic in the next chapter.

166 The book went through five editions, each containing new sections that addressed contemporary issues in the study of caste, such as the rise of interest in the study of class (one edition was titled Caste and Class in India) and the non-Brahman politics in Tamil Nadu in the 1960s (the fifth edition, published in 1969, carries a final chapter on the subject). See Govind Sadashiv Ghurye, Caste and Class in India (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 5th ed., 1969).

167 Ghurye emphasized that miscegenation was particularly strong in Maharashtra and Madras, where, as we have seen, caste had become strongly politicized in the form of anti-Brahman movements, which reveals his desire to revert separatist tendencies and his aspiration to (Brahman-guided) national unity.
for the Indian population based on the nasal and cephalic indices.\textsuperscript{168} In Indian anthropology the combination of orientalist renderings of Indian society and history with the practice of measuring human bodies was destined to long life. In the inter-war period prominent figures such as D.N. Majumdar and Irawati Karve used sero-anthropology to ascertain the racial origins of different Indian castes.\textsuperscript{169} The extent to which the biological comparison between caste and race is still a lively topic in post-colonial India has been demonstrated by the heated debates stirred up by Dalit spokesmen’s demand for the inclusion of caste and the discriminatory practice of untouchability into the United Nations sponsored ‘World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance” (WCAR) held in Durban in 2001. The Indian government as well as some sections of civil society vehemently opposed the demand. A striking element in the voluminous literature that the debate produced is the fact that the discussion constantly shifted from the comparison of caste and race as forms of social inequality to the question whether caste and race were two comparable socio-biological units.\textsuperscript{170}

In colonial India, beyond the official publications of Indian anthropologists, the discussion on the nature, origin and usefulness of caste was a hotly debated topic also in a diverse set of other genres. The first four decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century witnessed an explosion of caste genealogies (jāti itiḥās).\textsuperscript{171} As research in this field has pointed out, this genre played an important role in fixing the authenticity of determinate versions of the origin myths of specific jātis, which were then in turn

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\textsuperscript{169} Projit Bihari Mukharji, ‘From Serosocial to Sanguinary Identities: Caste, Transnational Race Science and the Shifting Metonymies of Blood Group B, India c. 1918-1960’, \textit{The Indian Social and Economic History Review} 51,2 (2014), pp. 143-176. The legacy of Risley’s caste ethnography stretches so far as the 1990s: the Anthropological Survey of India’s (ASI) \textit{People of India Project} (1985-92) divided adivāśis into different racial types based on a combination of head and nose measurement and genetic findings.

\textsuperscript{170} The renowned Indian anthropologist André Béteille, for instance, appositely wrote a number of articles in which he tried to prove that they were not. See, for instance: Andre Beteille, ‘Race and Caste’, \textit{The Hindu} (10 March 2001). The argument that the debate should be about the comparison between two forms of discrimination rather than the biological comparison was made in Gail Omvedt, ‘The UN, Racism, and Caste’, in Sukhadeo Thorat & Umakant (eds.), \textit{Caste, Race, and Discrimination. Discourses in International Context} (Jaipur & New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2004), pp. 187-193.

\textsuperscript{171} A few examples are: Bharatendu Harishchandra, \textit{Agarvālonī kī utpatti} (Banāras: Bhāratjīvan Press, 1885); Babu Surajbhanu, \textit{Brahmanonī kī utpatti} (Etawah: Brahmin Press, 1926); Narayan Singh Panvar, Rāvaṇā-Rājput darśan (Mainpur: Navajīvan Press, 1926); Mukh Sampatti Ray Bhandari, Chandraj Bhandari, Krishanlal Gupta et al., \textit{Osvāl jāti kā itiḥās} (Bhānpurā, Indore: Oswal History Publication House, 1934); Parmeshvarilal Gupta, \textit{Agarvāl jāti kā vikās} (Banāras: Time-Debut Press, 1942).
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used to make political claims with the colonial administration.¹⁷² The numerous caste genealogies in turn stirred up a host of books and short pamphlets ridiculing the claim of lower castes to higher status.¹⁷³ In addition to that, numerous caste magazines and treatises featured more general discussions on the topic, addressing the questions of the nature, origin and usefulness of the caste system, the ways and the extent to which it should be interpreted and reformed. This section is going to zoom in on a subsection of this copious literature, asking in how far upper-caste Hindi writers (Hindu and Jain) used the comparison between caste and race, and sometimes even the equation between the two concepts, in order to strengthen their arguments for or against the caste system.¹⁷⁴

Before entering the debate, it needs to be pointed out that the first two mentioned genres, that is, caste genealogies and treatises ridiculing the claim of lower castes to higher status hardly ever contained references to race. Arguing within the horizons of genealogical caste history, their authors recurred to myth and history to bolster their claims.

Caste-newspapers and treatises on the origin and usefulness of caste prove a more fertile terrain for our research question. In the brief survey that follows I shall argue that authors principally employed the comparison between caste and race in two different ways.

A first group of high-caste authors combined a full endorsement of the Orientalist racial origin myth of Indian history—thereby accepting that caste had a racial origin—with moderate reform proposals of the caste system. For example, in a book titled, *Jāti bhed. Vaidik yug se uskī janam, puṣṭi, ādi kā itihās* (1911), which consisted of a translation of an essay from Bengali¹⁷⁵, an author named Rajendralal Acharya Krat, narrated the racial origin of caste and the subsequent ‘social

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¹⁷³ An example in which barbers (*nāī*) are ridiculed is found in Chotelal Sharma, *Jāti nirṇaya nidān* (Jaipur, 1946), pp. 86-128. For more examples see Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, pp. 24-25.


¹⁷⁵ Rajendralal Acharya Krat, *Jāti bhed. Vaidik yug se uskī janam, puṣṭi, ādi kā itihās* (Bamkipur: Kamdagvilal Pres, 1911). The text of the book was originally written by Girjakumar Gosh for the Bengali periodical *Hindu Patrikā*, a periodical focusing especially on ancient Indian scriptures and Vedic literature with the aim of saving Hinduism from its ‘present decadence’. It was published from Jasohar (presently in Bangladesh) and continued for at least 33 years under the editorship of Jadunath Majumdar. See N.a., *A guide to the Hitesranjan Sanyal Memorial Collection* (Calcutta: Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, 1998).
stratification’ though intermarriage between racial ur-groups employing an array of European and Bengali Orientalist scholarship ranging from Friedrich Max-Müller, Monstuart Elphinstone, Sir William Muir, Romesh Chunder Dutt and Ram Krishna Gopal Bhandarkar, thereby confirming the preference for texts with respect to bodies expressed by Ketkar. Nevertheless, the author argued that, the same ancient Hindu texts also revealed numerous hints to interpret caste in meritocratic terms,176 and expressed the hope that this interpretation would eventually substitute the hereditary caste-system, without going into further detail on how this transformation might be brought about.177 Adopting a more global outlook than Rajendralal, the Jain author Babu Surajbhanu, editor of the Jain Gazette178 extended the racialist interpretation of the Orientalist Aryan myth to humanity as a whole. The opening of his short pamphlet titled Varna aur Jātibhed (1916) deserves to be briefly quoted:

Mankind can roughly be divided into two species: ārya and mleccha, that is, the civilized (sabhya) and the uncivilized (asabhya). The uncivilized are those savage human beings who know neither how to make fire, nor how to cultivate the land and build dwellings. They eat, drink and satisfy their physiological needs exactly like animals. (...) In Africa such savage people still exist today. Many of them were captured, as if they were wild cattle, by the cruel people of Europe, and then shipped to America and sold as slaves. Nevertheless, ever since the Americans gave them freedom, they have achieved education, and became civilized and learned. Some of them even became ‘president of America’ (koī kōī to Amrīkā ke presīdainṭ arthāt māhārājā han cuke hainī).179

The second species of mankind, the civilized people, know how to construct dwellings, cook food etc, in other words, they are not completely dependent on nature. They achieved civilization, and, thanks to their cravings needs, which became and more and more sophisticated, they have brought about the modern era. Also in India both kinds of human beings have been present since ancient times. The uncivilized, savage (jaṅglī) people

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176 One oft he earliest proponents of a meritocratic interpretation of caste was Swami Dayanand, although with many important reservations. For example, he maintained almost unaltered traditional views of food pollution although presenting them in a more modern, ‘scientific’ idiom of hygiene and cleanliness. This point is made in Anshu Malhotra, ‘The Body as a Metaphor for the Nation. Caste, Masculinity, and Femininity in the Satyarth Prakash of Swami Dayananda Sarasvati’, in Avril A. Powell and Siobhan Lambert-Hurley (eds.): Rhetoric and Reality: Gender and the Colonial Experience in South Asia (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 128.


178 The lawyer Babu Suarjbhanu (usually known as Babu Surajbhanu vakīl) was the first editor (between 1895 and 1896) of the English-language Jaina Gazette printed from Madras.

179 Following his preoccupation to demonstrate that blacks could get civilized Surajbhanu apparently slightly overestimated the speed of US recognition of black civil and political rights, anticipating the first black US-presidship of about a century.
were black, and the civilized were white. This is why the people of India acknowledged the existence of two varṇa or colors.\textsuperscript{180}

The rest of Surajbhanu’s origin tale very much resembled Risley’s: the āryas subjugated the mlecchas but married their women and this process the caste system had emerged. ‘Direct’ descendants of mlecchas could still be found in India’s forests, and lived on hunting although, with respect to their ancestors, their decorum (tamīz) had improved a lot: the Bhil constituted an example. Nevertheless, Surajbhanu suggested, everywhere in the world savagery was just a result of outer circumstances, it was not determined by race. The Indian Bhangs and Chamars provided an example, which was similar to the one of blacks in the US. They had become sepoys and fought in WWI, side by side with Kshatriyas, showing the same worth (jouhar) in battle. All these examples demonstrated that the human genre (manusya mātr) was one and that all humans could do all kinds of works. Caste obstruction (varṇa aur jāti kā aḍāṅgā) was not grounded in nature (prakritik nahin hai).\textsuperscript{181} In the second part of his pamphlet Surajbhanu emphasized that Jains and Bhuddists had done a lot in the past to liberate the oppressed castes. He lamented the fact that even Jains themselves were disregarding their śāstras, adopting several restrictions with regard to interaction with lower castes, and urged the to revert this tendency and spread the message of equality. In a later philosophical treatise, titled Jīvan nirvāh (1920) Surajbhanu contested the Darwinian principle of the ‘survival of the fittest’. This interpretative tool, he argued, might be appropriate for describing what went on in the animal world. It could also be applied to human behaviour in ‘ancient times’ (prācīn samay), when in places such as Africa and the Fiji Islands man had been eating his fellow beings, when the Aryan invaders of India had brutally subjugated the country’s original inhabitants, or when, in more recent times, Europeans had enslaved ‘African Negroes’ (Āfrikā ke nīgrolog). But after that humans had learnt civilization and started to act according to the principles of ‘compassion’ (mahānubhūti) and equality (samāntā). Step by step they have finally understood that the progress of the progress of the whole human genre was also in the interest of the individual.\textsuperscript{182} Surajbhanu’s approach to the caste question was in line with the binary division of the human continuum into civilized and uncivilized and the civilizing mission ideology expressed in the first two sections of this chapter. Also his race concept resonated with this view: it was malleable.


\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., pp. 9-10.

and grounded upon the pedagogical view of civilization. The equation of caste with race served him as a confirmation that civilization could be learnt.

Be it in support of or against caste, the second group of authors prevalently employed the comparison between caste and race within a traditional argumentative framework. In traditional Hindu literature, post-Buddhist authors reflecting on the relationship between heredity and action (karma) often expressed the view that while a śudra who perfectly performed the duty of his own caste (svadharma) could be considered ethically valuable, he would never attain the peculiar ethical potential that belongs only to the Brahman. This stance was typically exemplified through an analogy between castes and different animal species: a mule, which performed its duties as a mule well, could not become a horse.183 In this context authors also emphasized the fact that in humans outer forms could be perfectly similar and therefore caste difference might not be immediately recognizable as in the case of animal species. Nevertheless, Brahmins and Kshatriaya were as different as lions and elephants.184 This type of argument continued to be used by Brahman authors for and against caste in the early decades of the 20th century. For instance, in the first volume of a treatise, titled Ćūṭ aur acūṭ, the Maharshtrian pandit Damodar Satvalekar stated, while a camel could not change into a horse and vice versa, jātis were not that fixed.185 The analogy could also be made with the unanimated objects. For example, a staunch supporter of caste segregation who authored an article series in the caste magazine Brāhmaṇsarasva in 1929 pointed out that the offspring of low parents would necessary be low, it would not be able to change its nature, in the same way as cotton would not be able to turn into silk.186 Traditionalist Brahman authors, opposing the meritocratic view of caste promoted by reformers, inserted the comparison of caste with race into this argumentative framework. For example, Shriharirjayati, author of a book in two volumes titled Jāti bhed (1937)187 stated that in the same way as animals divided themselves up into countless species and subspecies such as birds, insects etc., humans were composed of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Japaneese, Chinese, French, Russian, Italian, German, Australian, English,


184 Ibid., p. 376.


186 N.a., ‘Sanātandharm dīpāk samīkṣā’, Brāhmaṇsarasva 5,7 (July 1929), pp. 2-16, p. 15. In another article of the same series the author defended the theory that the sons of a Brahman father and a mother of another varna was still to be considered a Brahman. N.a., Sanātandharm dīpāk samīkṣā’, Brāhmaṇsarasva 5,3-4 (March-April 1929), pp. 119-138.

American, African etc. Jātis were nothing else than a further subdivision of such macro-groups.\textsuperscript{188} Racial segregation could be encountered in different places of the world such as the US and South Africa. The persistence of such separation throughout historical epochs proved that ‘separation between black and white bodies’ (svetakāya aur krṣṇakāya meiṁ bheda), of which caste segregation (jāti bheda) was just another variant, would always be present. In similar fashion, the author of an article condemning intermarriage between different castes published almost a decade earlier in \textit{Brahmacārī} contended that it was general knowledge everywhere in the world that people of mixed descent could not be trusted. Hindus decried inter-caste marriages in the same way as, elsewhere in the world, people denounced unions between blacks (habṣī) and whites (gore).\textsuperscript{189} Within the traditionalist argumentative structure, the analogy between caste and race served the same function as the analogies between castes and animal species, or, between castes and objects: it was \textit{yet another} rhetorical tool to underscore that caste differences could not be erased (‘cotton could not become silk’). Race was not used as a ‘scientific’ tool to justify caste. Although their traditionalist formulation of caste resembled race in its most ‘fixed’ formulations, authors did not adopt ‘race science’ as argumentative tool, but rather inserted race into traditional Brahmanic argumentative patterns.\textsuperscript{190}

Last but not least, also Brahman authors writing \textit{against} the hereditary view of caste sometimes preferred recurring to traditional ways of arguing. In a treatise that counted over 500 pages, titled \textit{Jātī nirnay} (1926) Pandit Shivshankar treated the race question in a subchapter in which he discussed the different interpretations of the Sanskrit word \textit{pancamāna}, which literally meant ‘five human groups’. He stated that ‘the scholars of his times’ agreed that the word referred to the fact that ‘the world’s population had originally been composed of five races (jātiāṁ)’, that is, the Indo-European or Aryan, the Mongol, the Negro (nīgro jātī), the American and the Malay.\textsuperscript{191} Shivshankar rejected this view on two grounds. Firstly, according to the Vedas all human jātis of the world were Aryans. Indeed in Vedic literature the word \textit{pancamāna} always referred to people

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\textsuperscript{188} Ibid., pp. 6-7.
\textsuperscript{189} N.a., Varṇasaṁkaratā, \textit{Brahmacārī} 4,7 (1919), pp. 217-221.
\textsuperscript{190} If such texts referred to western ‘science’ at all, they usually quoted Orientalist scholarship in support of the racialist version of the Aryan myth. Shriharirjayaṭi’s book represented an exception in so far as it was \textit{replete with} quotations of this kind. Shriharirjayaṭī, \textit{Jāti bheda}.
\end{footnotes}
who venerated Aryan Gods. Secondly, humans were not divided into species like animals. In order to prove his stance the author referred to passages in classical Hindu texts in which the hereditary and the ethical dimensions of each caste’s duty (*svadharma*) were separated and set against each other. Inverting the argument on the mule and the horse mentioned before, he stated that while an ant could not build a spider’s canvas, a *śudra* who was given education was perfectly able to perform the duties of a Brahman. In the same way, a Brahman could easily turn into a *śudra* or even into a *mleccha* if he converted to Islam. Last but not least, a Brahman and a *śudra* could procreate, while a spider and an ant could not. Nevertheless, Shivshankar did not express any intention to do away with Brahmanic privilege. Like many upper-caste proposers of the meritocratic view of caste, he rather expressed a moralist Brahmanic paternalism. His message to Brahmans was that, if they had been designated Gods (*devta*) on earth, they should act accordingly, and should not hate anybody, or did the sun refuse its rays to the Chandal? Did the Ganges impede the Yavana to wash himself in its waters?

With respect to Indian anthropologists, who employed anthropometry in order to contest or qualify colonial theories which argued for a racial basis of caste, upper-caste Hindi writers defending and opposing the caste system largely continued to use traditional argumentative patterns in which race fulfilled the function of other analogies such as those with animal species and unanimated objects. In other words, race was used, as *yet another* parallel, but did not change the argumentative framework. Their use of ‘race science’ largely limited itself to an incorporation of the racialist Orientalist Aryan myth.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has focused on a diverse set of genres, whose authors emphasized different aspects of the Indian elites’ ‘yearning for civilization’. Against the background of the shifting discourses on civilization and savagery I have tried to assess the changes in the concepts of human difference during the analyzed time span. Can we identify a shift in the description of the uncivilized from

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192 While this comment could be read as an evolutionist influence, it was also used in traditional Bhuddist refutations of caste. Omvedt, ‘The UN, Racism, and Caste’, p. 192.

monsters and beasts to inferior races? As the analysis has shown, the answer to this question depends upon the side from which we look at it.

If we compare late 19th-century texts (articles on civilization, armchair travel literature, and geography textbooks) with early 20th-century texts (articles on the ‘showcasing of the wild’, the ‘struggle for existence’ and eugenics, as well as some among the analyzed treatises on caste) we can establish a general tendency towards a scientification of the description of the ‘uncivilized others’.

If we look at the four analyzed genres from the point of view of this general process, we can indeed identify a shift in the representation of the uncivilized from beasts and monsters to inferior races. Late-19th authors principally divided up the world’s population into two opposite blocks: the civilized nations or races, among whom they counted themselves, their colonial masters, and other civilized societies of past and present, and the uncivilized human groups or races, living in India and across the world, which were sometimes described as ‘sub-human’ or ‘half-human’ beasts or monsters. They did not use racial concepts coherently. In contrast to this, in the early decades of the 20th century most analyzed authors divided up the human continuum into a variety of distinct groups. The authors of the Hindi genre of the ‘showcasing of the wild’ usually furnished detailed, ‘scientific’ descriptions of their human bodies, although they did not always use racial categories to define them. Similarly, the authors of the ‘struggle for existence’ genre spelled out the physical consequences of the struggle. While Urdu writers of the same genre did usually not emphasize the physical aspect of the struggle for existence, in the early decades of the 20th century they nevertheless started to adopt and readapt eugenics, although less broadly with respect to early-20th century Hindi writers.

However, if we consider each genre more in detail, it becomes much more difficult to ascertain a linear change. As far as the Hindi public sphere was concerned, we can observe that authors’ concepts of human difference depended not only on the historical moment in which they wrote but also on the genre in which each of the four analyzed discourses had developed. This is particularly evident if we compare the ‘showcasing of the wild’ genre and Babu Surajbhanu’s books on caste with the contemporary Hindi discourses on the ‘struggle for existence’ and eugenics. Within the first two genres the pedagogical view of civilization survived at least into the 1920s, whereas within the second and third ones much more fixed ideas of race affirmed themselves already since 1900.

In addition to this, we have seen that in traditionalist caste literature, the career of race followed a

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194 Interestingly, tracing the history of the concepts of civilization and civility in a different geographical and cultural context, Helge Jordheim has come to a similar conclusion, that is, that the genre could sometimes be as important as time, in determining the authors’ use of concepts. Helge Jordheim, ‘The Nature of Civilization: The Semantics of Civilization and Civility in Scandinavia’, in Pernau & Jordheim, Civilizing Emotions, pp. 25-44.
slightly different trajectory: here a fixed racial concept was used by way of analogy to defend a not less fixed caste concept, which, authors claimed, corresponded to the only ‘authentic’ reading of classical Hindu texts.

The point about the importance of the genre can also give us new insights with respect to the comparison with Anglo-Indian race discourses. As pointed out, Anglo-Indian race concepts maintained a degree of fluidity until the mid-19th century, but then gradually became more fixed with the growing scientification set off by the evolutionary turn in anthropology. In slight contrast to this, we can ascertain that in the Hindi and Urdu public spheres the meaning of race became gradually more ‘scientific’ while its degree of fixity depended on the specificities of different genres.
Chapter III

Vernacular Eugenics? Santati-Śāstra in Popular Hindi Advisory Literature

Introduction

This chapter wants to shed light on a different aspect of vernacularization. Chapter Two has tried to understand how Hindi and Urdu writers translated, transformed and readapted racial concepts to local contexts. The third section has tried to sketch a comparative history of the adoptions and readaptations of eugenics in the Hindi and Urdu public spheres. Zooming in on the Hindi public sphere this chapter ascertains the development of a form of vernacular knowledge that ran parallel to the global spread of eugenics and its Indian adoptions and readaptations (in English as well as Hindi literature). Known as santati-śāstra, literally, ‘science of the progeny’ or ‘progeniology’¹ this form of knowledge based its principles not on ‘classical eugenics’ as defined and promulgated by Francis Galton, but on an entirely different set of sources, which included Ayurveda, ratiśāstra, and theories on heredity stemming from a mid-19th century American phrenologist. This hitherto little explored branch of knowledge was contained in Hindi advisory manuals and instructed newly married middle-class couples on how to produce mentally and physically perfect children. In terms of publication numbers these books were highly successful. The analysis that follows starts out comparing santati-śāstra with the eugenics that was promoted in Eugenic Societies by a group of elite authors writing mainly in English. The chapter’s objective is twofold. Firstly, it tries to explain why santati-śāstra can and has to be compared with eugenics. Secondly, it emphasizes that, if we want to define santati-śāstra as ‘vernacular eugenics’, we need to conceive eugenics in broader

¹ I have found no evidence of the existence of a genre comparable to santati-śāstra in Urdu, although similar ideas can be found in single conjugal advisory books and the periodical press. See, for instance, Sayyid Ali Ashghar Bilgrami, Falsifah-e izdível (Agrah: Matabah-e šamšī Muhammad Ibrahim Khān, 1909). Another example was Kaviraj Harnam Das’ Hidāyat-e namah-e validain whose Hindi translation of 1935 was prefaced by Begum Shah Nawaz. Kaviraj Harnam Das, Gharbavāṭī, prasūṭā aur bālak (hadāyat nāmā vālidain. Lāhaur: n.e., 1935). For some brief references in the Unani periodical press see Attewell, Refiguring Unani Tibb, p. 248.
terms, as scholars studying the transnational and global trajectories of the ‘well born science’ have been claiming since some time. In particular, santati-śāstra’s singular frame of ‘scientific’ reference, and especially its use of American ‘fringe science’, provide new insights into the multiple, and sometimes unexpected, ways in which ‘Western science’ functioned as a legitimising source in vernacular texts.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first two sections provide the essential background. Section One introduces santati-śāstra, briefly describing its development as a literary genre and new form of ‘scientific’ knowledge. Section Two describes its promoters and their socio-political objectives, comparing this group of people with those calling themselves ‘eugenicists’ in India and elsewhere. Sections Three and Four further dwell on the difference between santati-śāstra and ‘eugenics’ by analysing two specific subject matters treated in this form of vernacular knowledge, namely the view of conception and the theory of hereditary transmission. The analysis of these two subjects also explores the multiple ways in which ‘Western science’ could function as a legitimising source in vernacular knowledge. Section Five looks at santati-śāstra authors’ attempts to implement their theory of hereditary transmission in order to obtain fairer skin color in their offspring. It tries to look at these endeavours against the background of an increasingly racialized colonial setting. Finally, the last section tries to widen the focus, exploring Hindi writers’ attitudes to birth control, not only within santati-śāstra literature but also in the Hindi public sphere more in general. The debate on birth control took place in the late colonial and highly nationalist political climate of the 1920s and 30s. As the section is going to show, within this context it was not primarily the authority of ‘Western science’ Hindi writers had to engage with, but also the authority of Gandhi’s ideal of brahmacārya, which symbolized an influential form of cultural nationalism.

1. Santati-śāstra, a New Literary Genre and ‘Scientific’ Discipline

In the early decades of the 20th century, the Hindi public sphere saw a vast circulation of a varied set of popular advisory manuals on conjugality, sex, reproduction and childcare which were styled as socially ‘useful’ (upayogi) and grounded in ‘science’. This literature often justified itself as a

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reaction to so-called ‘obscene’ (aśāli) literature, which the commercialization of print had made available in great quantities and to cheap prices. Nevertheless, ‘scientific’ and ‘useful’ literature on married life and sex, too, had many bestsellers, whose popularity was not necessarily inferior to the bestsellers of erotic literature. Moreover, although authors of upayogī literature usually used a prescriptive tone and expressed aims of social reform and nation-building, they did not necessarily shun away from displaying erotic themes. The major difference was that those authors of ‘useful’ literature who included erotic elements in their books claimed that the latter were not meant for pleasure alone, but fulfilled a ‘scientific’ purpose. As a matter of fact, some of them actually quite explicitly offered ‘scientific’ advice and titillation. The ways in which the authors arranged a balanced combination of prescriptions and eroticism were manifold. For instance, Pyarelal Zamindar of Barautha, whom we have met already in the previous chapter, claimed to have purposely enriched his advisory book on sex with erotic elements in order to spread its ‘scientific’ contents to a wider range of readers. His book bore the half-Hindi half-English title Kokhaśāstra. Sexual Science, which simultaneously evoked the homonymous 12th-century erotic treatise by Kokkoka and ‘Western science’. A reader comment reproduced on the books last pages stated that the reference to the famous Sanskrit erotic treatise in the title was a clever trick by the author to increase the book’s circulation. Thanks to this stratagem, the reader wrote, the book had reached the common man. The book proved to be highly successful indeed: it went into its seventh edition in 1905, with 2000 copies per edition. The interior of the book revealed the prescriptive aim behind the erotic disguise. The book had indeed very little in common with Kokkoka’s Ratirahasya. In chapter one, for instance, bearing the exciting title Javānī divānī (‘Crazy Youthfulness’) the author condemned the excessive sexual activity of young Indian men, accusing them of spoiling their own and their young wives’ bodies. In another chapter he explained the classification of women and men into different types according to their physical, psychological and sexual characteristics and the

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3 Such erotic publications included a rich variety of texts ranging from old literary forms such as erotic Braj songs, kīṣās, nāțaks and sangīts, translations of classical erotic treatises from Sanskrit and Persian, to new genres, like romantic novels and newly composed erotic advisory manuals. Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, pp. 49-55, 60-66.

4 Ibid., p. 53.


6 Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, p. 54. Gupta briefly comments the book but classifies it as an erotic text, without referring to its ‘eugenic’ content.
kind of offspring resulting from mismatched unions. He then further substantiated his claim that mental and sensual compatibility between partners was a requirement to generate ‘fit’ offspring by referring to Charles Darwin’s considerations on sexual selection in animals.

Santati-śāstra developed within this wider genre of ‘useful’, ‘scientific’ and sometimes erotic advisory manuals on married life and sex as a subgenre specifically dedicated to ‘fit reproduction’. It offered advice to married couples on how to produce ‘excellent offspring’ (uttam santān).

Advisory books on ‘healthy reproduction’ had been circulated since the late 19th century. Garbhadhān vidhi (‘The Law of Conception’) first published in 1888, written by the prolific advisory book author and Arya Samaji Chimmanlal Vaishya based in Tilhar (UP) can be considered as an early specimen of this genre. The sixth edition of this small booklet came to 65 pages and contained brief pieces of information and advice related to the physiological process of semen production in men, women’s menstrual cycles, conception, pregnancy, birth, and postpartum health. By 1928 the booklet was in its twelfth edition, indicating the popularity of the genre.

During the 1910s the type of information contained in books such as Garbhadhān vidhi developed into a more detailed set of theories, collectively known as santati-śāstra, to which authors dedicated more voluminous pieces. A seminal book of this period was Mānav-santatiśāstra (‘Human Progeniology’), published in 1913, authored by Hiralal ‘Jalori’, a clerk based in Kota, Rajasthan. A 241-page-long monograph amply quoted by later authors, Mānav-santatiśāstra explained the physiology of men and women’s reproductive fluids, and the mechanism of conception. Mentioning a variety of sources, it thoroughly elucidated the multiple ways in which parents could influence the physical and mental traits of their offspring. The book did not touch upon birth and postpartum health, focusing entirely on the ways in which offspring could be made ‘perfect’ before birth.

During the 1920s many more books of this type appeared on the market, bearing titles such as Santati-śāstra, Santān śāstra, Santān vijñān or Janan vijñān (all synonyms for ‘science of the progeny’). Sometimes authors dedicated an entire series of books to santati-śāstra and some

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7 The concern over the kind of offspring that would result from mismatched unions does not stem from the Ratirahasya but has to be traced back to the more recent corpus of Ratiśāstra. The two oeuvres making up the latter, the Ratiśāstra and the Ratiramaṇa both contained such theories. See Kenneth G. Zysk, Conjugal Love in India: Ratiśāstra and Ratiramaṇa (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 10, 75-77, 223-227. The importance of Ratiśāstra for santati-śāstra will be discussed later in this chapter.

8 Zamindar az Barautha, Kokhaśāstra, pp. 1-11, 32-33, 39-40.

9 Chimmanlal Vaishya, Garbhadhānvidhi (Murādabād: Pandit Rāmnārāyan Śukla, Āryabhāskar pres, 6th ed., 1902); and Idem, Garbhadhān vidhi (Tilhar: Chimmanlāl end sans āryapustakalaya, 12th ed. 1928).

established specific publishing houses primarily devoted to the topic. The genre of santati-śāstra distinguished itself from other Hindi advisory manuals on sex and married life because it focused almost exclusively on ‘healthy reproduction’. This meant that most santati-śāstra books touched upon other issues related to conjugality (such as sexual pleasure or the emotional relationship between husband and wife), only as far as they were deemed relevant to produce ‘fit offspring’. Besides this specific literary genre, this paper also considers more broadly conceived advisory books on conjugality, sex and reproduction, in which pieces of knowledge described as santati-śāstra were dedicated single chapters or subchapters. Santati-śāstra, therefore, was a form of knowledge that could be found inside as well as beyond a discrete literary genre. Vernacular works touching upon reproduction more generally, alongside sexology and married life have received some scholarly attention. The same holds true for English-language writing on eugenics. The field of santati-śāstra, however, has not been thoroughly scrutinized. Before entering into detail on the content of santati-śāstra books, let us first define the field of ‘eugenics’ as it was promoted in India in this period, in order to show in how far the Hindi literature surveyed here departed from it.

11 The Vaid Ramnarayan Vaidshastri from Kanpur, for example, published the Santati-rahasya granthmālā (lit. ‘The Mystery of Offspring Series’) from a specialized publishing house, the ‘Santati-rahasya office’ (Santati-rahasya āfīś).


13 Hodges, Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce; Idem, ‘Indian Eugenics in an Age of Reform’; Idem, ‘South Asia’s Eugenic Past’; and Ahluwalia, Reproductive Restraints.

14 Rachel Berger attests that from the 1910s onwards discussions on reproductive health with the aim of ‘superior offspring’ emerged within various spheres of Hindi writing, especially advisory literature for women, but she does not discuss santati-śāstra as a specific subgenre or distinct form of knowledge. Rachel Berger, Ayurveda Made Modern. Political Histories of Indigenous Medicine in North India, 1900-1955, (Cambridge: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 93-99.
2. Eugenics, Nationalism and the Language of Science

In India, eugenic ideas were extensively taken up and readapted by composite groups of people. As Sarah Hodges and Sanjam Ahluwalia have pointed out, amongst the most vocal promoters of eugenic ideas were a number of middle-class/upper-caste men with nationalist aspirations who combined eugenics, sexology and birth control advocacy. Sarah Hodges has referred to these figures as ‘Indian eugenicists’. Concerns over supposedly excessive population growth were expressed already in the late 19th century, and led to the establishment, in Madras, of the Hindu-Malthusian League (1882). In northern and Western India, ‘eugenics societies’ sprung up in the 1920s, such as the Indian Eugenic Society and the Sholapur Eugenics Education Society. The founders and supporters of these societies such as Aliyappin Padmanabha Pillay (1889-1956) and Narayan Sitaram Phadke (1894-1978) corresponded and collaborated with eugenicists and birth control activists in Britain and the US, spreading their version of eugenics primarily in English-language publications. In these writings, birth control was framed both as a means of leading a ‘modern sexual life’ for the middle-classes as well as a means to reduce the numbers of the ‘unfit’ among the poor masses. To achieve these ends, Indian eugenicists encouraged the establishment of birth control clinics as centres to distribute contraceptive information. Some even went so far as to suggest sterilisation of the ‘unfit’. Beyond the group identified as ‘Indian eugenicists’, eugenic ideas were also taken up within Hindu reform movements such as the Arya Samaj. Swami Dayanand believed that the process of degeneration of the ‘Hindu race’ had already reached so far that it would shortly face physical extinction unless immediate action was taken. Dayanand had already preached ‘healthy reproduction’ in the Satyarth Prakash (1875). During the 1910s the leaders of the Gurukul, the nationalist educational institution established by Lala Munshiram (1857-1926) in Kangri (Haridwar), sustained eugenic views in the school’s monthly organ. The leadership of the school also put these ideals into practice. The Gurukul’s entry examination consisted of a

15 Hodges, Indian Eugenics in an Age of Reform’.

16 Ibid., pp. 119–121. The Marathi sexologist Ragunath Dhondo Karve (1882-1953) was exceptional in this as he supported eugenic ideas but consciously chose to spread his views chiefly in Marathi. See Haynes & Botre, ‘Explaining R. D. Karve’.


series of anthropometrical measurements and tests of physical performance aimed at selecting the ‘fittest’ boys for the school, intended to be the ‘germ cell of the nation’. As shown in the previous chapter, references to eugenics in the Hindi periodical press were quite frequent, whereas monographs specifically dedicated to this topic, such as the mentioned Deś-darśan by Shivnandan Singh, were rather uncommon. Much more widespread was the type of literature which I describe as santati-śāstra, which, as I shall explain shortly, contained a different ‘eugenic rationality’ and grounded on different ‘scientific’ sources.

Before entering into detail on santati-śāstra’s ‘eugenic rationality’ and the sources it referred to, I shall first very briefly present the background and aims of its authors. The promoters of santati-śāstra were mostly men, educated upper—and intermediate—caste Hindus from North India. If most stemmed from or lived in important Hindi publishing centres such as Allahabad or Benares, some among them, such as the already mentioned Chimmanlal Vaishya and Hiralał ‘Jalori’, lived and wrote their books from more provincial places. Only a few authors of santati-śāstra books were Vaidas or doctors, although many of them emphasized that santati-śāstra in great part consisted of medical knowledge. Most presented themselves as laymen and emphasized that they had acquired their expertise on these topics studying the books containing such knowledge. Indeed, most of them wrote books on other topics too, addressing a whole range of issues that were relevant to the members of the nationalist Hindu middle class milieu writing in Hindi: religion and religious reform, education, ‘national’ and foreign history, language and language reform, science and


20 As I am going to show, Singh himself referred to santati-śāstra and its theories in his monograph. Singh, Deś-darśan , pp. 267-269, 320. The same author also wrote an advisory manual for married couples, titled Dampati mitra (‘The Friend of the Couple’) which might have been a ‘classical’ santati-śāstra book, but which, unfortunately, the present author could not find it in the visited archives.


22 Hiralał ‘Jalori’ (1888-1944) worked as a clerk in Kota. He is reported to have set up a well-furnished personal library and a publishing house. Jalori, Māṇav-santatiśāstra, p. 2. Kshemchandra, Divangat hindī sevī (Delhi: Śakun prakāśan, 1981) p. 691. Chimmanlal Vaishya (1854-1933) established his publishing house in Tilhar from which he did not only publish his bestsellers but also sold ayurvedic medicines. The success of his books suggests that, unlike Jalori, he could live on writing and publishing.
technology. In the introduction to santati-śāstra books the authors emphasized that their books were intended to spread useful knowledge to forge a strong nation. Santati-śāstra was presented as an instrument of ‘racial improvement’, which would forge a nation composed of healthy and strong Hindu middle-class and upper-caste individuals. If nationalist aims were reflected in the early specimens of the genre, they were spelt out more specifically in later texts. This would suggest that as the nationalist movement grew, ‘healthy reproduction’ came to be styled as a means to accelerate the fight for independence and once achieved, ensure its protection. As one author, Devnarayan Dvivedi, wrote in the addendum to the second amplified edition of Santān-vijñān in 1935:

In these days the independence movement is moving forward. If God wants the country will become independent very soon. But only heroic men, men of character and intelligence (vīr, sākasī or buddhimān purāś) will be able to protect this independence. Cowards and stupid people will neither be able to achieve such independence nor to protect it. In the present circumstance every man in India (bhārat) should generate progeny according to the rules of this book. If the children of the future will possess the mentioned qualities, they will be able to protect freedom once it is achieved.

As this quote exemplifies, santati-śāstra reflected two simultaneous perceptions that preoccupied the North Indian middle class during the first three decades of the 20th century. On the one hand, the development of the national movement into a mass movement increased the confidence that independence would be achieved soon. At the same time, the perception of Hindu weakness and effeminacy which had developed under Orientalist influence was revived by growing communal antagonisms alongside fear of the anti-Brahmin and low-caste movements which were making headway in some regions. Although the Muslim or low-caste ‘other’ was not explicitly mentioned in the analyzed texts, the imagined ‘fit’ nation was nominally defined as Hindu and upper-caste. Santati-śāstra aimed at making this nation ‘fit’ enough to face both perceived international competition—authors often referred to a ‘struggle for existence among nations’—as well as the internal ‘struggle’ among communities and castes.

23 See the entries on Hiralal ‘Jalori’, Chimmanlal Vaishya and Rishilal Agrawal in Kshemchandra, Divangat, pp. 77-78, 218, 691.


Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine have argued that even though eugenic ideas varied according to place, socio-political and cultural context, eugenics shared two universal characteristics; it was closely interlinked with the development of nations and nationalism; and it was articulated in the language of scientific theory.²⁶ As I suggested above, santati-śāstra was tied up with nationalist aims, and below I will show that it relied heavily on the language of science. Arguably, santati-śāstra might be seen as a form of eugenics. However, santati-śāstra’s set of ‘scientific’ references radically differed from those most commonly employed by individuals and movements who claimed to promote ‘eugenics’ in India and in other parts of the world, to the extent that I believe santati-śāstra might be characterized as ‘vernacular eugenics’ only with the due specifications.

At the same time, santati-śāstra vernacularized ‘Western science’ at various levels. To demonstrate this, rather than perform an exhaustive analysis of the contents of santati-śāstra, I will provide two examples to show the rationality of the ‘eugenics’ contained in these texts and highlight the ways in which this differed from the ideas proposed by Indian eugenicists. An analysis of santati-śāstra adds a new dimension to understandings of the ways in which ‘Western science’ functioned as legitimizing source in vernacular texts in colonial India.

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²⁶ Bashford & Levine (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics, pp. 11,16.
3. Explaining Conception: Accommodating Spermatozoon and Ovum in Ayurveda

Santati-śāstra authors considered it part of their agenda to provide their readers with a detailed ‘scientific’ explanation of reproduction, believing that this would enable readers to follow their practical instructions on how to generate ‘excellent offspring’. Therefore, the opening chapters of most santati-śāstra books were dedicated to the nuts and bolts of reproduction. Most books published in the 1910s and 1920s presented a hybrid idea of reproduction, which combined references to a British manual for students of medicine with references to the ‘primeval texts of Ayurveda’, the Suśruta and Caraka Saṃhitās.

In her recent book Ayurveda Made Modern Rachel Berger briefly discusses the emergence of popular Hindi advisory literature on sexuality, reproduction and mothercraft, of which santati-śāstra constituted a sub-genre. She points out that in this type of literature, ‘health edicts that were
foreign in nature were made suitable to Indian bodies through their incorporation into a wider spectre of health care based around a properly indigenous system’, a feature that was typical of ayurvedic and nationalist discourse of the time.\textsuperscript{27} Looking specifically at the ‘scientific’ description of the reproductive process in santati-śāstra books the following analysis substantiates Berger’s stance. However to this I add a fresh dimension, exploring the particular strategies developed by authors to readapt ‘foreign’ theories to ‘indigenous’ contexts; the dissonances that this caused; and the manner in which these were resolved. Gyan Prakash has drawn our attention to the ways that Western-educated elite nationalists writing primarily in English negotiated ‘science’; I will demonstrate the ways that authors of Hindi advisory manuals appropriated the ‘language of science’ was very different.

The first explanation of reproduction invoked by santati-śāstra authors claimed to follow the Suśruta and Caraka Samhitās, conceiving of conception as the union of male and female reproductive fluids—semen and menstrual blood (vīrya and raj)—which were thought to be discharged into the woman’s uterus during sexual intercourse. The second explanation referred to Kirkes’ Handbook of Physiology, a popular manual for students of medicine that first appeared in England in 1850, and was subsequently reprinted in numerous parallel editions in Britain and the United States.\textsuperscript{28} It described conception as the combination of two reproductive cells, spermatozoon and egg cell, the first contained in the semen discharged by men during intercourse, the second produced by women once a month, regardless of sexual union. Santati-śāstra book authors incorporated the biomedical narrative into the ayurvedic narrative, ‘translating’ spermatozoon and ovum into ayurvedic terminology. Their hybrid accounts of reproduction usually displayed the following structure: they began with a description of men’s and women’s sexual fluids, explaining that they were formed through a series of subsequent biochemical transformations of digested food, and that they constituted the essence of man’s and woman’s bodies respectively since they were permanently present in the whole body, sustaining and conferring vitality to it.\textsuperscript{29} After this, they specified that both fluids contained ‘minuscule particles’, which they often defined with composite words such as viryakīt (‘the insects contained in semen’) and rajkoṣ or (‘the cocoons contained in

\textsuperscript{27} Berger, Ayurveda Made Modern, p. 96.


menstrual blood’). Some authors added the English words ‘spermatozoon’ and ‘cell’ (referring to ‘egg cell’) in brackets after these Hindi words and displayed drawings of a spermatozoon and an egg cell.30 After the description of male and female sexual fluids and their composition, the authors proceeded to explain the way in which the two united during intercourse. This process was usually described in the following terms:

As soon as the menstrual blood (raj) of the woman and then the semen (vīrya) of man get released [into the uterus during intercourse] the spermatozoon (purūṣ-vīrya-jantu) can enter the egg cell (strī-koṣ). From the fusion of the two the seed (bīj) of the child gets created.31

This description illustrates how the authors incorporated the biomedical narrative into the ayurvedic narrative. Instead of choosing between explaining reproduction as either a union of fluids or a union of cells they ‘translated’ the union of cells into a union of fluids, understanding the union of cells as the microscopic level of the union of fluids. The result was a view of reproduction in which the union between spermatozoon and egg cell represented the microscopic level of the union between semen and menstrual blood. Ayurveda furnished the overall framework, explaining the macro-level, whereas biomedicine explained the micro-level. Since each explained a different level, the two narratives did not come into conflict with each other. Santati-śāstra’s new narrative of reproduction thus appeared as a coherent whole, presented as both ‘scientific’ and rooted in ‘indigenous’ tradition.

Nevertheless, there were points at which such incorporation did not work smoothly. One instance was the translation of the English biomedical term ‘ovum’ into a Hindi ayurvedic vocabulary. Many authors such as Rishilal Agrawal (see figure three) equated the English ‘ovum’ with the Hindi raj (‘menstrual blood’).32 Following the logic of the hybrid explanation of reproduction as a union of reproductive fluids containing reproductive cells, they then went on to state that ‘ovum’ (raj) contained egg cells (raj-koṣ) in the same way as semen (purūṣ-vīrya) contained spermatozoa (purūśkīṭ). From the biomedical point of view, this resulted in a contradiction, since the English terms ‘ovum’ and ‘egg cell’ were synonyms. But the (mis)translation was not contradictory from


31 Dvivedi, Santān-vijñān, p. 70. Basically identical explanations were given in most of the consulted santati śāstra books.

32 Rishilal Agrawal, Mancāhī-santān, p. 81. See also Jalori, Mānav-santatiśāstra p. 36.
the point of view of the authors’ explanatory model, in which the English word ‘ovum’ had lost its original meaning and had acquired a new one; that is, the ayurvedic ‘menstrual blood’ or the reproductive fluid of women. Significantly, as noted by Martha Ann Selby, the same imprecise equation of ‘ovum’ with ‘menstrual blood’ can be found in Sanskrit-to-English translations of the Caraka and Suśruta Samhitās published in the 1960s. Yet as Selby’s analysis shows, in that case, it was the ayurvedic terminology (the Sanskrit word for ‘menstrual blood’ ārtava) which was straitjacketed into biomedical terminology The role played by ‘menstrual blood’ in the ayurvedic physiology of reproduction was thereby completely discarded, which, as Selby suggests, reflected the translators’ efforts ‘to make Ayurveda look more scientific’.33 The process of ‘translation’ and readaptation of Sanskrit texts into English ‘scientific’ terminology identified by Selby fits into the model proposed by Prakash with regard to ‘Hindu science’. The nationalist discourse on ‘Hindu science’ involved Sanskrit-to-English translation, which bestowed ‘scientific authority’ upon ‘traditional’ Hindu knowledge. Compared to the latter, the instances of English-to-Hindi translation discussed here present an important difference. In this case it was not a Sanskrit term to be straitjacketed into English ‘scientific’ terminology. Instead, an English ‘scientific’ word (‘ovum’) was emptied of the meaning it carried in its ‘original’ context (‘egg cell’), and filled it with a new, negotiated ayurvedic meaning (namely ‘female reproductive fluid containing reproductive cells’).

Nationalist texts on ‘Hindu science’ and santati-śātsra books thus both used English terminology to confer authority upon their own claims of ‘scientificity’, but they adopted different definitions of the terminology. If nationalist texts conferred new meanings upon the Sanskrit words, santati-śātsra morphed the meaning of the English ‘scientific’ words.

As illustrated in figures two and three, English words were often written in the original Roman script in brackets after the ‘corresponding’ Hindi words. Through this practice, the authors sought to inject their texts with the authority of English, although the meaning of the English had been altered, as where raj (‘menstrual blood’) was translated as ‘ovum’. Sometimes the words were misspelt, e.g. ‘sell’ for ‘cell’, as shown in figure two. In contrast to the examples analyzed by Prakash and Selby, in this case the scientific authority derived from the English word alone, not from its original biomedical meaning, which had been endowed with a new meaning. Hindi advisory manual authors thus appropriated the ‘idiom of power’ by ‘sprinkling’ Hindi texts with English words that had acquired new meanings within a new vernacular ‘pidgin-knowledge’.

Compared to the Sanskrit-to-English translations effected by elite nationalists writing in English, the process of vernacularization then implied a slightly different kind of nationalist appropriation of science, one in which science acquired new meanings not just because it was ‘dislocated’ from its original context, but because its actual content was modified.

4. How to Influence Heredity: Santati-śāstra’s Theory of ‘Mental Force’

Santati-śāstra’s theory of hereditary transmission was based on the idea that parents could substantially influence the bodily and intellectual features of their future offspring through ‘mental force’ (mansākāti). The authors insisted that bodily and intellectual features of the child were not determined by God, but by human action alone. In the first book of his series on married life, Shivshankar Mishra lamented that the majority of people still ignored this fact:
In India (*Bhāratvarś*) the number of people who know santāti śāstra and trust the fact that the responsibility of producing good or bad offspring is in their own hands, is very small. The majority of the inhabitants of this country understand offspring to be God’s gift. [...] Yet scientists (vaijñānīk) have proved that man is himself responsible for the quality of the offspring he begets.34

Like santati-śāstra’s theory of conception, its theory of hereditary transmission through ‘mental force’ also evoked both ‘local’ knowledge and ‘Western science’. However in this case, the most quoted ‘Western scientific authority’ was an author that early-20th century academia would have classified as a ‘fringe scientist’ or ‘quack’. This addresses a further question related to the problem of the authority of ‘Western science’: how did ‘fringe-science’ function as an authoritative ‘Western’ source in santati-śāstra texts?

The Hindi advisory book authors’ theory of hereditary influence through ‘mental force’ was mostly described in very general terms, defined as ‘thought force’ (*vicārśakti*), ‘mental ambition’ (*mānasik ākāṅkṣā*) or the act of ‘fixing the mind firmly’ (*man mein drīrh niṣcay kar lena*).35 To illustrate what they meant by this, some mentioned stories bearing no relation to reproduction or heredity, featuring individuals that had achieved unusual results by simply ‘focusing their mind on their goals’. Devnarayan Dvivedi, for instance, claimed that Nadir Shah had won many battles thanks to this force, and he described a young student whose mental powers had enabled him to swim along the Ganga from Chunar to Benares.36 As far as the transmission of hereditary qualities was concerned, santati-śāstra authors asserted that there were three key moments at which parents could influence their future offspring through their ‘mental force’; the days of the mother’s last menstruation before conception, the moment of conception itself, and the actual pregnancy. Conception was seen as the sole opportunity in which both the mother and the father could bear an influence upon the qualities of the coming child. In order to transmit positive qualities to the child at conception, parents had to deeply ‘impress’ such qualities on their own minds. It was therefore imperative that during sexual intercourse husband and wife intensively thought of a child with the features they desired. ‘Mental force’ was thus conceived of as a force that could be consciously employed. Yet at the same time, it was imagined as a force that had repercussions even for parents who were unaware of it. If the parents did not focus their mind on anything particular during intercourse and pregnancy, the offspring would simply inherit the features and forms that reflected

34 Mishra, *Dāmpatya vijñān*, pp. 176-177.
their parents’ everyday lives. The Bombay-based Vaid Rameshvaranand Sharma claimed to have personally witnessed this phenomenon. He maintained that a dark-complexioned couple employed as domestic servants in the house of a European, had begot fair children that were ‘of the same complexion as the Parsis’. The reason, he claimed, was that the sahib’s family’s complexion had been so strongly impressed upon the mind of the servants, that the latter had transmitted these characteristic to their own children. The same author reported another incident with arguably less positive results. A youth, who had got terribly drunk on the day of his dvirāgamaṁ conceived a child with his bride on the very same night. The girl that was born talked gibberish and walked like a drunkard for her whole lifetime. The author pointed out that such phenomena were fairly widespread among the jātis who drank alcohol. Santati-śāstra books were full of examples of this type, featuring accounts of similar ‘incidents’ that had occurred in India, Britain, Europe and ‘America’. To the list of examples some even added reinterpretations of stories drawn from Hindu mythology. Sharma, for instance, mentioned the story of Krishna’s birth. The reason why Krishna was born with a dark complexion was because during conception and pregnancy his parents were locked up in a dark jail as captives of his maternal uncle.

In line with the logic that offspring would inherit the features shaped by their parents daily experiences, many authors suggested that readers consciously influence their minds by hanging images of beautiful youths on the walls of their rooms, a trick, some claimed, which had been practiced by the ancient Aryans with formidable results. Hiralal ‘Jalori’ went so far as to devise a fixed program of daily exercises for pregnant women to pass on positive qualities to their children. From the second day after conception, every morning and evening, the future mother should focus her mind on the features of the desired child. After an exercise that relaxed her body and purified her thoughts though a technique of regular and deep breathing, she should take an image of the ideal boy or girl (both pictures were helpfully provided in his book) and look at it with full attention

37 Sharma, Santān-Kalpdrum, pp. 20-21. His main concern being the proof of his theory on the ‘force of mind’ the author did not mention the possibility of an ‘illegitimate union’ between the sahib and his female servant as an alternative explanation of such ‘racial intermixture’.

38 The ceremonial arrival of the bride at her father-in-law’s house to take up residence there with her husband.

39 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

40 Sharma, Santān-Kalpdrum, pp. 37-38.


42 Since the authors also gave highly detailed instruction on how to calculate a woman’s fertile days, the readers were expected to know on which day conception had occurred.
and love. She should then intensively concentrate on each part of the child’s body, one after the other, and afterwards she should impress the picture so strongly upon her heart that she could see it before her with closed eyes. After she had completed the exercise, he encouraged the woman to eat some nutritious and easily digestible food, rest for a while, and then read a ‘useful book’ aloud. While reading, she should imagine transmitting the words to the child in her womb ‘as through a telephone’.  

Theories of the hereditary influence of ‘mental force’ were substantiated by reference to a number of texts. As far as the mind’s influence during menstruation and pregnancy was concerned, santati-śāstra authors mostly cited ‘Ayurveda’ and ratiśāstra. The idea that the features of a woman’s nascent child were influenced by her conduct during menstruation, and in particular, by the person she first saw after she had had her purifying bath had indeed a base in the Suśruta and Caraka Saṃhitās, as well as in Ratiśāstra and Ratiramaṇa (the two oeuvres making up ratiśāstra). The authors also quoted ratiśāstra in relation to the effects of particular actions during pregnancy, and sometimes, even in relation to the influence of ‘mental force’ during conception.

However, as far as the mind’s influence during conception was concerned, authors felt the need to further validate their theory by quoting ‘Western science’. The most quoted ‘Western author’ in this context was the New York-based ‘practical phrenologist’ Orson Squire Fowler (1809-1887). Together with his brother, Lorenzo Niles Fowler (1811-1896), O. S. Fowler had achieved great popularity in the United States during the 1840s and 50s by promoting a ‘practice-oriented’ version

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43 Jalori, Mānavsantatiśāstra, pp. 228-229. Unfortunately the pages with the pictures were missing in the edition consulted. The reference to the telephone, which would not have been available to the large majority of the readers, could be interpreted as a ‘maker of modernity’, a concept used by Douglas E. Haynes in his study on advertisements for sex tonics in Western India. Haynes, ‘Selling Masculinity: Advertisements for Sex Tonics and the Making of Modern Conjugality in Western India, 1900–1945’, in South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, (2012), p. 32.

44 While sharing some of its contents with ancient and medieval kāmaśāstra (i.e. texts such as the Kāmasutra and the Ratirahasya), ratiśāstra differed from the latter in so far as its primary concern was not erotic pleasure but reinforcing ‘righteous’ conjugal life aimed at reproduction. The exact dates of composition of Ratiśāstra and Ratiramaṇa are uncertain. Kenneth G. Zysk sees them as modern compositions drawing on earlier textual material and locates them between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the 19th century. I thank Kenneth G. Zysk for this information. See Kenneth G. Zysk, Conjugal Love in India: Ratiśāstra and Ratiramaṇa (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

of phrenology, accessible to the wider public. O. S. Fowler had been involved in numerous early and mid-19th century US-American health reform movements, and in particular, he had been an adamant proponent of methods to improve ‘inherited traits’. He had published numerous advisory manuals on heredity, partner selection, married life, sex and reproduction, and although nowhere in his works Fowler mentioned an abstract ‘mental force’ in the terms Hindi advisory manual authors described it, he promoted a similar idea. Fowler maintained that reciprocal love between husband and wife consisted of a ‘mental activity’ that influenced the future progeny. In his *Creative and Sexual Science* (1875) he explained that through reciprocal love the qualities of husband and wife became perfectly fused, and were transmitted to the child. Santati-śāstra book authors picked up this idea and integrated it into their larger concept of hereditary influence through ‘mental force’. Besides fixing their minds on images of beautiful youths, husband and wife were advised to cultivate mutual ‘true love’ (saccī prem), or their efforts to conceive excellent offspring might fail. It is striking that the authors usually cited Fowler as a ‘Western scientific authority’ not only in relation to the idea of a positive hereditary influence of conjugal love. Fowler was also invoked with reference to the more general idea of the influence of visual and other mental stimuli on heredity. Thus Fowler, an American ‘fringe-scientist’, was quoted as ‘scientific authority’ for a theory that the authors of Hindi advisory books had elaborated themselves, through a combination and readaptation of multiple sources. A few particularly ambitious authors, such as Hiralal Jalori, felt the necessity to engage into a closer scientific enquiry of the phenomenon of mental force. Jalori first gave a meticulous explanation of the structure of the ‘seed of the child’ (bacce kā bij) or ‘human seed’ (manuśyabīj) resulting from the combination of spermatozoon and egg cell, or the very the first stage of the embryo’s development (what nowadays we would call zygote). Inspired by the views of German biologist August Weismann (1834-1914) he pointed out that the smallest unit contained in the ‘seed’ was the

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49 Like the US-American phrenologist, the authors conceived the beneficial hereditary influence of ‘true’ love only within the bounds of marriage, although only a few of them mentioned this explicitly. E.g. Sharma, *Santān-kalpadrum*, p. 57.
‘biophor’ (bāyofar), which was also its ‘life-bearer’ (jīvan-śakti dene vālā).\textsuperscript{50} As the ‘seed’ contained an individual’s entire hereditary information, biophors were, according to Jalori, the smallest units into which hereditary information could be subdivided. And so, ultimately, they were the elementary particles that gave the seed the ‘characters of the race’ (jātīya gun). At this point Jalori asked what elements biophors were made of. He reasoned that, since the human seed was smaller than ‘a particle of water’ (pānī kā parmāṇu), which measured 1/200 of an inch, the biophors contained in it must be infinitely smaller than this. Jalori informed his readers that in order to solve this problem, he needed to leave Weismann and search for a solution within a different ‘scientific discipline’ (śāstra) namely, psychology (manasik śāstra). The only element that was so infinitely small that it could be contained in the human seed’s biophors was ether (īthar), the material, which permitted psychologists to ‘measure’ thoughts. Jalori explained that ether was invisible and composed of extremely minute particles that filled up the entire space. Thoughts generated waves in ether in the same way as sounds generated vibrations in the air. Therefore, thoughts literally imprinted their form into ether. It was through ether that the parents’ thoughts were transmitted to the seed of the child during conception, and then, during pregnancy, the mother’s thoughts were continually transmitted to the foetus. Jalori moved even further away from Weismann when he linked the theory of the force of mind to a Lamarkian view of evolution. He claimed that the evolution of species demonstrated the effects of the mind’s influence. Through their force of mind the manifold species of animals and plants present on earth ‘created’ useful traits in their offspring, which helped them in the struggle for existence. This means that, it was the very force of mind that brought forward the evolutionary process; in the author’s own words: ‘It is this very force of mind that made us humans.’\textsuperscript{51} Interestingly the reference to ether was made also by Shivnandan Singh, not in a santati-śāstra book, but in the already mentioned Deś-darśan, one of the comparably few

\textsuperscript{50} Weismann’s main contribution was the so called ‘germ-plasm theory’, according to which in multicellular beings inheritance takes place by means of the ‘germ cells’ (i.e. gametes) only, whereas the other cells of the body do not function as agents of heredity. The theory holds that the germ cells are not affected by anything the somatic cells ‘learn’ during their life and therefore rules out the inheritance of acquired characteristics as proposed by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Jalori quoted this theory but did not adopt it in its entirety. Weismann also posited that ‘germ-plasm’ (the ‘hereditary substance’ contained in the ‘germ cells’) could be subdivided into ‘ideoplasm’ (the comprehensive physiological unit), ‘determinant’ (the unit controlling the method and direction in the development of individual) and the ‘biophor’ (or ‘life-bearer’), the smallest and most numerous unit. Jalori applied the same subdivision to the ‘seed of the child’. Jalori (1913), Mānavsantatiśāstra, pp. 74-76.

\textsuperscript{51} Jalori, Mānavsantatiśāstra, p. 140. Even Rameshvaranand Sharma mentioned that living species could effect useful bodily transformations through their force of mind, but did not refer to any similar theory. Sharma, Santān-Kalpdrum, pp. 32-36.
contemporary Hindi-language monographs on eugenics.\textsuperscript{52} As direct source of the ether theory both authors mentioned a German scientist\textsuperscript{53} who had constructed a ‘plate’ where the images imprinted into ether by human thoughts could be seen. Egil Asprem has shown that in the second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century a new definition of matter in terms of more elementary substances or processes such as ether or electromagnetism gained wide currency within late-classical physics in Europe, particularly in Britain. Occultists, spiritualists and especially psychical researchers took up these concepts at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, Singh referred to the British theosophist Annie Besant (1847-1933) as a renowned supporter of the ether theory.\textsuperscript{55} The theosophists identified the English concept of ether with the Sanskrit ākāśa, the fifth element according to Ayurveda, which confirmed their tendency to ‘look for and \textit{de facto create} concordances between different religious, esoteric and scientific knowledge systems’.\textsuperscript{56} Although Singh quoted Besant’s theosophical version of ether theory, neither he nor Jalori related ether to ākāśa. Finally, both authors quoted Fowler as a further supporter of the reproduction-related ether theory. Indeed, in \textit{Love and Parentage Applied to the Improvement of Offspring} (1845). Fowler sustained that the hereditary influence of reciprocal love among the parents occurred through ‘magnetism’, ‘electricity’ or ‘galvanism’. The latter he defined in very vague terms only. ‘Magnetism’ was what determined the ‘constitution’ of every living being, that is, its ‘form, texture, aptitudes, and character’, and, at the same time, it was also the ‘agent’ that transmitted the parental constitution to the offspring. The more husband and wife loved

\textsuperscript{52} Singh, \textit{Deś-darśan}, pp. 267-275. Shivnandan’s ether theory very much resebled Jalori’s, whose \textit{Mānavsantatiśāstra} was listed in the bibliography.

\textsuperscript{53} Both refer to this scientist as dākṛt Bredak (‘doctor Bredak’). I have not been able to identify him. Jalori, \textit{Mānavsantatiśāstra}, p. 78; Singh, \textit{Deś-darśan}, p. 268. Jalori’s excerpt on the ether theory is quoted extensively in the appendix.

\textsuperscript{54} Egil Asprem, ‘Pondering Imponderables: Occultism in the Mirror of Late Classical Physics’, in \textit{Aries} Vol. XXI, no. 2 (2011), pp. 129–165. This shows, once again, that the boundaries between orthodox and unorthodox knowledge were far more blurred than commonly imagined.


\textsuperscript{56} Asprem, ‘Pondering Imponderables’, p. 142. The equation of ‘ether’ with ākāśa was first made by Helena P. Blavatsky (1831-1891), the founder of the Theosophical Society in her magnum opus \textit{Isis Unveiled} (1877). Asprem sees the theosophist concepts of ‘etheric bodies’ as examples of ‘a specific blending of scientific and esoteric discourse’. Ibid., p. 133.
each other of ‘pure love’, Fowler concluded, the higher was the ‘amount of magnetism expended’, and, consequently, the better were the qualities they passed to their offspring.\(^5\)

Fowler’s high ‘quotation score’ in \textit{santati-śāstra} texts finally brings us back to the question of the politics of referencing: how was it possible that, in this context, a ‘fringe-scientist’ counted as an authoritative source of ‘Western science’? I suggest that this was because, over the first three decades of the 20\(^{th}\) century, \textit{santati-śāstra} attained a degree of ‘scientific authority’ of its own within the Hindi public sphere. If we compare earlier and later \textit{santati-śāstra} books, it becomes evident that during the 1910s references to Fowler (along with references to Ayurveda and ratiśāstra) came to be part of an increasingly fixed set of theories on ‘mental force’. Some later authors slightly deviated from this pattern, but most simply illustrated it with new stories of ‘hereditary incidents’ as described above, adding their own anecdotes to those ascribed to Fowler. My analysis suggests that within about a decade this more or less fixed set of theories to a certain extent developed into a ‘scientific reference’ of its own. In order to illustrate this it is worth quoting the words with which an author writing in 1923 introduced the theory of ‘mental force’:

\begin{quote}
According to psychologists (\textit{mānas śāstra ke vidvān}), the world is generated through the mind. Therefore, to produce progeny according to our desires is not outside the reach of this power. Mental power (\textit{man ki sakti}) is variously called \textit{manas-śakti}, \textit{manśakti}, \textit{icchāśakti} and \textit{mano-bal}.\(^5\)
\end{quote}

The author first briefly mentioned psychology and thereby linked his views to ‘Western science’. Yet, immediately afterwards, he mentioned four Hindi synonyms for ‘mental force’, which shows that he was referring to a well-established ‘scientific’ concept within \textit{santati-śāstra} literature itself, a concept which, as we have seen, was based on a number of ‘indigenous’ and ‘Western’ sources that included Fowler. We can conclude that within \textit{santati-śāstra} the ‘fringe-scientist’ Fowler had become part of a hybrid cluster of ideas, which, to some extent, built up a mechanism of legitimation of its own. Consequently, \textit{Fāular sāhib} (‘Mr Fowler’) functioned as ‘Western’ supporter of this cluster and was in turn supported by the authority of the cluster itself. It was precisely in this context, I argue, that the global ‘fringe’ could become the local norm.

A last question arising from the analyzed material is if the preference for the non-British ‘fringe scientist’ Fowler can be interpreted as a cultural nationalist choice, that is, as a conscious act of


opposition to the hegemony of the colonial establishment. Joseph S. Alter has sown that the adoption of German naturopathy by Yoga practitioners in colonial North India can partially be explained along these lines. Yet the present case study rather suggests that Fowler’s theories might just be fitted with the purpose of Hindi advisory manuals. It is reasonable to suppose that Galton’s propositions—the ‘fit’ should marry the ‘fit’ and the ‘unfit’ should not marry—were of little practical use to the newly married couples that bought and read these books. In contrast to this, as shown in section two, Galton’s theories were indeed used in the Hindi periodical press, in order to criticize Hindu caste marriage. As a matter of fact, journal article authors could expect that their arguments might induce parents to arrange marriages in such a way as to avoid dysgenic reproduction. Instead, santati-śāstra books did not address parents of sons and daughters in marriageable age, but spoke directly to the newly married husband and wife. To them the theory of the ‘force of mind’ offered tangible results in the short term, presenting them with the possibility to entrust their offspring with qualities they were themselves not endowed with. However, if the choice of Fowler should not necessarily be interpreted as a form of anti-colonial self-assertion, other instances show that nationalism did play a role in the vernacularization of ‘scientific’ knowledge, within and beyond the genre of santati-śāstra. An interesting example is provided by the discussion of contraception, which I discuss in the last section of this chapter.

FIGURE 12. With these drawings Rishilal Agrawal showed where phrenology located ‘love’ in the brain, (Mancāhi-saṁtan, 1928, p. 47). The same drawings were present in Fowler’s Love and Parentage.

5. Recreating the Complexion of the Aryans: Santati-śāstra and the ‘Yearning for Lightness’

In the previous section I have shown that an often-used example to illustrate the effectiveness of mental force as an agent of hereditary transmission was the variation in skin color between parents and offspring. The concern over skin color, and the association of fair skin to beauty and high social status stretched well beyond santati-śāstra literature and is still an issue in present-day South Asian societies, where the ‘yearning for lightness’ is channelled by giant multinational corporations with their sophisticated means of creating and manipulating needs.60 There seems to be an asymmetry in scholarly attention with regard to this topic. While a vast array of—especially US-sponsored—sociological and media studies works have focused on the cultural politics of fair beauty in contemporary India, as it is reflected in the film industries, matrimony websites, and, in particular, advertising and consumption of skin-lightening products,61 there is a lack of specific historical research on this topic.62 As a result, scholars focusing on these contemporary phenomena sometimes


62 Kavita Philip mentions amateur anthropologist Sundaresa Iyer’s obscure book titled How to Evolve a White Race (Madras, 1934) but she does not discuss the topic in detail. Philip, Civilizing Natures, pp. 142-143.
have rather superficially approached the question of their ‘historical roots’. If the legacy of colonialism—in particular the racial interpretation of caste—has generally been recognized, it has rarely been subject to exhaustive research and critical discussions. Analysing santati-śāstra authors’ approach to skin color and their advice on how to achieve fair complexioned offspring, this brief section wants to attempt a first small step in this direction. Scholars analysing the ways in which the—often highly elusive—quality of ‘whiteness’ was defined and defended by British colonizers in India have identified a ‘racial turn in imperial self-definition’ in the late 19th century. What do santati-śāstra authors’ early-20th century statements on skin color tell us about the racial self-definition of the colonized?

This section looks at the reflections on the hereditary transmission of skin color, contained in santati-śāstra books as well as in other ‘scientific’ publications, analysing the ways in which they reflected authors’ middle-class-cum-upper-caste anxieties to position themselves with respect to the white sahibs on one side and the lower strata of Indian society on the other. I then ask in how far their ‘scientific’ discussions on skin color might be seen as a form of ‘vernacular race science’. I try to answer the question setting this form of knowledge against Shruti Kapila’s comparison between colonial ‘race science’ and sāmudrik vidyā, another form of vernacular knowledge, consisting of a range of practices that sought to interpret and codify set of human physical signs.

The second section of this chapter has shown that santati-śāstra authors presented their ‘science’ as useful knowledge to forge a strong nation. Such nationalist aspirations were reflected in their dealing with skin color. Hiralal Jalori emphasized that the particular shade of whiteness his readers ought to aspire to, was different from that of the colonial masters. He first gave a ‘scientific’ explanation of the association of whiteness with beauty, which he conceived as universal. ‘White’ (svet), he stated, was the color all humans were ‘naturally’ (prakriti se) attracted to, since it was the result of the mixing of all colors. Having thus ‘naturalized’ human craving for fairness, Jalori then asked:

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65 Kapila, ‘Race Matters’, pp. 502-511. Her arguments will be discussed further in the section.

66 Jalori, Mānav-santatiśāstra, pp. 216-217.
Which is the shade of whiteness you like most? (Kis gaur varṇ ko āp adhik pasand karte hai?) Do you like the pallid white (phīkā gaur varṇ) of the Europeans, the yellow white (pīt gaur varṇ) of the Chinese and Japanese, the blood-like white (rakt-gaur-varṇ) of the inhabitants of Scotland? Or do you like the dark white (sāṃvalā gaur) of the inhabitants of India, that color people commonly accept today since there is a general ‘excess of color’ (varṇādhikya) around us? Speak up, readers!67

His answer was that his readers should resolutely reject all these colors because they were foreign (vīdeśī). He continued:

What we need is the color of our own nation (jāti). Compared with our national color (svajātiya varṇ) all these colors are as faint (phīke) as a candle before the sun. Because of our incapacity (ayogyatā) our color—like many other aspects—is degenerating (pati daśā ko prāpt hote jāte hai), distancing itself from the supreme color (uttam varṇ) of the holy (pavitr) Aryan people (jāti). While God had bestowed our people with the best of all colors, we are making an effort to degenerate it as much as we can: we are gradually developing the black color (śyām varṇ) of the Anarya in our progeny, […] Our duty now is not to take up any new color but to go back to that superior white (gaurvarṇ), that primary color (pradhān varṇ) of our nation, that color, which, when seeing it, you realize being a superhuman color (aloukik varṇ).68

This quote illustrates the predicament of the middle classes’ yearning for lightness in the colonial ‘albinocracy’.69 While Jalori returned the racialist gaze to the sahibs by classifying Europeans’ different shades of whiteness, he did not question that ‘white was might and right’. As a matter of fact, he attached a highly negative connotation to the word sāṃvalā (lit. ‘dark-complexioned’), which is also an epithet for Krishna (and by extension, of any lover) emphasizing the very attractiveness of the God’s dark complexion.70 For Jalori the brown skin complexion of India’s majority was a result of the general ‘racial degeneration’ of his people. It was ‘foreign’ (as much as the red-white of the Scots) because it differed from the ‘original complexion of the Aryans’, being the result of Indians’ incapacity to react to alien invasions. As the rest of this section is going to explain in more detail, the quest for the ‘lost fairness of the ancient Aryans’ was also a way in which upper-caste middle class authors sought to keep a distance from the lower castes and classes,

67 Ibid., p. 217.
68 Ibid., p. 218.
69 This expression was used by Bengali nationalist Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1887-1949). See Harald Fischer-Tiné, ‘Deep Occidentalism?’, p. 194.
which had started to gain new political terrain. This aspect becomes evident if we take a closer look at the specificities of different santati-śāstra authors ‘scientific’ advice on how to achieve fair complexioned offspring.

We have seen that authors usually agreed on the fact that mental force could influence hereditary traits in substantial ways. However, in the case of skin tone, most of them recognized that environmental factors such as climate and food also played an important role. The question, which factor played the biggest part in determining skin color, often built up a theoretic excursus within oeuvres that were mainly dedicated to practical advice. Authors' opinions on the topic diverged. Rameshvaranand Sharma, for instance, recognized that climate influenced skin tone, which was why the inhabitants of India’s colder Northern areas were ‘white’ (gaur varṇ) whereas those of Madras province were ‘black’ (krśan varṇ). Nevertheless, if groups of people moved from one climatic zone to another, substantial changes in their skin tone would be visible only after about five to six generations. Smaller changes in shape, color (ākriti aur raṅg-rūp) and the pupils of the eyes, the author added, were detectable at an earlier stage. Europeans who lived in India for two or three generations already reflected such climatic influences.71 However, the author contrasted the slow influence of climate with the immediate effectiveness of mental force, which became apparent already in the first generation. He sought to demonstrate his stance through the example of offspring from a black (krśan varṇ) father and a white (gaur varṇ) mother. From the context we can infer that Sharma was referring to an Indian couple, in which husband and wife presented a particularly accentuated difference in skin tone.72 The example of a couple in which the wife was fairer than the husband reflects the upper-caste milieu, in which light skin tone was a particularly important asset for the bride. ‘According to Ayurveda’, the author stated, the child’s skin tone was always the result of a mix between the complexions of the parents. Nevertheless, in the mentioned example, the child’s complexion was likely to tend more towards the fair skin tone of the mother because one could assume that ‘the black father desired his white woman with supreme love’ (krśan varṇ kā pita gaur varṇ kī strī ko ati prem se cāhtā hai).73 Consequently, the ‘imprint’ (chāp) of the woman’s whiteness would completely fill up the man’s mind and his semen and thus be transmitted to the offspring. Here Sharma merged Fowler’s idea of a positive hereditary influence of conjugal

71 Sharma, Santān-Kalpdrum, p. 16.

72 Indeed, when his examples referred to African ‘blacks’ and European ‘whites’ he specified this, referring to them as kāle siddī log (black siddī people) and gaur varṇ yūropiyan (‘white Europeans’). He used such examples as a demonstration of the fact that the hereditary influence of the force of mind worked even in their case. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

73 Ibid., p. 24.
love with his own attitudes about skin tone, which equated fairness with sexual desirability and high social status. While the writings of the Fowler brothers certainly were replete with racialist prejudices towards blacks,74 the idea that the particularly intense desire of a dark-complexioned husband towards his fair-complexioned wife would bear a positive (i.e. lightening) imprint on the skin tone of the child was Sharma’s own creation. However, although Sharma considered it as an obvious fact that the dark-complexioned man desired his fair wife with more intensity than she desired him, he did not exclude the possibility of the opposite situation. If the ‘white’ woman loved her ‘black’ man extremely (yadi gaur varṇ kī patni kā krśan varṇ ke pita par atiśaya prem ho)—in her case he did not mention ‘desire’—then the offspring would turn out black like the father. Sharma’s advice to the couples in which the husband was dark and the wife fair, was that, during intercourse, the husband intensively thought of his wife with a lot of love, whereas the wife should avoid thinking of her husband at all, and focus her mind on the image of the fair son she wanted to have.75

Ayodhyaprasad Bhargava framed the question in a slightly different way. While recognizing that mental force could influence the skin tone of the offspring, he sustained that the food eaten by the parents before conception and during pregnancy had even a stronger effect. Drawing on Ayurvedic theory, Bhargava conceived complexion chiefly as the result of the proportion between an individual’s dhātus, the seven fundamental principles that supported the basic structure and functioning of the body. This proportion, in turn, was largely determined by the food an individual ate. The main key to influence the offspring’s skin color then was to eat the right type of food (i.e. the one that strengthened the right dhātus) during the three key moments for hereditary transmission (i.e. menstruation, conception, and pregnancy). The author observed that the complexion of the English, Afghans, Chinese, Japanese, and Burmese did not change, even if they had been residing in India for a long time. The reason was that these people kept eating their own food, and so, even though their minds were unconsciously influenced by what they saw (i.e. Indian people of darker complexion with respect to themselves), the proportion between their dhātus remained the same. In contrast to this, Indians usually changed their food habits when moving from one climatic zone to another within their own country and their skin tone varied accordingly. Also, since Indians were used to eat different things in different seasons, it commonly happened that the same parents bore


75 She should never think of another man because this would destroy her dharma as a pativrata. Ibid., p. 26.
two children of different complexion.\textsuperscript{76} The emphasis on food as an important factor in determining the complexion of the offspring was emphasized even beyond the genre of santati-śāstra, not only in Ayurvedic writing\textsuperscript{77} but also in publications that were specifically dedicated to the discussion of ‘Western science’ such as the periodical Vijñān. An interesting case in point was that of Jayadev Sharma Vidyalalmar who presented these strategies as a proof of the geniality of the ‘Eastern mind’ (puṛbīy dimāgh). The article opened up with a brief report on a recent ‘scientific’ method, devised in the ‘West’, more precisely in Brazil, by a certain Octavius Philips Pedro. The latter claimed to be able to change people’s skin tone to such an extent as to ‘turn a black Bhil into a white Kashmiri’ by injecting particular substances into their veins.\textsuperscript{78} In the rest of the piece the author demonstrated that Indians had excogitated a different means to change skin color already in ancient times, which testified that they had already grasped the scientific basis of variations in human complexion.\textsuperscript{79} The method, which, he stated, had its textual basis in the Upanishads, consisted precisely of eating the right type of food before conception: parents who wanted a ‘white’ (gaur) child should eat kūr during the days of the wife’s last menstruation before fecundation, those desiring a ‘tawny’ (kapil) child should eat a mix of yogurt, rice and butter, whereas those ‘craving for an arrow-eyed black ruby’ (jo cāhte hein ke putr śyām raṅg kā lohit cakṣuvān utpanṇ hove) should simply eat boiled rice mixed with ghee. The author’s mocking tone quite unambiguously suggests that no one within his readership would have gone for the third option.\textsuperscript{80} In order to boast their arguments, santati-śāstra authors often emphasized that their tips and tricks to achieve fair skin always guaranteed the wished results, whatever the social background of the couple. Bhargava, for instance, observed that even śūdra couples having the means to afford to eat to the right type of food could bear children that were fairer than their parents.\textsuperscript{81} Nevertheless, while

\textsuperscript{76} The context suggests that by ‘slightly different’ (un ke baccom kī raṅgat kuc aur hī hoī hai) the author implied ‘fairer’. Bhargava, Santati-śāstra, p. 224.

\textsuperscript{77} See for example Ganeshdatt Mishra, Cikitsopadeśikā vols. 1-2 (Lakhnaū: Naval Kiśor Press, 1924), pp. 11-12. In order to conceive a fair-skinned child, on the day on which she takes her purification bath after her menstrual cycle has ended, the woman is advised to drink the milk of a white cow which has mothered a white calf, in a white and tidy vessel.


\textsuperscript{79} Vidhyalalmar, ‘Kāle kā gore honā’, pp. 42-43.

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., p. 43.

\textsuperscript{81} Bhargava, Santati-śāstra, p. 224.
the lower castes might change their complexion they could not simply cancel all their supposedly ‘inborn’ physical features, not to mention the moral and intellectual characteristics. One of the numerous examples of ‘hereditary incidents’ provided by Sharma, illustrated this. The author reported the story of a fair-skinned royal couple in Persia who bore three dark-skinned sons in a row as a result of the visual ‘impression’ of the king’s black concubine on the begum’s mind. The begum changed her third son for a white-skinned baby of a couple of cotton-carders. The adopted fair-skinned boy turned out to be lazy and ‘corrupted’ (kharāb), whereas the dark-skinned royal son who grew up in the cotton-carders family became an intelligent and strong youth. The incongruence of the two boys’ character with their respective social status was so apparent that the queen finally had to confess that she had exchanged her baby.82

In her comparison between European ‘race science’ (in particular phrenology) with sāmundrik vidyā Shruti Kapila has suggested that, while for phrenology skulls and other physical material were representative of a ‘type’, sāmundrik vidyā sought to make sense of the unique signifiers and marks of physical distinction carried by the individual. The ‘vernacular race science’ shared some characteristics with both forms of knowledge. Some of the questions it asked resembled those of colonial ‘race science’: why did humans differ from each other in physical appearance? Was physical appearance a result of heredity or environment? Was there a correspondence between physical appearance, intellectual and moral characteristics? Some santati-śāstra authors, like Jalori and Sharma, identified ‘racial types’ based on different shades of skin tone (‘blood-like white Scots’, ‘yellow-white Chinese and Japanese’, ‘dark-white Indians’ and ‘black siddīs/habīs). Nevertheless, the fundamental difference with respect to colonial ‘race science’ was the authors’ confidence in the possibility to change such markers in fundamental ways in the next generation. Race was not a fixed category but could be modified by the individual, or better, the couple. For santati-śāstra—like for sāmundrik vidhya—physical characteristics did not differ (only) according to ‘racial type’ but (also) individually, in so far as every infant was the direct outcome of the conscious or accidental effects of the mind and the dhātus of its specific pair of parents.

82 Sharma, Santān-Kalpdrum, p. 20. The royal couple then consulted a tabīb who advised them to dismiss the black concubine and make sure that all women living in the zenana were fair-skinned and thereafter bore only fair-skinned offspring. The author claimed to have been told this story from an Iranian hakim.
6. Between ‘Artificial Contraceptives’ and Brahmacārya. Ambivalent Attitudes To Birth Control in the Hindi Public Sphere

The last topic I want to discuss in this chapter is the Hindi literati’s positions on contraception or birth control. As pointed out by Susanne Klausen and Alison Bashford, the relationship between eugenics and the advocacy of birth control had always been ambivalent. While neo-Malthusians entirely supported contraception, early eugenicists were often hesitant towards the issue. As a matter of fact, many early eugenic advocates were interested in providing contraception to the ‘unfit’ but at the same time were concerned with the decline of middle-class birth rate caused by the use of contraceptives. In this respect, too, scholars have shown that attitudes changed according to the national and colonial context. For example, while in many non-Catholic and especially Protestant countries eugenics and neo-Malthusianism had merged at an early stage, in Catholic countries eugenicists have often been reluctant towards accepting birth control.

As Sarah Hodges and Sanjam Ahluwalia have highlighted, in India eugenics and birth control advocacy were strongly interconnected since their very beginning. Hodges in particular, has highlighted the relatively ‘uncontroversial’ promotion of contraceptives in India if compared to other contexts. Her statement bases on the analysis of birth control activism as it was brought forward in the English and Tamil public spheres. In this section I wish to show that the views on contraception expressed in santati-śāstra literature and in the Hindi public sphere more in general offered a different picture. In order to verify this point, I look beyond the genre of santati-śāstra, extending the analysis to another genre of advisory manuals on conjugality, and to periodical literature. This section tries to assess how the agitated political context of the 1920s and 30s,


85 Hodges, ‘South Asia’s Eugenic Past’, p. 229; Ahluwalia, Reproductive Restraints, pp. 30-35.

86 Tamil sources are analyzed in Hodges, Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce.

87 A difference in the attitude to birth control in Hindi advisory books and periodicals with respect to the English-language writings by Indian birth control activists-cum-eugenicists has already been pointed out by Sanjam Ahluwalia, although she has not discussed this point in detail. Ahluwalia, Reproductive Restraints,
which saw the transformation of Indian nationalism into a mass-movement under the guide of Gandhi influenced vernacular authors’ selective readaptation of ‘Western science’ and ‘traditional knowledge’. In this context, Hindi writers’ attitudes towards birth control were highly ambivalent: while many of them sustained the use of contraceptives, they, at the same time, expressed high esteem for the Mahatma’s severe ideal of sexual abstinence.

The example of the contraception debate in the Hindi public sphere intends to add a new aspect to the discussion on the relationship between English and vernacular public spheres attempted in this chapter. Firstly, it tries to extend and complicate the argument that Indian eugenics and santati-śāstra run along parallel trajectories. As a matter of fact, the debate on birth control represented the sole shared topic between Indian eugenicists and santati-śāstra authors. Yet at the same time the scrutiny of a broader section of the Hindi public sphere, beyond the genre of santati-śāstra, reconfirms the existence of two parallel trajectories at a broader level. Although Indian eugenicists writing in English and authors writing on birth control in Hindi participated in the same debate, their approach to the question essentially differed. This gap was largely due to the fact that Hindi writers were more deeply influenced by Gandhi’s nationalist ideal of brahmacārya. Although, notably, most of Gandhi’s views on this topic were originally written in English, they were quickly and widely published in Hindi.88 Gandhi’s ideal of sexual abstinence, which had acquired a new political meaning during his discussions with Western birth control activists became an obliged term of reference for middle-class Hindi writers. The section thereby addresses the question of normativity within the Hindi public sphere and approaches the discussion on the authority of science from a different perspective. Within the debate on birth control it was not only the authority of Western science the authors had to engage with but also the authority of Gandhi’s nationalism.

Nevertheless, while stressing the importance of the Gandhian ideal, I do not imply that it was adopted tel quel. Sanjay Srivastava has criticized the ‘relatively unquestioned assumption’ of the accessibility of Gandhi’s ideas to the ‘masses’ within the discussion of sexuality in South Asia, and, in particular, the pronounced scholarly preoccupation with ‘semen anxiety’, which, he points out, pp. 165-172. See note 54. The inquiry into conjugal advisory literature and the periodical press is not as exhaustive as the analysis of santati-śāstra literature proposed in the former sections. Rather, it seeks to single out a few representative examples. The aim of this section is to describe what I conceive as the dominant attitude to contraception in the Hindi public sphere. As I am going to show, there were some important exceptions which cannot be analyzed here, and call for further research.

88 Many Hindi books collected the Mahatma’s views on brahmacārya. See for instance Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, Brahmacārya aur ātmasanyam, Kāśī: M. M. Sehta and Brothers, 2nd ed., 1934; and Gandhi, Brahmacārya, Delhi: Sastā Sāhiya Maṇḍal, 1939. As mentioned by Monika Freier, the Sastā Sāhiya Maṇḍal started a special book series with Gandhi’s writings in the 1930s. The books were sold at a very low cost in order to make them available to the masses. Freier, Cultivating Emotions, p. 177.
‘is almost as obsessive as what is sought to be described’. In contrast to this, Srivastava suggests the significance of ‘the slippage between the idealized texts of social life and the practices through which lives are led and such textual imperatives transgressed’. My analysis tries to suggest that spaces for such a slippage were provided in the ‘texts’ themselves, that is, in the copious popular Hindi literature dealing with contraception, where middle-class authors negotiated Gandhi’s ideal and offered a ‘textual’ basis for various readaptations and ‘transgressions’ of brahmaça:rya.

In the early decades of the 20th century, especially between the 1920s and 40s—partly as a consequence of the birth control campaigns conducted by renowned Western birth control activist such as Marie Stopes (1880-1958) and Margaret Sanger (1879-1966)—the question of birth control became a highly debated topic in India. The two ‘extreme’ positions in this debate were those brought forward by Western and Indian eugenicists-cum-birth control activists on one side, and by Gandhi on the other. Western and Indian birth control activists shared a neo-Malthusianist view of social and economic development. Their concern was that if Indians would not reduce their numbers, the country would soon be affected by a ‘population explosion’ whose evil consequences,

89 Sanjay Srivastava, ‘Introduction: Semen, History, Desire, and Theory’, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 24:s1, pp. 1-24, p. 3. Srivastava links this aspect with the lack of anthropological studies of the post-colonial present that are as theoretically sophisticated as those of the colonial past, and the tendency to rend the present as an unmediated and almost direct consequence of that past.

90 Ibid. Srivastava’s analysis of present-day cultures of masculinity and heterosexuality combines an anthropological study of present-day sex clinics in Delhi, and Mumbai, with an analysis of what he defines as Hindi language ‘footpath’-pornography, which were largely directed to the same audience as the former, that is men from lower socio-economic categories. He shows that in these contexts neither the Gandhian discourse on sexuality and masculinity nor the Hindu fundamentalist one have an overarching presence. See Srivastava, ‘Non-Gandhian Sexuality, Commodity Cultures, and a ‘Happy Married Life’; The Cultures of Masculinity and Heterosexuality in India’, South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies, 24:s1, pp. 225-249.

91 The people identified by Hodges as ‘Indian eugenicists’ (see note 10) were always also birth control activists. Ahluwalia majorly refers to them as ‘birth control activists’. In the former sections I used Hodges’ definition in order to contrast ‘Indian eugenics’ to santati-śāstra. In this section I use ‘eugenicists’ and ‘birth control activists’ interchangeably.

92 The positions of colonial government officials, Indian feminists, British and Indian practitioners of biomedicine, as well as practitioners of other forms of medicine such as homeopathy, Ayurveda, and Unani, were mixed. See Ahluwalia, Reproductive Restraints, pp. 85-143. Interestingly, Ahluwalia points out that, unlike biomedical practitioners, ‘vernacular practitioners’ mostly did not discuss birth control as a separated issue but dealt with fertility control and infertility together. Her analysis bases on Hindi books and journals. Ibid. pp. 166-167.

such as poverty and ‘racial degeneration’ were already visible in their days. They held that the sections of society that needed to restrict their numbers most drastically were India’s poor masses but they promoted birth control for the middle classes too. Actually, as Hodges has pointed out, Indian eugenicists major efforts were dedicated towards spreading information on contraceptives among the middle classes. Importantly, in their discourse to their middle class audiences they combined the eugenic argument with the argument that family planning constituted an essential part of a ‘modern’ sexual relationship between husband and wife.  

Gandhi staunchly opposed this view. The Mahatma, who had emerged as a highly prominent figure in the Indian political landscape from 1915 onwards, condemned the use of ‘artificial methods’ of birth control by which he meant all methods of contraception other than abstinence from sex. His view based on the idea that, apart from producing offspring, sex had exclusively negative effects on the human mind, and body, and consequently ‘sexual excesses’ caused social and national disorder. In contrast to this, Gandhi attached high moral and political value to sexual abstinence, emerging as one of the main promoters of brahmacārya. Rejecting birth control activists’ Neo-Malthusianist arguments, Gandhi reinterpreted the Malthusian paradigm. He recognized overpopulation as a problem but saw it as part of a general deterioration of Indians’ health caused by colonial exploitation.  


While neo-Malthusianists suggested reducing population through the spread of contraceptives, Gandhi advocated birth control through brahmacārya as a form of self-discipline, which he saw as necessary to the realization of his utopian national project. As Joseph Alter has put it, Gandhi ‘wanted nothing less than a nation of sober celibates that would embody a new moral

95 The ideal of brahmacārya, which connects chastity and semen retention to the attainment of spiritual growth and physical strength has deep roots in different currents of the Hindu tradition. The term denotes two interrelated concepts. Firstly, it refers to the first of the four life-stages of a twice-born Hindu male according to the scriptural tradition of the Dharmāśāstras, (that is, the first 25 years), in which youths were to lead a celibate life and wholly dedicate themselves to the acquisition of knowledge under the supervision of a teacher. Secondly, brahmacārya more generally refers to a way of life based on the avoidance of all sort of lustful stimuli. During the colonial period, Hindu reformers of various ideological affiliations (from ‘reformist’ to ‘orthodox’) have inserted the ideal of brahmacārya into larger projects of national education and national self-assertion. See for instance Malhotra, ‘The Body as a Metaphor for the Nation’; and Harald Fischer-Tiné, ‘From Brahmacharya to “Conscious Race Culture”’. In particular, brahmacārya has played a chief role (albeit a controversial one) in the definition of Hindu masculinity in the colonial, and partly also the post-colonial period. See Joseph S. Alter, ‘Ayurveda and Sexuality. Sex Therapy and the “Paradox of Virility”’, in Dagmar Wujastyk and Frederick M. Smith (ed.), Modern and Global Ayurveda. Pluralism and Paradigms (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), pp. 177-200; and Sikata Banerjee, Make Me a Man!: Masculinity, Hinduism, and Nationalism in India, Delhi: Suny Press, 2012, pp. 43-110.

96 For an analysis of Gandhi’s views on national health see Alter, Gandhi’s Body, p. 11 ff.
order’. Concretely, he implied that couples should have sex only when they desired a child. He even posited a limit, up to which the desire of children could be considered ‘legitimate’: having more than three or four of them should be considered ‘immoral’. Gandhi’s utopia had a ‘eugenic edge’ too, in so far as he thought that, if they followed his ideal, Indians would bear mentally and physically strong children who would be able to forge a strong nation. Gandhi’s debate with Western birth control activists (especially Marie Stopes and Margaret Sanger) gained high media coverage. The Mahatma’s *Self Restraint Vs. Self Indulgence*, first published in 1927, was entirely dedicated to the issue. The book was highly popular and went into several re-editions. Gandhi’s radical rejection of birth control bore an influence on the way in which the debate came to be framed. Most authors promoting the use of contraceptives—be they eugenicists writing mainly in English, *santati-śāstra* authors or other authors writing in Hindi—felt the need to answer Gandhi’s accusation that contraceptives were ‘immoral’. Most recognized that the spread of contraceptives could, if abused of, induce population to ‘immoral behaviour’. Only very few promoters of birth control rejected the accusation of immorality altogether. A second shared attitude among middle-class birth control advocates cutting across the linguistic divide was the idea that the ‘keeping of high moral standards’ mattered only for themselves. In the case of the poor masses, they held that the most urgent imperative was to check their uncontrolled growth, whatever means they may use. Consequently, they argued that the use of ‘artificial contraceptives’ was legitimate for the poor. As far as the middle classes were concerned, they

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97 Ibid., p. 10.

98 In 1920 Gandhi wrote: ‘I have not the shadow of a doubt that married people, if they wished well of the country and wanted to see India become a nation of strong and handsome well-formed men and women, would practice self-restraint and cease to procreate for the time being…’ Quoted in Ibid., p. 11.


100 Gandhi discussed *brahmacārya* also in his journal, *Young India*, as well as in his autobiography. As far as Hindi publications were concerned, many books collected the Mahatma’s views on *brahmacārya*. See for instance Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Brahmacārya aur ātmāsāṁyam*, Kāśi: M. M. Sehta and Brothers, 2nd ed., 1934; and Gandhi, *Brahmacārya*, Delhi: Sastā Sāhitya Maṇḍal, 1939. As mentioned by Monika Freier, the Sastā Sāhitya Maṇḍal started a special book series with Gandhi’s writings in the 1930s. The books were sold at a very low cost in order to make them available to the masses. Freier, Monika, *Cultivating Emotions: Hindi Advice Literature in Late Colonial India*, unpublished dissertation: Freie Universität Berlin (2013), p. 177.

101 One was the already mentioned Marathi Sexologist R. D. Karve. See Haynes & Botre, ‘Explaining R.D. Karve.

102 In practice, neither eugenicists nor *santati-śāstra* authors did much to spread contraceptives among the poor.
sought to establish standards of a ‘moral usage’ of contraceptives for ‘respectable’ married couples. Where the views of eugenicists, santati-śāstra authors, and other Hindi authors differed was on the setting of these standards. Eugenicists were confident that their own informative campaigns would suffice to teach the middle classes to use contraceptives with ‘moderation’ and ‘responsibility’. As N. S. Phadke put it in his *Sex Problem in India* (1927), middle class married couples ‘should be so trained that they would never be inclined to regard contraceptives as a great facility for sexual extravagance’. 103 In contrast to this, Hindi writers expressed the concern that the middle-classes would be inclined to make ‘immoral uses’ of contraceptives. Consequently, their positions on birth control were highly ambivalent, even when they defended the use of contraceptives.

Let us first consider santati-śāstra literature. As a premise, I should point out that the majority of santati-śāstra authors analyzed in this chapter did not discuss contraception in detail. Most simply stated that the poor and sick needed to reduce their births but did not specify how, 104 whereas, to their middle class audience, they suggested to practice a form of ‘married brahmacārya’ similar to the one proposed by Gandhi. 105 Within the few santati-śāstra authors who did discuss ‘artificial contraceptives’, an interesting example was provided by the mentioned Kanpur-based Ayurvedic practitioner Ramnarayan Vaidshastri, author and publisher of the *Santati-rahasya granthmālā* (‘The Mystery of Offspring Series’). Unlike most other santati-śāstra authors analyzed in this chapter, Vaidshastri wrote a book dedicated exclusively to contraception, which testifies that he considered birth control to be part and parcel of santati-śāstra. The book, first published in 1928, was titled *Santati-nirodh-rahasya* (‘The Mystery of Contraception’). It contained an argumentative section, which defended contraceptives against the accusation of immorality, and an informative section, consisting of an impressively comprehensive list of contraceptive methods. 106 The author defended


104 E.g. Sharma, *Santān-Kalpdrum*, p. 43. Among the analyzed authors only Hiralal ‘Jalori’, did not mention birth control at all.

105 See Mishra, *Janan vijnān*, pp. 40-41. Devnarayan Dvivedi criticized Gandhi’s argument that Indians should not have sex *at all* before India was free. Yet at the same time he suggested his readers to follow a form ‘married’ brahmacārya that was basically identical to the form of sexual abstinence proposed by Gandhi. Dvivedi, *Santān-vijnān*, p. 344. He also wrote a book entirely dedicated to brahmacārya, which unfortunately I was not able to consult. See Devnarayan Dvivedi, *Brahmacārya kā mahattva*, Kalkattā: Ratnakar Pres, 1934. Most santati-śāstra authors also emphasized the importance of brahmacārya for keeping vīrya and raj pure in order to produce ‘fit’ offspring (see section 3).

106 Among the santati-śāstra books consulted, this is the only one containing a reference to Indian eugenicists. In the last part of the book Vaidshastri reproduced a lecture held in November 1928 in Bangalore by P.S. Sivaswamy Iyer (1864-1946), one of the founders of the Madras neo-Malthusian League.
the use of ‘artificial contraceptives’ against Gandhi’s criticism, quoting the neo-Malthusian arguments brought forward by Stopes and Indian eugenicists, that is, birth control through ‘artificial contraceptives’ was the only effective way to stop population growth, and was not harmful to the human body. Like Indian eugenicists, he answered Gandhi’s moral accusation with the argument that those who needed contraceptives most (i.e. ‘the wretched poor’) indulged in immoral behaviour anyway. In the long illustrated inventory of contraceptives that followed the argumentative section Vaidshastri explained how each contraceptive method worked, and discussed their advantages and disadvantages. If throughout the book the author staunchly defended the use of contraceptives against its critiques, the very last pages reveal his ambivalence. In the epilogue Vaidshastri provided his readers with three strikingly contradictory remarks. Firstly, he warned them that none of contraceptive methods illustrated in his long and detailed list was infallible, and advised them to always use two different methods in combination. Secondly, he pointed out that the only infallible method was Gandhi’s brahmacārya, expressing his hope that the readers might consider the use of ‘artificial methods’ only in ‘extreme’ cases. Thirdly, and in contrast to the previous statement, he invited people to write him about their experiences with contraceptive methods. These three contradictory remarks make us wonder: was this superficial homage to Gandhi’s ideal of brahmacārya at the very end of the book genuine, or was it a discursive strategy through which the author sought to render his position on contraception ‘morally acceptable’? In either way, the book’s contradictory epilogue gives us a first idea of the influence of Gandhi’s position on birth control in the Hindi public sphere.

As a matter of fact, a look into Hindi advisory manuals on conjugality beyond the genre of santati-śāstra testifies that Vaidshastri’s ambivalent approach was not unusual. Interestingly, the same ambivalent attitude was shared by highly popular advisory book authors, which combined

The lecture, titled ‘Birth Control. Why is it Necessary for India. No Dangers to Health and Morality’ was reproduced in Hindi translation along with the original English text. Ibid., pp. 72-73. For information on the Madras Neo-Malthusian League and Simaswamy Iyer see Hodges, Contraception, Colonialism and Commerce, pp. 74, 48, 67.

107 The list included ‘sophisticated’ devices (e.g. the ‘rubber sheath’ for men or the ‘quinine pessary’ for women) along with more ‘easily available’ ones (e.g. pieces of sponge or cotton-wool impregnated with neem oil). The inventory also included contraceptive ‘practices’, such as interrupted intercourse, the method of the ‘safe period’, and the method according to which the woman should sit upright and jump immediately after intercourse and let the semen flow out of the vagina. Last but not least, it comprehended a paragraph on deśī ausādiyāṃ (‘national drugs’), basing on quotes from kāmsāstra and ratiśāstra books. Unlike other authors discussed later in this section, Vaidshastri did not argue that ‘indigenous’ contraceptive methods were better than ‘foreign’ ones. Quite to the contrary, he warned his readers that the deśī ausādiyāṃ he had mentioned were potentially dangerous for health and had to be taken with great caution. Ramnarayan Vaidshastri, Santati-nirodh-rahasya, pp. 25-56.

108 Vaidshastri, Santati-nirodh-rahasya, p. 57.
As an example of this genre, I have explored the famous and controversial advisory manual for newly married husbands, titled *Suhāgrāt (bhāg 2) yā patiyōṁ ko sīkh* (1927) by Krishnakant Malaviya. At a general level, the message of the book was quite at the antipodes to Gandhi’s views on sex and sexuality. Malaviya emphasized the importance of sexual pleasure, mental and sexual affinity between husband and wife as a fundamental basis for leading a happy married life, and also for bearing healthy, intelligent and beautiful children, which he called ‘love children’ or ‘children of passion’. He mentioned Australian sexologist Norman Haire’s critique of British prudery and set it against ancient India’s freer attitude regarding sexual matters. Nevertheless, Malaviya’s attitude was much more ambivalent when it came to discussing contraception. In *Patiyōṁ ko sīkh* one of courtesan Manorama’s fictional letters to her former lovers, containing pieces of advice for their married life, was dedicated specifically to the issue of contraception. In the first bit, the author showed his affiliation to the Neo-Malthusianist paradigm as far as the ‘unfit’ were concerned. The fictional letter writer highlighted that contraception (through ‘artificial methods’) was not a sin (pāp) for those who were unable to nourish and educate more children than those they already had. Nevertheless, just a little later in the text Manorama vehemently criticized a Hindi writer (whose name was not mentioned) for having spread Marie Stopes’ views among college students. Such publications, she lamented, had

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109 Charu Gupta has drawn attention to this specific, ‘hybrid’ subgenre of ‘useful’ Hindi advisory literature. See Charu Gupta, *Obscenity, Sexuality, Community*, p. 53.

110 Suhāgrāt refers to the fourth night after marriage when, according to Hindu custom, husband and wife were supposed to sleep together for the first time. The book was the second part of a three-volume oeuvre. The first volume, *Suhāgrāt yā bahūrānī ko sīkh* (‘Wedding night or advice to the bride’), probably first published in 1926, contained advice to newly married wives, whereas the third one was dedicated to motherhood and childcare. The volume mentioned here was volume 2, titled, *Suhāgrāt (bhāg 2) yā patiyōṁ ko sīkh. Manoramā ke patra apne premīyoṁ ke nāṁ par* (‘Wedding Night Part 2 or Advice for Husbands. Manorama’s Letters to her Lovers’. It was dedicated to newly wedded husbands and was written in the form of letters by the fictional female character Manorama to her former lovers. I will refer to it as *Patiyōṁ ko sīkh*.

111 Krishnakant Malaviya (1884-1941) was the nephew of renowned nationalist Madan Mohan Malaviya, from whom he took over the editorship of the political weekly *Abhyudyay*, founded in 1907. He authored nationalist political treatises and articles himself and participated in the civil disobedience movement. Biographical information is taken from Charu Gupta (2005): *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, p. 60, Francesca Orsini (2002): *The Hindi Public Sphere*, p. 406. See also Freier, *Cultivating Emotions*, pp. 171-173 who offers a closer analysis of Krishnakant’s three advisory volumes for married couples.


113 Malaviya might be referring to the Arya Samaji, and founder of the Jat-Pat-Todak Mandal, Santaram (born 1887), who translated many books by Stopes. Interestingly, Santaram’s autobiography reveals that the author held the ideal of brahmacārya in high regard. See Freier, *Cultivating Emotions*, pp. 178-180. Another
increased sexual desire (kāmukatā), which had made society unhappy. Manorama went on to state that she had reflected on Marie Stopes’ opinions and on those of her adversaries, and had come to the conclusion that both contained truths and errors. She concluded exhorting the readers to use their intelligence and make their own judgment on the issue. ‘But’, she added, ‘do always keep in mind that there is only one [contraceptive] method which can give you all the joys of the world, that is, temperance (sanyam).’ If the preaching of sexual temperance on the part of a fictional courtesan might look bizarre, it shows that even a controversial figure like Krishnakant Malaviya—who was known in Allahabad as kuṁvar kanhaiya (‘young Krishna’) because of his flamboyant publications on sexual matters—paid his homage to Gandhi’s brahmacārya. With respect to Vaidshastri, Malaviya’s view actually was closer to Gandhi’s. Yet in this case, too, the author’s position remained ambivalent. As a matter of fact, in the mentioned excerpt, middle class readers in economic trouble might also find a justification for a moderate use of ‘artificial contraceptives’.

In order to put Vaidshastri’s and Malaviya’s views into proper context, let us look at a few further examples. A case in point was the already mentioned Shivnandan Singh, author of Deś-darśan. The book was dedicated to Gandhi and opened with a direct quote of a core statement by the Mahatma on the issue of birth control. Yet in the last chapter the author admitted that a moderate use of ‘contraceptive drugs and instruments’ (santān-vriddhiko roknevālī osadhyain aur yatra) was necessary in order to avoid overpopulation. He regretted that he could not enter into detail on ‘artificial methods’ in his book and suggested those readers who needed contraceptive ‘drugs’ (osadhyam) to come to him and get a smaller booklet in which he provided the necessary information.

If Vaidshastri, Malaviya and Singh simultaneously subscribed to two contradictory views on contraception, other authors sought to accommodate these views. They did so by slightly

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116 Singh, Deś-darśan. I have classified this book as ‘uncommon’ with respect to the genre of santati-śāstra because it promoted ‘classical eugenics’, extensively quoting Malthus and Galton.
117 ‘It is a good thing to reduce population in India. I know one valid method to achieve it: temperance (sanyam). Western scientists’ artificial methods are evil (rākṣasī) and harmful (hānikar). Married women and men, too, can easily control their lust (svādendrayako mār kar) and practice brahmacārya.’ Ibid., p. 1.
118 Shivnandan Singh, Deś-darśan, p. 302.
reinterpreting Gandhi’s position in order to allow for some ‘natural’ methods of contraception other than sexual abstinence. For instance, in an article titled ‘Santati sudhār’ (‘Improvement of Offspring’) in the ‘caste magazine’ Agravāl, Madanlal Khemka suggested his readers to practice birth control following the instructions given by ‘Ayurveda and our śāstras’, thereby offering them methods of contraception other than brahmacārya (though without specifying any particular method in detail), which he considered ‘indigenous’ and ‘natural’, and therefore not in contrast with Gandhi’s ideal.\(^{119}\) Other authors entered into more detail regarding such methods. In an article titled Ādārś santān-nigrah (‘Ideal Birth Control’) in Madhūri, Ramnarayan ‘Yadavendu’ suggested to adopt specific ‘techniques of coition’ (English in the text), and added that Vatsyayana had provided an explanation of such techniques in his Kāmasutra.\(^{120}\) The same author also subscribed Margaret Sanger’s claim that Gandhi had accepted the ‘safe period’ method, highlighting that this was also a ‘natural’ method.

The analyzed books and journal articles suggest that there was a tension in Hindi conjugal advisory literature regarding the discussion of contraception, and especially the use of ‘artificial contraceptives’ by the middle classes. I have singled out two widespread attitudes. One group of authors (Vaidshastri, Malaviya and Singh) sought, so to say, to have their cake and eat it too, promoting contraceptives more or less explicitly, while at the same time paying homage to Gandhi’s ideal of brahmacārya. A second group (Khemka and Yadavendu) tried to readjust the Gandhian ideology in such a way as to put it into accordance with at least some ‘artificial’ forms of birth control, as to ensure a ‘eugenically fit’ development of society. Both positions insinuate that—unlike Indian eugenicists, who promoted the use of contraceptives quite straightforwardly—Hindi writers had to manoeuvre through the ideological strictures of the ideal of brahmacārya, which had acquired a new political meaning in the debate between Gandhi and Western birth control activists. Francesca Orsini has emphasized the ‘culturally conservative “Hindu” outlook’, which characterized an important segment of the educated Hindi public.\(^{121}\) She has noted that nationalist political figures operating in the Hindi public sphere (whom she has called ‘Hindi politicians’) shared a certain ‘cultural commonality’ despite ideological differences. ‘They embraced Hindi as a culturally loaded language, felt a personal affiliation to the “harmony” of Indian culture, held

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120 Ramnarayan ‘Yadavendu’, ‘Ādārś santān-nigrah’, in Madhūri (February 1937), pp. 2-8, p. 6. The author added that he could not describe these methods in his article because he would breach the norms of ‘civility’ and good behaviour (śiṣṭācār).
121 Orsini, The Hindi Public Sphere, p. 355, fn. 124.
ancient India in high regard, and finally [...] subscribed to a moral view of literature."\textsuperscript{122} She has emphasized that in the second half of the 1930s, this cluster of ideals became normative and gradually excluded critical voices in the literary sphere.\textsuperscript{123} Gandhi’s dichotomy between ‘artificial contraception’ and *brahmacārya* fitted well with this conservative cultural ideal because it reflected the idea that keeping one’s ‘moral sphere’ ‘clean’ from ‘foreign’ influences was fundamental to national self-assertion.\textsuperscript{124} Therefore, the discussion of birth control gives us a chance to verify to what extent Orsini’s argument can be stretched beyond the literary sphere and applied to the public sphere more in general. The analyzed authors’ reluctance towards birth control attests the normative dimension and exclusive authority of Hindi authors’ ‘cultural commonality’. Given the anti-nationalist bias attached to the expressions ‘birth control’ and ‘artificial contraceptives’, authors who promoted the use of contraceptives felt the need to reassure their readers that they were not trying to spread ‘morally corrupting’, westernizing, and anti-nationalist behaviour. At the same time, I have hinted at the possibility that the ambivalent attitudes expressed by the first group of authors (Vaidshastri, Malaviya, and Singh) might also be interpreted differently. As a matter of fact, these authors also show possibilities of circumventing the strictures of a too rigid interpretation of *brahmacārya*. Their repeated homage to Gandhi’s ideal can be read as a discursive strategy enabling them to promote the use of contraceptives among the middle classes without incurring in the accusation of being anti-nationalist. Hindi authors sometimes just paid lip service to ‘public cultural norms’, while actually transmitting a different message to their readers. This suggests that, to some extent, the ‘cultural conservatism’ could be breached as long as authors kept within the boundaries of its language. Vaidshastri, Malaviya, Singh, and the other analyzed authors negotiated what ‘morally acceptable’ forms of birth control meant to the Hindi reading public. They established a readapted (yet still nationalist and culturally conservative) ‘code of respectability’, which allowed for a limited use of contraceptives while at the same time expressing deference for Gandhi’s *brahmacārya*. Rather than a literal adoption of Gandhi’s ideal, various renegotiated forms of his ideal characterized the Hindi middle class public’s attitude to contraception. Srivastava has called for a theoretically more sophisticated approach to post-colonial sexualities in South Asia that breaks free from the excessive scholarly focus on ‘semen anxiety’ in the colonial period, which has often been unreflectively projected to the post-Independence era. The present analysis has

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid., p. 354.

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., pp. 357-358.

\textsuperscript{124} The wide acceptance of Gandhi’s position on birth control is especially evident if we compare it to other views expressed by the Mahatma such as his stance on the Hindi-Hindustani controversy or on caste. For the latter see chapter 5. On the Hindi-Hindustani controversy see Orsini, Ibid., pp. 358-375.
emphasized that the concern over ‘semen anxiety’ expressed in the Gandhian ideal of *brahmacārya* had *already* been negotiated by middle-class Hindi authors in the colonial period. These authors’ arguments in support of contraception, which accommodated negotiated versions of Gandhi’s *brahmacārya*, might provide new insights for the study of birth control, in discourse and practice, in post-Independence India.

At the same time, the analysis also opens up a set of further questions. Widening the focus beyond *santati-śāstra* has complicated the comparison between English and vernacular public spheres. Gandhi’s views on sexual temperance, which had first been published in English as an answer to the campaigns of British and American birth control activists, had an enhanced influence in the Hindi public sphere because they spoke to Hindi writers’ concerns with nationalist self-assertion. This picture might be compared with the views on sexuality expressed in the Marathi public sphere, analyzed by Douglas Haynes and Shrikant Botre. As they have shown, the sexologist R. D Karve completely rejected the practice of *brahmacārya*, which he considered as non-scientific and detrimental for health. Although Karve chiefly wrote in Marathi, most of his readers were likely people who knew English themselves. In contrast to this, Karve’s much more popular contemporary, Shivananda, a spiritual figure and Ayurvedic practitioner from Warud (then in Hyderabad State) wrote many books in which he promoted a negotiated form of the Gandhian ideal of *brahmacārya* similar to those proposed by the Hindi writers analyzed in this section. Shivnanda’s works sold many copies and went into several re-editions. The greater popularity of Shivananda with respect to Karve suggests that certain ideas, such as the complete rejection of *brahmacārya* on the grounds of ‘Western science’ were not successful in the Marathi public sphere *even though* Karve had specifically sought to spread them in Marathi. While I am not aware of any author expressing similarly radical rejection of *brahmacārya* in Hindi, it is difficult to imagine that his fate would have been different, at least in the middle-class/upper-caste milieu.

Finally, the present study has not addressed the comparison between middle-class-cum-upper-caste literature with Dalit and non-Brahman literature on birth control. Like Periyar, (who wrote in English and Tamil), Ambedkar (who ‘wrote in Marathi for a local constituency and in English for the rest of India and for the world’), was a strong supporter of birth control. The ways in which

125 I thank Douglas E. Haynes’ for having stimulated the thoughts that follow through his critical comments on a draft version of the present chapter.

126 Haynes & Botre, *Explaining R. D. Karve*. It is important to distinguish him from another, even more famous Swami Shivananda, who lived in north India and wrote in English and who also was an advocate of brahmacharay.

Dalit authors writing in Marathi and Hindi discussed and reformulated Ambedkar’s ideas calls for further research.

**Conclusion**

I began my chapter by asking if *santati-śāstra* could be considered as vernacular eugenics. While there are some compelling parallels – in so far as it represented a nationalist project and used the language of science – it may be considered as a form of eugenics. However, the analysis of two specific subject matters discussed in this literature—the explanation of the reproductive process, and the theory of hereditary influence through ‘mental force’—has made it clear that *santati-śāstra* was grounded in completely different set of ‘scientific references’ to the theories promulgated by people who called themselves ‘eugenicists’ in India and elsewhere in the world. This means that *santati-śāstra* differed from eugenics not because it represented a vernacularization of eugenics as it was coevally promoted in India and elsewhere (even though it involved vernacularization of ‘Western science’ at various levels) but because it contained a different logic that drew inspiration from a different set of ‘scientific’ sources. If Indian eugenics proposed to increase the numbers of the ‘fit’ through ‘healthy marriages’ and to reduce those of the ‘unfit’ through reproductive restraints, *santati-śāstra* suggested its ‘fit’ readership (that is, middle-class/upper-caste married women and men) maximize the desirable qualities in their offspring by following certain rules during menstruation, conception and pregnancy. The intention of this chapter in highlighting this distinction has not been to emphasize a discrepancy between a supposed ‘soft’ vernacular form of eugenics from its alleged ‘hard’ ‘Western’ or ‘westernized’ counterpart, but rather to show the ways in which *santati-śāstra* offers new insights into the complex processes of vernacularization of ‘Western science’ in colonial India. In particular, I have emphasized how *santati-śāstra* entailed mechanisms of ‘scientific legitimation’, which eluded most categories of analysis proposed so far in this context of study. For one thing, as shown in the section on reproduction, *santati-śāstra* differed from the mainly English-language discourse on ‘Hindu science’ brought forward by elite nationalists analyzed by Prakash. Unlike ‘Hindu science’, *santati-śāstra* often drew its scientific

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legitimation merely from English scientific words, while profoundly readapting their ‘original’ meaning. Furthermore, as exemplified by the section on ‘mental force’, santati-śāstra gradually elaborated a more or less fixed set of hybrid ‘scientific’ theories, which developed into a source of scientific legitimation of its own. Within such a set of theories ‘fringe science’ could work as an authoritative ‘Western’ scientific source.

Beyond this, santati-śāstra also presented some important differences with respect to other forms of vernacular knowledge, which utilized or related to ‘Western science’ in similar ways. If ‘progeniology’ shared some features with the hybrid nationalist daktari medicine studied by Mukharji, it differed from the latter in so far as it bore no direct relation to any supposed ‘official’ counterpart. Finally, santati-śāstra differed, too, from what Shruti Kapila has termed ‘insurgent knowledge’ (with reference to sāmudrik vidya). In contrast to Kapila’s example, santati-śāstra book authors clearly set their self-styled scientific discipline apart from religion by repeatedly pointing out that the bodily and intellectual features of the child were not determined by God but by human action alone, exhorting the readers to become ‘modern’ by following their ‘scientific’ advice.\(^{129}\)

However, I suggest that in order to fully appreciate the ways in which the case study of santati-śāstra can contribute to our understanding of vernacularization and legitimation of ‘science’ in the colonial public sphere we need to include other vernaculars into the analysis. Hindi advisory manual authors’ frequent and sometimes very specific references to sources in Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi indicate that similar forms of knowledge existed in those languages.\(^{130}\) How far did the uses of particular Western ‘fringe scientists’ such as Fowler and the strategies of ‘scientific self-legitimation’ identified in this chapter extend themselves beyond the Hindi public sphere? Exploring other vernacular public spheres and especially the exchanges between vernaculars might uncover yet a further, much broader network of ‘scientific self-legitimation’ cutting across a number of vernaculars. The example of santati-śāstra might encourage further research into the exchanges of ‘scientific’ knowledge between vernaculars, a much-understudied aspect with respect to English-vernacular exchanges. The ‘progeniology’ contained in Hindi advisory manuals discussed in this chapter might have just represented a single string within a dense network of exchanges. Exploring the latter could reveal important new insights into our understanding of vernacular knowledge in colonial India and into local authors’ continuous efforts of translation,

\(^{129}\) Jalori, Mānav-santatiśāstra, p. 91; Mishra, Dāmpatya vijnān, pp. 176-177.

\(^{130}\) See Jalori, Mānav-santatishāstra, pp. 1-2 and Mishra, Janan vijnān, p. 5. For similar discussions in Bengali periodicals see Pradip Kumar Bose, Health and Society in Bengal. A Selection from Late 19th-Century Bengali Periodicals (London: Sage Publications, 2006).
readaptation and modification of ‘foreign’ and ‘local’ contents which made up South Asian modernity.
Epilogue

By applying the technique ‘think global, study local’ this work has tried to explore the ways in which Indian authors readapted concepts of race in vernacular texts. Between 1860 and 1930 Hindi and Urdu writers used racial concepts more and more frequently and increasingly defined them through ‘scientific’ language. At the same time, the degree of ‘fixity’ of racial concepts could vary significantly in different literary genres. For instance, Chapter Two has shown that within the Hindi accounts that I have defined as the ‘showcasing of the wild’ the pedagogical view of civilization survived at least into the 1920s. Conversely, within the degenerationist discourses that coalesced around the catchphrase ‘struggle for existence’, ideas of race that appeared much more fixed had already asserted themselves since 1900.

What is equally important, in some intellectual milieus analyzed in this work race was only rarely recurred to. As pointed out, conservative authors writing on caste, for example, sometimes used racial concepts by way of analogy to defend a not less fixed caste concept. Yet, they did not systematically recur to ‘race science’ to argue that caste was, in fact, race. Rather, the comparison between caste and race simply carried out the function of other comparisons, which were typically employed in traditional argumentative styles, such as the one with the animal and vegetal kingdoms or the world of unanimated objects, expressed through aphorisms such as: ‘cotton cannot become silk’.

The largest example of a milieu in which racial concepts were comparatively little used was the Urdu public sphere before 1930. In this respect, the Urdu sources analyzed in this thesis substantiate Pernau’s emphasis on the lateness of Urdu writers’ reception of race and eugenics.¹ In addition to her findings, the comparison between the two public spheres attempted in this work has assessed a quantitative gap in the reception of race that ran parallel to the growing communalization of the two languages. What was the relationship between these two phenomena? Can the different degree of receptiveness to racial arguments be traced back to different ways of constructing communal identities? Again, the answer to this question depends on the literary genre we look at. This work has assessed a certain continuity of two types of texts, addressing a mixed Hindu-Muslim readership, in which race and/or eugenics were referred to but not systematically used. The first was the entertaining armchair travel literature with some ‘scientific’ pretentions represented by Pyarelal’s Duniā kī sair (1897). In this book the author used what we might define as ‘pre-

¹ Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’.
scientific’ concepts of human difference along with Victorian racial categories. The fact that this Urdu travelogue was republished in Hindi in 1902 without any major changes in language and content but basically as a simple transliteration, suggests that the travelogue continued to have a market on both sides of the communal divide. This reconfirms Francesca Orsini’s emphasis on the persistence of cross-communal forms of entertainment literature in both languages.\(^2\) Perhaps more significant for our purpose, was the persistence of a second kind of medium addressing a mixed readership: the miscellaneous Urdu periodical engaging in regular ‘scientific reporting’. Chapter One has mentioned the monthly *Adīb*, founded in 1910 under a joint Hindu-Muslim editorship, a prolific publisher of ‘scientific reports’, which included references to the ‘science’ of eugenics.\(^3\) Nevertheless, the present research has not found instances in which the authors of this journal inserted race and eugenics into their ideologies and political projects. We can therefore ascertain the presence, at least as far as the first fifteen years of the 20\(^{th}\) century were concerned, of areas of shared Hindu-Muslim literary and ‘scientific’ culture—mostly but not exclusively in Urdu—in which race and eugenics played a comparatively limited role. At the same time, this work has identified a highly popular early-20\(^{th}\) century genre of eugenic advisory literature in Hindi whose authors explicitly addressed an exclusively Hindu readership and which had no counterpart in Urdu. When Pyarelal wrote his eugenic advisory manual *Kokhaśāstra—Sexual Science* (1900) in Hindi, his change of language went hand in hand with a change in register: he employed ‘Western science’ to teach Hindus how to ‘upgrade their race’.

On a broader, theoretical level, the in-depth analysis of this genre, to which an entire chapter has been dedicated, emphasizes a major difficulty of the ‘think global, study local’ approach, namely how to capture local specificity while trying to take ‘the big picture’ into consideration. The chapter has argued that the form of knowledge, which I have identified as *santati-śāstra*, can and has to be compared with eugenics as it was promoted coevally in India and elsewhere on the globe. At the same time, this case study has forcefully emphasized the importance of looking at the sources closely in order to avoid easy generalisations. As pointed out, *santati-śāstra* authors hardly ever mentioned Galton and Indian eugenicists, but based their principles on an entirely different frame of ‘scientific reference’, which included Ayurveda, *rati-śāstra*, and theories on heredity stemming from mid 19\(^{th}\)-century American ‘fringe scientists’. Therefore, generalising expressions such as ‘vernacular eugenics’ might be used only with the due specifications.


The case studies analyzed in Chapter Two and Three also have some more general points to make in the debate regarding the complex processes of vernacularization of ‘Western science’. This work has identified three different ways in which Indian authors appropriated and readapted ‘scientific’ concepts, namely through ‘scientific reports’, ‘incorporation’, and ‘substitution’. As discussed in Chapter One, ‘scientific reports’ were frequently contained in periodicals and consisted of selectively summarized and commented renderings of fragments of ‘Western science’. While such reports do not tell us how specific concepts were used they are nevertheless a valuable historical source because they show which bits of ‘Western science’ were ‘within immediate reach’ to the authors of a specific intellectual milieu. The form of readaptation, which I have defined as ‘incorporation’ refers to the cases in which one or more English-language concepts stemming from Europe were subsumed into a set of vernacular concepts, in which they were variously combined with ideas stemming from ‘indigenous’ forms of knowledge, that is—in our cases—mostly deriving from Sanskrit and Persian knowledge traditions. Within this process, both the European and the ‘indigenous’ concepts were transformed in various degrees that could vary from case to case and over time. For instance, as shown in Chapter Two, the Hindi/Urdu word habšī distanced itself from its Perso-Arabic etymology (‘Abyssinian’) and finally—mostly but not always—became practically identical with the contemporary English meaning of ‘Negro’. Unlike the case of ‘scientific reports’, here the ‘original’, which was being selected and readapted, was usually not explicitly mentioned by the author. Finally, I use ‘substitution’ to describe the cases in which the author quoted an English word in brackets (usually in Latin characters) after the vernacular term he associated it with, yet de facto reinvented the English word’s meaning, readapting it to the new context. As Chapter Three has made clear, English terms in brackets conferred ‘scientific’ authority to vernacular texts. Unlike the former case, here the author made the reader aware of the translation process involved in the readaptation process. The equivalence between ‘egg cell’ and raj (‘menstrual blood’ according to ayurvedic physiology) has exemplified this point. These forms of readaptation often, albeit not always, also contained references to specific ‘Western’ authors and works.

Equally important than the research results I have tried to sum up are the obvious limitations of the present investigation, in the hope that the unanswered questions might provide inspiration for further research. A first aspect is the disproportion between the Hindi and Urdu sources analyzed. A

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4 Hatcher and Pernau have described this process for Bengali and Urdu respectively: Hatcher, Idioms of Improvement; Pernau, ‘The Virtuous Individual’. Like the European ‘originals’ the Sanskrit or Persian concepts used by the authors were usually already the result of various entanglements. For the Persian and Indo-Persian tradition see Ibid., p. 170.
prospective further study of the theme might gain considerably by engaging with Urdu genres that bore parallels to the analyzed Hindi genres even though race was no major issue in them, making precisely this difference the centre of the discussion.

A further obvious limitation of the work is the analyzed time frame. While Chapter Two has made a few cautious attempts to glimpse into the period after 1930 it has not looked into the pre-1857 period. The starting point of this research has been 1860; a temporal juncture in which more or less fixed European racial concepts had already entered Urdu and Hindi language. It has tried to chart the semantic shifts that occurred thereafter. Which concepts of human difference were present in the Subcontinent in the early decades of the 19th century, when the massive ‘translation venture’ of ‘Western science’ had not yet reached its full speed? It should be reminded that, in this period of time European notions of race were themselves not yet, in David Arnold’s words, fully ‘self-explanatory’, and, as shown by Mark Harrison, often adopted and reapated local conceptualisations of human difference.\(^5\) If Harrison has looked at these early entanglements from a British/European perspective, a broadly framed analysis of the South Asian side of these connections still awaits to be written.

Last but not least, only one out of three chapters has attempted to look into the ways in which authors translated ‘race theory’ into practice (see Chapter Three). As far as eugenic advisory manuals are concerned, the sources’ very practice-oriented character has offered interesting glimpses into the uses of race concepts in everyday-life. Conversely, the sources analyzed in Chapter Two (‘armchair travelogues’, periodical articles, and treatises on caste) only offered scattered hints to the ways in which author’s conceptualisation of human difference might have affected their everyday life. The shifting ideas of human difference conveyed by these texts could be more fully appreciated if set against the background of the lived experiences of their authors. For instance, in what respect was the ethnographic report on the ‘naked Nagas’ written by Sitaram Singh for Sarasvatī in 1904 shaped by his own experiences as a soldier posted in Manipur, and how did the ideas of race he took up from ‘scientific reports’ published in the same journal affected his practical attitudes towards adivāsī populations?\(^6\) The extent to which answering such questions is possible in the cases of the specific authors analyzed in this work of course largely depended on the archive. Yet, in general terms, the present work has confirmed, once more, the immense richness of Indian vernacular archives for studying global histories of concepts. It can only be hoped that in future more scholars will interpret the ‘think global, study local’ refrain as a call to study in a vernacular.

\(^5\) David Arnold, ‘Race, Place and Bodily Difference’, p. 273. Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions*.

Appendix

Translated Excerpts

1. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, ‘Civilization’, that is, śā’istagī and tahzīb (1868)

The Ability of Different Races (nasl) to Adopt Civilization

Many thoughtful people have tried to prove that blacks (habšī) have the same ability to achieve civilization (śā’istagī) as the other human races, and that they can compete with the latter (aur nasloñ kī hamsarı kar sake heiñ). In my view, these attempts are not convincing. As a matter of fact, when evidence that people with black skin are inferior in intellect (’aql-o dānā) is brought before these authors, they are unable to give any answers. That is, they cannot explain why these stupid people (jāhil qaum), residing all over Africa live in a state of perpetual wildness (davamī vaihšat), which is not the case for the [African] Muslims and the Ethiopians, who actually descend from the people of white color and who have acquired at least some distinction in terms of civilization. There are many fertile places in Africa, with trees that that facilitate the possibilities to bear the hot climate, rivers and lakes. One such lake, called Chad, has built up an early commercial route in Africa and has permitted the economy to progress. In addition to that, blacks have always enjoyed independence and peace in their country. Nevertheless, despite these favourable conditions, this peace and freedom loving people did not give up its savage state. They never tasted the fruit of knowledge in their country. The mark of the blessing that Noah gave to Šām is still present in this race. Black people did have the ability to become educated but up to the present day it has not occured that any black made any form of research (muḥaqiq) or uttered anything intelligent or learned. The situation of the yellow people, that is, the people of the Mongolian race is different altogether. It is known that this race spread until America and can even boast having civilized Mexico and Peru. However, let us now consider the degree of civilization up to which this race has

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2 Emphasis added.
progressed when it has made itself a name in China. The Chinese introduced big innovations such as gunpowder, cannons, printing and magnet-agopuncture. But even if we accept that they really have invented all these things we have to ask what advantages these inventions brought them in the end. Their cannon factories are not better than those of the British. But those of the British are also not better than those of their neighboring nations (qaum), even though the latter are inferior to the British as far as intellect and discernment are concerned (fehm-o furāsat). The Chinese print books but they write their language using ‘signs’, not letters. [The author then briefly dwells on the argument that a language written in such a way is not practical]. In addition to this, the Chinese are excessively attached to their traditions. In fact if someone introduced an innovation, they would never welcome it. That's why they do not progress. Now their situation is so bad that they have started migrating to Europe. It is hoped that this will help them making some progress in future.

As far as the rest is concerned, the civilization of the inhabitants of the whole earth has been brought forward through the men of the white race. These people first lived in India and then moved to mount Qaf. It is a well known fact that India played a fundamental role in sending the ‘radiations of knowledge and art’ ('ulūm-o fannon kī sha'ā'ēn) to Iran, Šām, Chaldea, Phoenicia, and then, from there, to Greece and Italy. These radiations have brought light into the obscurity of ignorance.

As all these explanations have made clear, a man’s civility (ādmī kā šā’istah honā) depends exclusively on abandoning the habits that are characteristic of the bloodthirsty savages, and which take footing in the epochs, in which there is no ‘civilizing education’ (tahzīb-o tarbīat). I am referring to quarrelsomeess (jangjūū) and thirst for hunting (šikār bāzī), nomadism, and uncontrolled sexual activity (balā imīṭāz mubāšarat karnā), in sum, living without following any rule. However, once the savage understands the advantages of abandoning these habits, he does so out of his own will.
Africa

It is located South of Firingistān and West of India. It is very big but very few civilized (šāʿistāh) people live there. Only in a few fertile parts do muḥazzab (‘cultivated’) people live. Nobody has ever crossed the country entirely and large parts of it are uninhabited. There are large jungles, lions, elephants, and big snakes. Also the men who live in these jungles are men in name only. They are dwarfish cannibals, naked, as Nature has made them. They do not know anything besides eating, drinking and fighting. Their present condition was probably the same thousand years ago. [...] Even during Muslim rule only the people, living in the reigns close to the seacoasts, such as, for instance, the Berbers, became civilized, while the others simply remained as savage (vaihsī) as this desolate and wild place (laq-vaq maidān). Now foreign travelers are taking a lot of pains to cross these jungles, searching for ‘mysteries of Creation’, and looking for natural resources. But to civilize Africa by tomorrow is even out of their power and would take thousands of years. 4 On the four seacoasts of the continent there have been Muslim reigns. But nobody knows the interior of the country, and the existing maps, too this day, are very imprecise. [The author then goes on describing the Sahara desert and its inhabitants as well as the reigns on the seacoasts. He dedicates ample space to ancient Egyptian civilization and a few words to present-day Egypt.]

The Inhabitants of Dark Africa

Now we explain the situation of the savage people (janglī qaumeñ) that live in Africa's dark jungles. We cannot say anything about their country and cities because the people there are nomads. They do not live with any system (intizāmat), and their buildings, language and, ‘government’ are not worth to be mentioned. Their history is simply put: they eat, drink, and die like their fathers and grandfathers have done. Therefore I will only provide some information about their habits and customs. The Berbers never wash themselves, they wear red clothes and they are very religious. (dīn dār). They move from place to place and dwell where they find water for their livestock. The

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3 Pyarelal Zamindar az Baroutha, Dunīā kī sair (Barauthā: Maṭba’ Vidya Sāgar Press, 1897), pp. 84-

4 Emphasis added.
**Ghāncī** do not know agriculture […]. They believe in God, the Devil and the transmigration of souls. They like making jokes. The Spaniards made them slaves and also intermarried with them. Now ‘mixed’ (doghale) people are living there. Among the **Tuareg** men cover their faces and eyes, whereas women do not. Men paint their bodies blue and women yellow. They wear no clothes but only animal skins. The social status of the child goes after depends on the mother’s social status. Their faith includes some elements from Christianity and some belief in magic, yet they also carry Qu’ran verses with them. They do not cry for their death.⁵ […] The **Akkā** are dwarfs. Their lips are large and have a similar shape to those of monkeys. Their head is completely round and they have long ears. Their hair is brown and they usually keep it short. They are good hunters but besides living on hunting they also raise chicken. They are able to learn how to read and write. The **ḥabšī** kings have made them slaves, raising them as if they were monkeys.

### 3. N.a., ‘The Spread of Islam in Africa’ (1907)⁶

Islam was not only spread through the sword. […] For instance, Muslims often established schools in idol worshipping countries and allowed the children to learn the principles of the Islamic faith in these institutions. Or, Muslims married idolatrous women and thereby Islam introduced Islam into the homes of the idol worshippers. […] The most important element that favoured the spread of Islam is is that newly converts immediately get same rights as all other Muslims. This is not the case among the Christians. Therefore the spread of Christianity has been less succesful. For example, when a Christian missionary married an indigenous black woman and the Christians he was forced to leave the country. For example Mr. x⁷, who is Christian and belongs to the black race (ḥabšī al-nasl), and an extremely able man (nihāiat qābil sākh), wrote a book on this subject, in

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⁵ This description of the Tuareg as an ‘uncivilized’ people is in sharp contrast to the one provided by Aziz Mirza in *Mu’allim-e nisvān*, where the Tuareg were described as a ‘civilized’ Muslim people, which was very ‘advanced’ in terms of the status it accorded to its women. Mirza, Aziz, ‘Ek be-pardah musulmān qaum’, *Mu’allim-e nisvān* 8,11 (1895), pp. 6-13. See Chapter One.


⁷ The name of the author cannot be read properly on the article copy.
which he tried to compare Christianity and Islam in Africa. He proves that the influence (aṣr) of Islam on the idol worshippers and blacks (ḥabšī) of Africa was much better than the influence of Christianity. Those who have converted to Islam have immediately started to lead ‘clean and chaste’ (sāf aur pākīzah) life. Those who never washed their mouth and hands became so clean that it looked as if cleanliness was their new ‘national’ banner (ṣa‘ār qaumī). They have stopped drinking and being superstitious and their ‘morals’ or ‘culture’ (akhlāq) was deeply transformed. In contrast to this, those who became Christians drink even more than before and there is no progress in their ‘morals’ or ‘culture’. The reason for this difference is that even the meanest blackman (ḥabšī) can, once he becomes a Muslim and part of the birādarī, get access to the same rights as his Muslim fellows, and no discrimination of color and qaum (rang-o qaum) persists. His relations to other Muslims are as if had ever been a Muslim.

4. Vrajvihari Shukla, ‘Cannibal People’ (1911)8

Since their appearence on this earth humans have changed a lot. Major changes have occurred in their modes of living, their eating and drinking habits, the relations among the members of their societies, and many other things. So many changes have occurred that most of us are no longer aware of man’s original status. When looking at the great sparkling buildings of the present-day, who would ever think that men once slept in caves or on trees? Looking at the elaborated clothes on the elegant bodies of today’s gentlemen, who could imagine how men looked like in ancient times? [He dwells on the fact that people’s eating habits and taste for food, too, grudually became more sophisticated.] Once upon a time men eat his fellowmen. In ancient times cannibalism was a common practice. In some places it is still in use today. Today I would like to describe the origins of this custom and explain how it was gradually abandoned. According to his own natur (svabhāv) man is vegetarian/vegan (phālahārī, lit.‘fruit-eater’). He can also eat his fellow beings, as the savage people (janglī jātiyām) do, who eat their own children. Cannibalism is a very ancient custom. Among many blacks (ḥabšī) in Africa it is still common practice today. If we want to reflect on this topic we should ask how this custom came into being

8 Vrajvihari Shukla, ‘Narbhakśak manushya’, Sarasvatī 12,3 (March 1911), pp. 118-122.
and how it was abandoned. This is what I would like to explain now. When a people (jāti) becomes civilized (sabhya) it underwent deep changes. First of all comes the reform (sudhār) of its religion/law (dharma). Then its members reduce their own egoism (svārth) and start to have a sense of the merits and demerits of the members of their society. They also start enjoying the power of human intellect and start to have an intense desire (icchā) for reform (sudhār). Once this desire is awakened, the wish to abandon savage customs like cannibalism comes of its own.⁹ [...] Another factor, which has contributed to this process, was the development of parental love (sneh) towards children. The civilized man loves his children and therefore respects them. He even respects the bodies of the dead. Finally, the beliefs in the immortality of the soul (ātma) and in the existence of spirits (but) have also helped man to abandon cannibalism. A sense of horror (bhay) has arisen in him, which prevents him from eating the bodies of the dead. Now that I have furnished a general summary of the reasons why cannibalism has been abandoned let me now dwell on the factors that have permitted the diffusion of this custom. [The author then discusses seven different reasons of cannibalism: famine, hostility, 'false love' (mithya sneh), belief in magic, religious belief, and habit.]

Historians who have studied ancient human history have posed the question: were all humans cannibals in ancient times? Scholars have tried to answer this question examining ancient human remains. The discovery of remains of broken human bones (along with broken animal bones) in caves has led to the supposition that cannibalism was in practice even in the most ‘advanced countries’ (bhārtetar deś). With the advancement of civilization this abhorrent practice (ghriṇit prathā) has diminished. In some countries it has vanished altogether. Nevertheless the word ‘cannibalism’ still causes fear when it is mentioned. God willing, the custom will be destroyed (nāś ho jāe) where it still persists. It would be a good thing if humanity got rid of this vileness (kālimā).

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⁹ The emphasis on the fact that ‘savage customs’ are ‘automatically’ abandoned, once humans realize the benefits of ‘reform’ or ‘improvement’ recalls Sir Sayyid’s excerpt quoted above.
Dear readers! Pay attention towards this issue. I know it’s a difficult one. But not that difficult that it cannot be known. Knowledge about this topic might not be strictly necessary for generating progeny according to one’s wishes (icchaanusaar santanotpatti ke liye). Still, the information I am about to convey to you can be useful to avoid damage and obtain benefice. In addition to that, the readers will surely find it entertaining. Therefore, it appropriate that I should explain these issues in succinct form.

In the last chapters you have seen that the size of a [human] seed (bīj) is 1/200 of an inch. In the next chapter you will see that it grows in the mother’s body, where it becomes a child. Now the question arises, how are the fundamental parts of the child’s body, the hereditary traits, and the child’s resemblance to the nature of its mother and father (mātā pitā ke svabhāvādi kī samānata) be contained in such a small seed?

There are two theories (siddhānt) concerning this topic. According to the first view, ‘the essence, which determines the structure (racnā) of the offspring’s body is already contained in the seed from the very beginning (whether the seed be of a bird, animal or human)’. The second theory is that ‘the essence is not present from the beginning, but comes into being through a process of bhinnatva (Differentiation), that is, when one body splits into two halves’. In the following I am going to summarize the research findings of three scientists (vidvān) who have supported either the first or the second theory.

The first one is Herbert Spencer. He says that, in the same way as in salt there is the force to create more salt, every paramānu (unit) or koś (cell) possesses the ability (guṇ) to duplicate itself, this ability being part of its own nature. According to this scientist all cells of the body are created in this way. The parts of the body emerge from the assemblage of this many separated units and it is

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10 Hiralal Jalori, Mānav-santatiśāstra. Icchānusār uttam santān uppann karnā manuṣya ke adhīn hai (Bānkīpur: Khādgavilās pres, 1913), pp. 68-78.

11 The author put the two theories that follow in quotation marks but did not specify the textual sources from which they hailed. Nevertheless the authors of the two theories are mentioned below.

12 English (in Latin characters) in the text. The same applies to all subsequent cases in which I add the English word in italics in brackets.
part of the nature of these units to assemble. If a part of the body gets cut off these units will reproduce it. Thus the mentioned scientist has supported the first theory through an explanation of the functions of the units of the body. He has also reflected on the question of heredity. But he has remained silent about the ways in which these units get together in the seed. By simply stating that the units of the body possess the ability to reproduce themselves and assemble, this question remains unanswered. Other scientists have also supported this theory. Let us see what they said.

There is another scientist who has reflected on this, Charles Darwin. He has stated that every subtle part (sukšam bhāg) of the body makes a perfect copy of itself. These extremely subtle parts thus reproduce the whole body. If they get sufficient nourishment these parts grow strong and reproduce others that are strong, too. Slowly slowly they produce the reproductive cells (śarīr utpann karnevāle kośom kī utpatti hotī hai). They are all passed down to the child and are manifest in it, that is, they can also remain hidden for some generations. [...] Nevertheless, this explanation too, is not exhaustive as far as the ways in which the parts of these subtle parts get together in the seed.

The third person that ought to be mentioned is the prominent scientist from Germany, Weismann. This scientist gives a very detailed explanation and also answers the question how the structure of the body and hereditary traits are linked to each other in the seed. We will have to say a few words on his research results. He says that the first to explain why children get created was Haeckel. [Jalori then reproduces Haeckel’s account the emergence of unicellular and pluricellular beings and Weismann’s distinction between somatic cells and germ cells. Subsequently, in a paragraph, titled, ‘Similarities between the reproduction of unicellular beings and the genesis of humans’ he mentions the results of Theodor Heinrich Boveri’s experiments with sea urchins: the discovery that the power of reproduction is located in the cell’s nucleus, whereas the protoplasm serves to nurture the seed. He then gets back to Weismann, summarising the latter’s theory of hereditary transmission.]^{13}

With the support of Sir Professor Weismann we have thus smoothly proceeded up to this point. Nevertheless, at this point we will have to leave him as well. Well! Let’s leave him; there is no point in getting despaired! We need to look somewhere else. We will have to get support from some other science (śāstra)! ‘Psychology’ (lit. ‘mental science’, mānasik śāstra) will help us out. So, while bearing in mind the details given by the Professor Sahib (Weismann) we will now proceed with the help of this science:

**What is the origin of the forces and ‘essences’ (śaktiāṁ aur tatva) present in the human seed?**

We have seen that the human seed (manuṣyabāj) measures 1/200 of an inch, that is, it is even

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^{13} Jalori, Mānav-santatiśāstra pp. 72-76. Full-quotation continues from the last paragraph of p. 76.
smaller than a drof of water. The seed contains a single force (śakti), which links the hereditary traits that are passed down from generation to generation with the bodily structure (śarīrik saṁgaṭhan) of the child. This ‘force’ has to be made up of an extremely minute essence (sūkṣam tatva) since it is not possible to see it through any instrument. This extremely minute essence is called ‘ether’ (īthar). In order to imagine the extreme minuteness of this essence the readers may imagine that it can trapass even iron. And they should imagine that one single iron particle (parmānu) might contain thousands, nay lakhs of ether particles. So they should imagine that even the child’s seed, too, contains such ether particles (the special condition of these particles will be explained in Chapter Six). It is our mind, which creates these particles in the seed of the child. According to the theories of modern psychology (arvācīn mānasik śāstra) the thoughts and powers generated by our mind (man) are made of ether. Every thought gives ether a particular form, which distinguishes it from other thoughts. In other words, every thought imprints an image (ākṛiti) or a stamp (ākār) upon ether. But since this image or stamp is made up of ether, our eyes cannot see it. The eminent German doctor Brenḍak has conducted a complicated experiment in order to prove this theory.\(^\text{14}\) He has constructed a ‘plate’ on which the images imprinted into ether by human thoughts could be seen. For instance, put in front of a soldier, who was thinking of an eagle, the picture of an eagle could be seen on the plate. Or, when set in fromt of a woman who thought of her dead child, the plate reproduced the image of that child.\(^\text{15}\) So, as a summary of the aforementioned theories it can be said that the aspect (ākār) of the child first gets formed in the mind of the mother and is made of particles of ether. The latter are nurtured by the mother’s blood and then enter the seed of the child. There they produce a child, which bears exact resemblance to them. Readers! Continuing further you will see that the kind of forms (ākār), body structures (śarīr racnā) and natures (svabhāv) who influence the consciousness (jnān) and the intellect (buddhi) of the mother, are the characteristics the child will be born with. The reason for this lies in the particles of ether, which have been described above.

\(^{14}\) I have not been able to identify the author Jalori was referring to. Shivnandan Singh quoted the same author when he explained the ether theory, most probably taking it up the reference from Jalori. See Chapter Three.

\(^{15}\) The soldier and the woman who lost her (male) child would suggest that the German ‘scientist’ conducted these experiments in a war zone.
The Future Offspring

The rise or fall of any country depends on the future offspring. The country whose men (manusya) are very strong, industrious, virtuous, and intelligent will be independent and happy, notwithstanding its economic situation. Wealth, richness of the soil, and population size are not important factors in this respect. If in the people of a country possess the aforementioned qualities, the country will necessarily rise to the level of the superior nations (ucc se ucc rāṣṭrom meīṁ avaśya hogā), even if its population is small, and if it is covered with forests or mountains. Take our small Rajputana, for example. Even if the biggest part of that country is covered with desert, forest and mountains, its inhabitants have kept it free from six Mughal emperors until Aurangzeb. How could this be? The reason simply is that its people were strong industrious, virtuous, and intelligent. And how did they acquire these qualities? It was the fruit of the temperance (sanyam) and the education of their parents. They practiced the custom of svayaṁvar, that is, girls could freely choose an able (yogya) husband according to their wish. Marriage was contracted at the appropriate time. Men and women both had a full understanding of their rights. These qualities [i.e. the aforementioned ones: strength, industriousness etc.] were present in the boys since their childhood.

A second example is Sparta. In that country the weak children who could not use arms were brought out of the country. The result was that the parents of Sparta made an effort to generate progeny that was sturdy in any sense, and that’s why 300 Spartans in Thermopylae defeated 3000 Persians. That’s why for the rise of every country it is extremely important that its offspring be strong, industrious, virtuous, and intelligent. But how can this be achieved? The burden is on the young man and women of today. It’s in their hands to produce the progeny they wish. It depends on them if the country will arise or move towards the abyss. Bhārat Mātā today is relying on them. Therefore they have to pay attention to the follow the rules (nyam) that allow them to produce the kind of progeny they desire, and deeply reflect about them. Without knowing them it will be completely useless to hope to get able offspring. Therefore, men and women absolutely ought to know these rules when they enter the grihastha-āśram.

6. Rishilal Agrawal, The Desired Progeny (1928)\textsuperscript{16}

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Summary (English)

With the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of Species* in 1859 and the subsequent institutionalization of anthropology in the British imperial metropole, racial concepts based on physical difference gained a new ‘scientific’ legitimacy.

This work explores how notions of race based on biology were selectively adopted, readapted and transformed by Indian authors. The study shows that such concepts were adopted by different milieus, which went far beyond the relatively restricted circle of Western-educated elite Indians writing in English. It argues that racial concepts based on biology were neither unreflectively appropriated nor entirely rejected. Rather, they were combined with local concepts and influenced by the latter.

This work focuses on a diverse set of printed texts, periodicals and books in Hindi and Urdu, two of the major print languages of British North India. After a critical description of the multiple processes through which Western ‘science’ was refashioned in colonial India and a discussion of the concept of ‘vernacularization’ (Chapter One), the study proceeds to analyze three different areas of the Hindi and Urdu public spheres, including both ‘elite’ as well as ‘popular’ genres. Chapter Two looks at discussions on the concepts of ‘civilization’ and ‘civility’ in the Hindi and Urdu periodical press, as well as in Hindi literature on caste. It asks if and in what respect, between 1860 and 1930, these discussions changed through the authors’ selective appropriation and readaptation of racial concepts. Chapter Three focuses on early-20th century Hindi advisory literature on ‘fit reproduction’, whose authors founded a new form of knowledge, defined as *santati-śāstra* (‘science of the progeny’). The chapter compares the latter with the form of eugenics promoted by the founders of Indian eugenic movements and asks in how far *santati-śāstra* might be defined as ‘vernacular eugenics’.

The comparative study of these different areas singles out the specificities of divergent readaptations of ‘biological racialism’. In doing so it highlights the global ideological force and at the same time charts the limits of the power of the idea of race. The research results throw up the question in how far the concepts used in global history of science need to be ‘opened up’ in such a way as to accommodate regional concepts of evolution and race.
Zusammenfassung (Deutsch)

Curriculum Vitae

Savary, Luzia Judith
Viale Raffaello Sanzio 4, 34128 Trieste (Italy)
luzia.savary@gmail.com

Citizenship
Switzerland

Date of Birth
29.03.1983

Gender
F

Education

Since 09.2010
PhD student in History of the Modern World
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), Zurich
Thesis title: ‘Evolution, Race and Public Spheres: The Vernacularization of Science in Colonial India (1880-1940)’
Supervisor: Prof. Harald Fischer-Tiné
Second supervisor: Prof. Margrit Pernau (Max-Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin)
Third supervisor: Douglas E. Haynes (Dartmouth College, Hanover)

09.2007 - 09.2009
M.A. in History of South Asia
Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
Supervisor: Prof. Dharampal-Frick

09.2002 - 11.2006
B. A. in History of Religions and Anthropology
Università di Bologna
01.01.2006 - 30.04.2006

**Student exchange program** with ‘Overseas’ scholarship

University of British Columbia **Vancouver**

### Teaching experience

**Fall semester 2012**

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, **Zurich**
with N. Kamenov (MA)

**Seminar**
Introduction to History of Social Inequality: Gender, Race and Caste in a Comparative Perspective (c. 1800-2000)

**Spring Semester 2013**
(18.02.2013 - 31.05.2013)

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH), **Zurich**
with Dr. J. Tschurenev, Dr. U. Lindner, N. Kamenov (MA) and A. Mohr (MA)

**Seminar**
Colonial and Postcolonial Modernity in India

### Conference papers

**17.03.2012**

**02.04.2012**

**12.06.2012**
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**03.11.2012**
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**Work experience**

Since 09.2014

Interpreter and translator (Urdu)  
ICS - Consorzio Italiano di Solidarietà - Ufficio Rifugiati Onlus,  
**Trieste** (Italy)  
Legal assistance, socio-economic and psychological support to refugees