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"WALL OF WORDS": FAKIR MOHAN SENAPATI, PREMCHAND, AND THE LANGUAGE CONTROVERSIES IN LATE COLONIAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Linguistic controversies in one particular region of India often get treated as discrete units, as if such controversies have never had any bearing on other languages and regions in the subcontinent. I attempt a corrective to such insular approaches by juxtaposing various linguistic identity-based struggles in nineteenth-century India to demonstrate that there are several common players who operate across various linguistic zones and who are often inconsistent in their views and analyses. This essay examines the various linguistic controversies by organizing them along three broad axes with overlaps: the specialist, the instrumentalist, and the literary. The first set of controversies was conducted in jargon-ridden scholarship within newly emerged disciplinary practices such as philology, pedagogy, and linguistics. The secondary set of controversies was the concerns of intellectuals, missionaries, educationists, and scholars who were engaged in discharging juridical–administrative responsibilities. At the tertiary level, the controverters comprised the practitioners of literary culture. The essay shows how the cultural expressions within different linguistic groups inherit and share these derivative discourses while employing linguistic strategies as part of their linguistic–identitarian aesthetics. The essay, finally, argues for a need to evolve a more integrative methodology to "do" comparative literature in South Asia.

KEYWORDS: comparative literature, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi, Odia, Urdu

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In 1992, lamenting the "relative underdevelopment of the research genre of literary history in India," Aijaz Ahmad spoke of the frustrating experience of theorizing the category "Indian literature." He drew our attention to how "histories of individual languages as discrete entities . . . tend to be misleading, since multilinguality and polyglot fluidity seem to have been the chief characteristics which give Indian literature its high degree of unification in the premodern phase."[1] Meanwhile, sustained archival research in the areas where gaps existed is making it possible to recognize shared histories of people across linguistic borders and barriers.[2] This in effect has consequences for the disciplinary rubric of comparative literature. I refer not to Gayatri Spivak's highly sophisticated formulations (in *Death of a Discipline*) on the death of the old comparative literature, and her suggestions regarding its new avatar, what she calls the "new comparative literature."[3] Instead, I am suggesting how these recently ferreted archives might help comparativists to do comparative literature more professionally.

To begin with, we must reiterate the twin banality that (a) literature is made in language, and that (b) the history of a literature cannot be separated from the history of the language it exists in. Unfortunately, the high-profile Hindi-Urdu language controversy, the mother of all language controversies in India, has mostly been narrativized in terms of whether or not they constituted one or two languages with two scripts, and whether their polarization along communal lines was shaped by enthusiastic fundamentalists. In such discourses, major Hindi-Urdu figures such as Bharatendu Harischandra, Premchand, and M. K. Gandhi have been kept at the center if not the epicenter of all seismic cultural zones.[4] This line of enquiry for all its richness and variety seems to have run its course and it is time for scholarship to look beyond this rote-learned teleology into questions of whether the other regions contributed to or were in any way affected by these controversies and to the eventual ascendancy of Hindi and the decline of Urdu.[5] Also, the language controversy that was raging in Odisha around the same time—among Bangla, Hindi, Telugu, and Odia—that finally led to the formation of the first linguistically determined state (Odisha) in 1936 cannot be seen in isolation. Similarly, the dialectization of older-than-Hindi languages like Maithili (to name just one), the jettisoning of, one after the other, Mithilakshar and Kaithi in favor of Devnagari for transcribing Maithili speech: all of these were integral to the larger issue. In order to undertake any comparatist study of writers of the time in any of the aforementioned linguistic clusters, it would be necessary to examine the imbrication of two or more sets by structuring their interpenetrating grids. It might also be possible to see how the contexts of two writers, Fakir Mohan Senapati (Odia) and Premchand

(Urdu and Hindi), in which they worked by enlarging their two contexts to points of contact, and see how their art reflected their responses to similar historical pressures. For, though the two were born thirty-seven years apart, when it comes to their fiction, Fakir Mohan's work was contemporaneous with that of Premchand.

Linguistic Utopia of the Past or Sectarian Nationalism of the Present?

Bipin Chandra Pal was one of the first to speak of the common heritage of Bengalis and Odias, especially in terms of language, tracing the ideal world back to Chaitanya's time or before. Remembering his first visit to Odisha in 1879, Pal writes in 1932 of a "racial and cultural fusion," which was further strengthened through administrative unification under British rule. Such were the similarities that, to Pal, Odia appeared to be "an ancient and archaic [form of] Bengali language and literature itself"[6] and that it promised to be the cultural language of Odisha. He goes on to say, "Bengalee was in many places the second language in the Orissa schools, as in Bengal proper. There was as yet no jealousy of the Bengalee among the people of Orissa."[7]

These reminiscences, of course, stand against the backdrop of the intense anti-Bengali movement across parts of Odisha under the then-Bengal Presidency, from roughly the 1860s to the 1900s, and Pal was writing in the 1930s. If such local histories filled with nostalgia for a syncretic past are not common, similar narratives of a common linguistic heritage in North India are boringly familiar. One of the most recent examples of such a pining after an ideal past is Alok Rai's *Hindi Nationalism*, a book that hearkens back to an innocent past corrupted by modernity's "poisonous politics."[8] In Neeladri Bhattacharya's words, Rai's narrative, *Hindi Nationalism*, is marked by "a deep sense of loss: lost moments, blocked potentials, lost ideals."[9] It is indisputable that in common intercourse, until the arrival of print, a kind of heteroglot lingua franca had emerged among neighboring linguistic communities, and even across the subcontinent,[10] until precisely at the point when print arrived and certain scripts (*not* languages) that acquired sacrosanctity and the language associated with a particular script gradually became the language of power.[11] This "poisonous politics," it is often argued, resulted in division not only between Hindi and Urdu, but also more seriously between Hindus and Muslims and eventually led to the 1947 Partition. It might be necessary to try and redraw the map—and yet it is foolhardy to try and trace an originary moment for the polarization in question.

Antecedents and the Communalization of Language

The main point about the communalization of Hindi-Sanskrit and Urdu-Persian has to be seen in the context of certain antecedents. That Sanskrit, invariably written in Devnagari script (literally, the "language" of gods), is traditionally associated with Hinduism can be seen in "Macaulay's Minute" (1835), wherein Macaulay challenges the Committee of Public Instruction by asserting that the Act of the British Parliament did not mean by the phrase "the revival and promotion of Literature" "the revival and promotion of Sanskrit and Perso-Arabic," conflating all the time the languages and religious identities of the users ("Hindoo law is to be learned chiefly from Sanskrit books, and the Mahometan law from Arabic books").[12] If we ignore Macaulay's views as misplaced since he was an "Orientalist" outsider (in the Saidian sense), here is Gandhi's story: Gandhi's teacher and later Gandhi himself came to equate the two languages with the two communities circa the 1870s. Gandhi says in his autobiography how the Sanskrit teacher in his school was a hard taskmaster and the Persian teacher was lenient, because of which he, like his fellow students, had opted for Persian. His Sanskrit teacher, Krishnashankar Pandya, gently chided him by saying: "How can you forget that you are the son of a Vaishnava father? Won't you learn *the language of your own religion*?" Writing around 1927, Gandhi says, "I deeply regret that I was not able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the language, because I have since realized that every *Hindu boy and girl should possess sound Samskrit* [sic] *learning*."[13]

Thus, the point I am trying to make here is that whether or not there had *always* been a tradition of associating the two languages, Sanskrit and Persian, with the two communities, Hindus and Muslims, respectively, the linkages were certainly precipitated by the advent of European modernity, with all its concomitants such as administrative convenience, print education, and in short, governmentality.[14] The ground for the division between Urdu and Hindi was already set by the perception regarding their parentage: Perso-Arabic and Sanskrit.[15]

The Language of Power and Print Capitalism

Though there had been some talk in different quarters about the various "vernaculars," English effectively replaced Persian in the higher courts and the vernacular languages jettisoned Persian in the lower courts.

The processes were expected to be smooth but the vernacular languages of power clashed and internecine debates in various pockets became the order of the day. The other issue following Macaulay's "Minute" pertained to the medium of instruction in order to impart what was called (in Odia) "Ingrāji Shikshā," that is, English (or Western) education. Since modern education in any language required an adequate number of textbooks, the fate of languages was also predicated on the availability of textbooks in that language. This added a new dimension to the language debates, fueling as it did a competition among users of diverse languages in the setting up of printing presses, developing types and production of "textbooks." Educationists and administrators joined the fray as apologists or detractors of the media of instruction, joining the bandwagon of "experts." They were also forced to look into the immediate reality of claims and counterclaims while answering the question, "which language"; and as they did so, colonial administrators had to double up as philologists (or vice versa). At some point of time, the idea of using the "universal" Roman script was also mooted. However, given the fact that a large majority of the colonized population was comprised of illiterates or those who carried the baggage of mnemonic knowledge of scriptural texts, people were not concerned with the issue of script. Thus the so-called communal divide across masses was more imagined than real, at least during these initial decades, and was at best confined to a small minority of the educated class looking for jobs or wanting to partake of the petty crumbs of power.

The trajectories along which the controversies flared up, therefore, can be grouped under three broad categories: The first set of controversies, though arising out of exigencies of governance and administrative convenience, were conducted in the realm of jargon-ridden scholarship within the new disciplinary practices such as philology, pedagogy, and linguistics. I have in mind here the works of Robert Caldwell, John Beames, F. S. Growse, G. A. Grierson, Rajendralal Mitra, et al.[16] These scholar administrators, using their new analytical tools, would go into the history and evolution of languages and the respective language community, for which, in turn, they would engage in or draw upon linguistic demographics, census, and statistics. The stress on streamlining languages vis-à-vis native communities could have been impelled by such considerations back in Europe, where linguistic nationalism already held sway. The Indian scholars in this category, on the other hand, displaying "mere" scholarly interests also willy-nilly became complicit with and/or were indifferent toward the ideologies of empowerment or disempowerment of the respective linguistic communities. Thus, post 1857, for example, the perception that Muslims had *jihadi* tendencies[17] or, post

1837, when Odisha became part of the Calcutta Presidency, that Odias were inferior to the Bengalis, hovered in the background.

The secondary set of controversies were less scholarly in their engagement with the debates, but were nonetheless equally affective concerns of intellectuals, missionaries, educationists, and scholars who were engaged in discharging juridical–administrative responsibilities. These debates were also conducted at the level of commonsense and were anchored on the first set of discourses that involved influential figures such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Macaulay. Here I have in mind individuals like Saroda Prosad Sandel, the Accountant General; Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Aligarh Movement; Rangalal Bandopadhyay, the Bengali poet–scholar–administrator; Bhudev Mukhopadhya, the Inspector of Schools; Ayodhya Narayan Khattri, a court official; and, last but not least on my list, Sir Anthony MacDonnell. They would often represent specific linguistic communities, and could be dogmatic and judgmental. They tended at times to align themselves with the powers that be. For example, Sir Syed, who supported the Company in the aftermath of the Mutiny, had a clear linguistic–communal (in the best sense of the term) agenda for guarding the interest of the Urdu-speaking Muslims that he was trying to regroup under the umbrella of education. He even opposed the formation of the Indian National Congress on the ground that it was going to be dominated by Bengali Hindus.[18]

At the tertiary level, the controverters comprised practitioners of literary culture such as Bankimchandra Chattopadhya, Raja Bharatendu Harischandra, Fakir Mohan Senapati, Balmunkund Gupt, Babu Rangalal Bandopdhya, and Premchand, with intermediary characters like Madhusudan Das and Mahatma Gandhi flitting in and out of such groups. Of course, these discourses at the three levels overlap. While drawing on the scholarly works of philologists and orientalists, these writers seldom went into any scholarly analysis of ideas that were already a "whole climate of opinion," except in writing discursive pieces to explain their respective stances toward linguistic issues. Since their imaginative work often bore the marks of the controversies, the historicity of these texts is well worth pondering in a comparatist framework.

The Primary Level: The New Scientists of Language

It took about two decades for scholars to be jolted into the realization of the need (following the 1857 turmoil) to develop and deploy tools of philological

analysis to suggest, attack, or defend language and script choices. Major debates took place among Orientalists and philologists around issues of "The Application of the Roman Alphabet to Oriental Languages," "On the Transliteration of Indian Alphabets," "The Arabic Element in Official Hindustani," even an *English-Hindustani Law and Commercial Dictionary* by S. W. Fallon with an "Introductory Dissertation," "Some Objections to the Modern Style of Official Hindustani," and numerous others, so numerous that it is impossible to list them all.[19] These led to more localized debates about "whether Hindi ought to be the court language of the NW provinces"; and whether words of Perso-Arabic origin be used or purged in Bangla or Odia and so on. The debates often conducted in consultation with "Learned Natives" were taken up by the latter subsequently, so that questions as to whether Devnagari or Odia or Bengali or any other script was to be used were debated among the natives themselves.

Before such scholars started their research and writing, a few administrators, historians, and commentators had already set the tone through their casual remarks in diverse territories. As mentioned earlier, the question of imparting education in different languages prompted certain officials to treat one dominant language (dominant because of various factors such as well-developed print culture, availability of human resources, etc.) as a dialect of another, such as Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, or Odia as offshoots of Hindvi/Hindi or Bangla, and thus propose the use of the latter as mediums of instruction across schools in Mithila region or the Orissa Division of the Bengal Presidency. For instance, in 1859, Rev. James Long expresses the view that "the cultivation of the smaller dialects or 'fractions of languages' in India promotes division and isolation, even natives when left to themselves prefer the cultivation of a more refined Indian language—thus in the Sonthal districts Hindi is being studied as also in Chhota Nagpur."[20]

Five years later, heavyweight antiquarian Rajendra Lal Mitra, in a paper read at Calcutta in 1864, underscored the importance of Devnagari script as against both Persian and Roman scripts. He said, "As Sanskritic dialects the Hindvi and the Urdu have undoubted claims to the Nagari, for that alone can supply the necessary symbols properly to indicate their system of sounds. The Persian alphabet has no such symbols and therefore fails adequately to represent the phonology of the Hindvi, except by the aid of a cumbrous system of diacritical marks."[21] Moreover, he says, "the Hindus regard their alphabet (Dev Nagri) *to be of* divine origin . . . With it is associated their religion, their literature, and their ancient glory. To touch it is to meddle with their religion, their past greatness and their cherished recollections."[22] We shall see how these arguments are not only debated by fellow philologists,

but are also reiterated four or five decades later by the protagonists of the Nagari movement.

In a document preceding Mitra's speech, Rev. James Long recommended the introduction of Bangla as the medium of instruction in areas falling within the Bengal Presidency:

> Valuable as is the Uriya [Odia] language for imparting to the common people an *elementary* education, it is not likely to be much cultivated: the people of Orissa are too few to render it probable that the expenses of creating a literature can be borne by them or by Government, it will be much easier for Uriyas who wish to acquire knowledge to gain it through the Bengali, a kindred language which is rapidly developing itself.[23]

This must have been music to the ears of the hegemonistic Bengali elite. The extent of influence that Long's view must have cast—because they were expressed in the pages of a well-circulated and authoritative forum like that of the *Journal of Asiatic Society* (*JAS*) can be gauged by the reiteration of the same logic in subsequent years. Murmurings were heard in the corridors of power that "Uriya" should be replaced by the Bengali script in school education. By now, the Odia public sphere had shaped adequately with the setting up of printing presses, debating societies, and newspapers, in which the issue was debated and circulated.

Four years after Mitra gave his lecture in Calcutta in 1868, the self-same advocate of Hindi and Nagari in the North-Western Provinces (NWP), strongly advised the Odias to reject their script in favor of Bangla. As he himself was to recall in a paper in 1870, he compared the attachment of Odias to this "provincial patois" as injurious to progress as a false sense of patriotism and an insensate love for everything that was national. It is indeed significant how the discussion of nation, good and bad nationalism, race, and development is being articulated here. For we recall here Rev. James Long's observations nine years earlier regarding the rejection of the Nagari script by the "Uriyas": "All the Sanskrit MS used in Orissa are written in the Uriya and not in the Nagari character, though the latter is the *sacred character* of India and hence called the Deva Nagari or divine character, but the Brahmanas will not accept a universal character—*nationality* prevails over theory—and yet there are men who dream of abolishing all the Indian alphabets and substituting the English alphabet for them!"[24] Long's extract is interesting also because of his misplaced observation that these were the "Brahmanas." The fact is that

it was all across all social strata that Odia was the favored script for all scriptures: the jettisoning of the Sanskrit *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana*, and *Bhagabata*, and several other "sacred" texts in favor of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Odia translations.

Meanwhile, Kantichandra Bhattacharya, a certain "Pandit" working in the Government school of Balasore, where Fakir Mohan too lived and worked, published in 1870 a booklet in Bengali with the title, *Uriya Ekta Swatantra Bhasa Noi* (*Uriya is Not an Independent Language*). Bhattacharya offered the insidious argument that Bengali should replace Odia. It is easy to see that Long, who had put this idea in his mind, was more discerning. However, the Pandit's views proved to be the proverbial last straw—and straw catches fire easily. In the case of Odias, it was virtually a conflagration.

Responding to the pamphlet, John Beames wrote "On the Relation of the Uriya to the Other Modern Aryan Languages," and began by saying: "A book has recently been published by Babu Kantichandra Bhattacharyya, a Pandit in the Government School at Balasore under the title, 'Uriya is not an Independent language.' This little work, though profoundly destitute of philological arguments, has created some stir among the natives of the province, who are somewhat disgusted at finding their native language treated as a mere corruption of Bengali."[25] Mitra immediately responded to Beames by publishing a longer piece in the same journal, arrogating the very logic that Beames had used to pronounce Bhojpuri as a dialect of Hindi. "In an excellent paper on the Bhojpuri dialect, Mr. Beames has shown that, notwithstanding much graver differences in glossology and grammar—in pronouns and the degrees of comparison—in adjectives and conjunctions—than what obtains in Uriya and Bengali, the Bhojpuri is a dialect of Hindi; and by a parity of reasoning, I expect he will admit the Uriya, in like manner, to be a daughter of Bengali." Two issues deserve our attention here. First, Mitra draws attention to the interrelatedness of language issues across several sets of Indian languages. Secondly, it is easy to see here how the same scholars using identical analytical tools shape the basic tenets of the argument that catches on and influences the newly emerged native intelligentsia.

The Secondary Level

Almost contemporaneous to the first set of debates, scholars in this cluster had started responding in ways that clearly reflected their dilemma, even as they grappled for pragmatic solutions. In 1868, Baboo Saroda Prosad

Sandel, Accountant General, asked Sir Syed Ahmad (Judge, Small Cause Court, Benares) for advice on "whether Hindi ought to be court language of the Upper court. By Hindi is meant, the present mixed language of these provinces written in Deva Nagri character."[26] Sir Syed responds by saying that these were two different issues: "the choice of the language" and "selection of the character in which it must be written." He goes on to say, "the language of our courts in these provinces and Behar ought to be what you call Hindi . . . which I would choose to call Urdoo." The question of script, Sir Syed argues, can only be settled in the context of everyday business of the court. Sir Syed's answer is significant in that it shows how gradually the polarization that appears to be moving along communal lines is actually along linguistic identities: when Sandel is at pains to bring up this point he struggles to avoid the terms. Around the mid-nineteenth century, while Odias were trying to resist imposition of Bangla, these linguistic movements were far from being "communal." For the common Odia people were wary of the usage of Bengali in legal documents such as land deeds, as much as the non-Persian-Urdu-knowing people were wary of those who knew the language of court. Whereas the other linguistic communities were fighting for their identity along linguistic lines, it became difficult to keep communal identities at bay. Sandel disagrees with Syed's suggestion that Hindi and Urdu are merely two different names for the same mixed language as "there is a more copious sprinkling of the Persian in the latter [Urdoo]." With the twin objective to purify "national language" and promote one that is more intelligible in "Hindoostan proper," Sandel asserts that "Urdoo must make room for Hindi, just as earlier Persian had made way for Urdoo."[27] Apart from the crucial expression "national language" (by far the earliest use of the term for Hindi, to the best of my knowledge), the letter is full of such key terms as "indigenous" (for Dev Nagri) and "exotic" (for Persian), "character" and "language," "popular dialect," and so on.

When Sir George Campbell, the then-governor of Bihar, ordered the removal of the Persian script from Bihar in 1873, it was supposed to be replaced by either Devnagari or Kaithi. Since the question of script remained open-ended, it led to only partial introduction of the Devnagari script in the Bihar province. Ashley Eden, the then-lieutenant governor, felt that the changes would never be completed until the Nagari script was used exclusively in all the official documents. To this effect, an order was issued forbidding Persian completely by January 1, 1881. Since in the context of Mithila any administrative decision taken by the British Raj inevitably affected the Darbhanga Raj, the then-Maharaja of Mithila, Maharaja Lakshmishwar, had already issued a similar order for his employees on July 14, 1880.[28] Many hold the

policies of the Maharaja of Darbhanga responsible for the replacement of Maithili and Mithilakshar by Hindi in Devnagari script. Grierson, who was then posted as deputy collector in the Mungher district of Bihar, vigorously opposed this decision. In his "A Plea for the People's Tongue" (1880), Grierson reasons that contrary to the assumption that usage of Hindi will make the official documents accessible to all, "there never has been, is not, and never will be a Hindi such as is alluded to by the objector, and that Hindi, as meant by him, is not understood by ninety per cent of the people who are supposed to speak it."[29]

On April 18, the Lieutenant Governor Anthony MacDonnell brought a resolution to recognize Hindi in Nagari script as the nonexclusive language of the court and the administration in the United Provinces.[30] However, in the neighboring region of Bihar, a ban had already been imposed on the use of Urdu in official and educational spaces. Before coming to the NWP, MacDonnell had worked in Bihar as a secretary to the Lt. Governor of Bengal and was instrumental in replacing Urdu with Hindi in Nagri script. In 1871, the Lt. Governor of Bengal, Campbell, prepared "Lt. Governor's Minute on the Teaching of the Vernacular Language," which is a key document to understand the colonial decision to ban Urdu in Bihar. In his minute, Campbell remarked that flouting the official colonial policy of imparting primary education in the vernaculars, in the schools and official proceedings of Bihar, this "bastard language" was being used on the pretext of an important yet furtive term "Urdu." Campbell suspects the term was chiefly introduced by the Bengal education department and that it loosely refers to "the court and camp language of the Delhi courtiers, not the vernaculars of the Country. . . . I am determined to put a complete stop to the teaching of this language in our schools." Conspicuously, this happened without the intervention of the likes of Madan Mohan Malaviya and Shyam Sunder Das, as was the case in the United Provinces. However, even as Campbell rejects a Sanskritized Hindi on the one hand, and Urdu on the other hand, he does not have much use for the existing vernaculars of Bihar either and dismisses them as dialects.

Thus, MacDonnell was to be yet another common player in the language games. It was during his tenure as commissioner in Patna that the changeover had taken place from the Persian script to Nagari as early as 1872 in the Central Provinces, of which Sambalpur (then Koshal, and now a part of Odisha) was a district. The first indigenous and largest circulating Odia newspaper *Utkal Dipika* reported the history of such experimentation: "Urdu was introduced as the official language when the district first came under British occupation. When Urdu appeared as impracticable for official purpose

owing to the people's ignorance of the language, Hindi was introduced. But the common people found it extremely difficult to acquire proficiency even in Hindi and after all those experiments, Oriya was introduced"[31] (Translated from Odia). This again fueled Oriya nationalism in areas that are now part of Western Orissa, and the people of Sambalpur joined hands with those in Cuttack and Balasore to fight the battle against such "foreign" impositions, euphemistically calling them "Padoshi rajya" (ruling neighbors).

As a fallout of the controversies, *resistance* to Persian inflections in the vernacular languages began to surface circa 1865. On May 19, 1867, Babu Rangalal Bandopadhyay chaired the session of Utkala Bhasha Uddipani Sabha at Cuttack. He lamented that Bangla had come under the sway of the "foreign" language since the *yavnas* (i.e., Muslims) arrived 750 years ago. But, he pointed out how *jadio Uriya anek tadsama shabda rakhia acchhe*, that is, though Odia had retained much of its Sanskritic origin, the incidence of foreign words, that is, Persian and Arabic words, was more or less the same as those in Bangla, even though the "Mussalmans" had been in Odisha for only 300 years. Bandopadhyaya goes on to supply examples of administrative categories in the idiom of the Muslim ruled provinces, which continue to date and no Odia counterparts/synonyms have been adopted.

It was decided at the Sabha, finally, that in order to develop the Odia language, adequate number of books needed to be written and published, thus confirming the nexus between print and the gradual standardization of specific languages. The reason for this prescription is that the overabundance of foreign words is endemic in the schools of *Mughalbandi*. However, the *gadajats* remained outside the purview of Mughal administration and continued to use *deshiya bhasha* (native, local language) for administrative purposes and in schools. It was said that the step would also ensure that only those who knew Odia would get employment as clerks in government jobs, where Odia idiom and usage are to be "corrected."

Rangalal could well be right in his assessment. In fact, in 1899, recalling the state of Odia in the mid-nineteenth century, Fakir Mohan Senapati in "Utkala Bhāshāra Bhūta Bhabishyata" ("The Past and the Future of the Language of Utkala") reiterates Bandopadhyaya's point: "[During] those days to speak Odia infused with Persian vocabulary was considered a mark of sophistication and learning" (*Se kālare Pārasya-mishrita Odiā kathā kahibā bhadratā ebam vidwttāra parichāyaka thilā*).[32] Thus, the communal *bideshiya* and *bijatiya* tags which were initially attached to Persian-Urdu, Nagari-Hindi, and so on, came to haunt the non-Hindi, non-Urdu literary-cultural domain outside the NWP region too, which we shall soon turn to.

The Tertiary Level: From Administrators to Writers

It is indeed significant that Hindi, Urdu, and Odia writers from the late eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century or even beyond showed no anxiety confusion about their choice of language in their literary endeavors and aspirations, as if no controversy was raging around them during those years. They wrote *kavyas* as their predecessors had always written. Even a Dalit poet like Bhima Bhoi (1850-1895), a contemporary of Fakir Mohan and Radhanath Ray, but untouched by modern education, shows no sign of any impact on the contemporaneous discourses on "which language." In the eighteenth century, Brajanath Badajena had composed an entire long poem in Awadhi-Hindi, with numerous Perso-Arabic inflections. But even between 1830 and 1850, Baladev Rath too used several words freely drawing on Perso-Arabic sources. In the case of Hindi-Urdu too, scholars tend to focus on Bharatendu Harishchandra and Balmukund Gupt (and later, Premchand) as examples of writers caught in the linguistic dilemma. For in these narratives, cultural historians ignore a large number of other writers, less famous perhaps, but do so at their own peril. The intervention of Ayodhya Narayan Khattri is an example of this tendency. Khattri, who thought of himself as a philologist, disagreed with Bharatendu by saying that the latter knew no philology. Thus Khattri straddled all the three levels of discourse discussed earlier.[33]

In 1899, a major Odia literary figure, Nanda Kishor Bala (1875–1928), gave a lecture on *Jatiya Sahitya* (national literature) advocating Hindi as a national language.[34] In another essay published a year later called "Bharatara Bhabishyat Bhasha" (or "The Future Language of Bharatvarsha"), Bala made a similar assertion: "We are not saying that the *pradeshika bhasa samastha* or the regional languages should perish. The first and the main reason is the number of Hindi speakers and those from the other languages as per the census report of 1891 . . . Hindi is understood by people everywhere in Bharat."[35] This seemingly was a suicidal assertion in the backdrop of widespread protests that had been staged when Odia-speaking people of Sambalpur district were forced to learn Hindi around this time. But perhaps Bala's motivation came from the general suspicion that Bengali might be raised to the status of a national language, as was allegedly proposed by some "Bangiya writers." However, almost immediately, Bala attempts to allay the fears of those fellow Odias who were fighting hard for the official acceptance of Odia-speaking tracts. He also touches upon the inevitable subject of Hindi, Urdu, and Hindu-Muslim unity long before Gandhi and Premchand came to focus on it. Bala argues, "*Urddu*

Hindī-prasūta bhāshā thibāru Hindīra prachalana Bhāratara ubhaya bāhu Hindu Musalmānanka madhyare ekatā o sauhārdda samsthāpita kari Bhāratara prakruta Unnatira patha parishkāra kari deba" ("Since Urdu is mixed with Hindi, the currency of Hindi would strengthen the unity and understanding between the two arms of Bharat, the Hindus and Mussalmans").[36] He argues in favor of more and more languages opting for *tadvava* and *tatsama* words so that their languages would be mutually comprehensible, particularly because most of these languages have one common root: Sanskrit. Thus, even while there would be a possibility of promoting a distinct *language* in each region, there would be a common "National *Literature*." Of course, there would still be the inevitable question of "in which script?" There could be two possibilities: Roman script and Devnagari, but Devnagari would be much easier to handle. More importantly, he argues that "Urdu being a mixture of Hindi might bring about a unity among Hindus and Muslims. But then how practicable will this be?"

Thus, it becomes clear as to how creative writers in diverse languages had begun drawing on the primary and secondary level of controversies to reflect on the question of language and idiom, usage in writing literary works, and the use of *sadhu bhasa* or chaste idiom versus *gharoi bhasa* (the spoken idiom). Long before the subject was discussed by Odia lexicographers such as Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Bankimchandra Chattopadhya drew attention to the literariness and stressed the need for clarity in expression. To this end, Bankim advised, "you may borrow the words that you need from any language—English, Persian, Arabic, Sanskrit, rustic or of the jungle—so long as it is not indecent."[37] What was not noticed was there are times when these binaries become redundant; and what was seldom discussed and practiced or not practiced was how to handle conversations and dialogues between characters while presenting characters in short or long fiction. The two protagonists of Odia and Hindi nationalism, Fakir Mohan Senapati and Premchand, respectively, allowed their fiction to accommodate the then-current discourses on various language as well as communal issues. Fakir Mohan's interventions in the context of language issue of the time were wide and astute at the macro level and discerning and nuanced at the micro level—often fusing practice and discourse in the same texts, be they stories, tales, or lectures. Not only did Fakir Mohan look at the issues of English education, the use of English for acquiring knowledge, the fight against linguistic hegemony, but he also theorized the connection between power and linguistic spread and also looked into the Sanskritization of the local idiom through the influence of the so-called Mughalbandi. He had, in

1902, bemoaned the loss of regional flavor in the spoken Odia of the *Gadjati* educated class. He begins by saying that the more dominant a *jati*, the more widespread is the propagation of its language. He gives the example of the historical period when the Chinese empire was strong. The next, he says, is English. Due to the influence of the Mussalmans, the spread of Hindi (meaning Hindustani or Urdu) gained momentum and it became the largest spoken language. At the same time, he advocated the cause of Odia, celebrating and championing the cause of diversity of the spoken Odia idiom as it was practiced in different parts of what was then emerging as Odisha. He said, with this, even our culture is losing its uniqueness; and, along with the preservation of *gadjati* terms, the age-old cultural practices, which are almost moribund, should also be museumized. Of course, he was being sarcastic.

In a tale ("Mounā-Mouni"), he narrates the criminal practices of certain "sadhus" (who were dacoits from neighboring territories, and whose dialogues he cast in direct speech). As was his practice, the narrator suddenly intervenes "Just as French is a common language in Europe, Hindi is all pervasive in Bharatabarsha. Sadhus and sanyasis travel all over [B]haratabarsha; hence they have to speak Hindi. The language of our sadhu groups is an admixture of low type of spoken Bangla idiom and Hindi with Bangla inflections."[38] The idiom in the entire story is Sanskritized Odia or "sadhu" *bhasa*, with the aim of giving the story a light-hearted treatment, at times sounding funny at the expense of the characters. Interspersed are dialogues by the Hindi-speaking "asadhu" sadhus (dishonest holy men) too: "deo ka māl, deo diyā. Deotākā sevā, tumhāredharam."[39] Loosely translated, this would mean, "these are the property of God; God has given these; service to God; your duty."

For Odia writers, the motivation for producing a large number of study-worthy printed texts came from their anxiety over real or imagined threat to their linguistic identity. With the advent of print technology, nineteenth-century Bengal was flushed with modern books in Bangla, a luxury that Odias did not enjoy. From 1866 onward, among others, Fakir Mohan and Gauri Shankar Ray led from the front and with patronage from local rulers tried to ensure that there were good enough books for pedagogic as well as popular reading to stall the rising Bangla book business. Odia intellectuals also saw books in terms of pedagogic tools for nation-building purposes. All these factors are discernible in the "*Bhumika*" or Foreword to the first edition of the iconic Odia novel, *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* (1902) (*Six Acres and a Third*), which describes its author as well established and suggests that the novel "will at least partially fill the need of entertaining, pathanajogya or reader-friendly prose texts. . . ." Referring to the social inequality precipitated by the dominant position of English and Persian,

the narrator of the novel concludes, "It was Parsi [Farsi] first, and now it is English. . . . The fate of Devnagari is buried under the stone. The English educated say: 'Sanskrit is a dead language.' We clarify the matter further: Sanskrit is the language of a moribund people."[40] This social decline is exacerbated by the remoteness of Persian script from the people, allowing the privileged few (the *Mian*) to "become Zamindar merely by plying his pen backwards." As Sudipta Kaviraj has pointed out, the land-holding as well as business jargon under Bengal Presidency, of which Orissa was a part in Fakir Mohan's time, was all drawn from Persian. It was therefore possible to hoodwink even literate Oriyas into signing land deeds.[41]

Fakir Mohan's puzzlement over the complexities of India's past is cast in the form of debates and arguments among imaginary and historical characters. As Jatin Nayak puts it, these debates reveal "Fakir Mohan's essentially humanist outlook on history and [his] rejection of jingoistic or religious perspectives."[42] In *Lachhamā*, Fakir Mohan distances himself from the anti-Muslim tirade that was common in late nineteenth-century Bengal. According to the narrator, the threat to Odisha's peace and happiness in the eighteenth century was chiefly posed by the marauding Maratha Hindus and internecine fights, rather than by the Muslims. Fakir Mohan puts the following words in the mouth of one of the characters: "As for the preservation of our temples, a thousand Alibardi Khans or Aurangzebs cannot harm a particle of the temples of Bhubaneswar or of Lord Jagannath. . . . Even the infidel Muslim would shrink from committing such heinous crimes [as the Marathas]."[43] This is in sharp contrast to Bankim's somewhat monological historical vision, where Muslims are blamed for all of Bharatbarsha's woes. As Sudipta Kaviraj says, "References to Islamic rule as foreign are quite widespread and can be found in many Brahmo writings . . . . And hostility to Muslims in the works of highly influential writers like Bankimchandra played a significant role in this story."[44]

For the Odia Brahmo, Fakir Mohan, the same history reads differently. For his generation, Maratha "rule" was so atrocious that Odias welcomed the armies of East India Company in 1803. In fact, one of the characters in *Lachhamā* praises the white men who were beginning to settle down in Sutanati. When it came to the question of English education, Fakir Mohan had his own misgivings as reflected in his well-known story, "Dak Munshi" (or "Postmaster"). In this short story, the son of a poor postmaster mistreats his father upon acquiring English education and becoming a *hakim* and gives his father a couple of "*Ingreji ghussi*" (English insults). In his last novel, *Prayāschitta* (1914), the narrator says that true knowledge cannot be acquired through a foreign language. This in many ways anticipates Premchand's take

on the same subject in "Bade Bhaisaab" ("The Older Brother") in which the older brother makes personal sacrifices to give his younger brother a Western education so that the latter becomes a *hakim*. "*Is tarāh Angrezi padhoge to zindegi bhar padhte reh jāoge. Angrezi padhnā koi hansi khel nahin hai. . . . yahan din rāt ankhen phādne padhni padti hai aur khoon jalānā padtā hai. . . .*"[45] Nonetheless, the brother has to persevere to succeed in life. Similarly, Fakir Mohan's indictment of English education occurs along similar lines too: "nowadays much is being made of *ingrezi siksha*. But it is very difficult for this impossible language to percolate to the lower classes."[46]

The Hindi-Urdu controversy of the mid-nineteenth century continued to reverberate for decades to come, affecting national and personal interests. Premchand's response to it has been well documented.[47] On September 1, 1915, when Premchand was 35 years old, he wrote to Munshi Dayanarayn that he was "now practicing to write in Hindi as well. Urdu will no longer do," adding further that "like the late Balamukund Gupt, I'll also have to devote my life to writing in Hindi. Has any Hindu ever made a success of writing in Urdu that I will?"[48] By now, the estrangement between the two languages and communities had precipitated, and Amrit Rai's contention that "modern" Urdu is not a language commonly shared by Hindus and Muslims in his *A House Divided* had already come to pass.[49] It is possible that Premchand's latter-day attempt to reconcile the two through Hindustani is a belated decision following Gandhi's political strategy to keep the anticolonial stable safely bolted, although by which time, the horse of communal divide had already left the barn. But what exactly prompted Premchand to shift to Hindi, though well considered, has itself been a subject of controversy.[50]

Harish Trivedi, among others, offers a most cogent argument on this: the commercial consideration. Urdu books did not sell and one of Premchand's novels in Urdu, *Bazar-a-Husn* (*The Brothel*), could not find a publisher. It eventually appeared in Hindi under the title *Sevasadan* (1919). Communal factors too prevented a wider reception of Premchand's Urdu writings. His reference to Gupt, who was among the first writers to switch from Urdu to Hindi in 1888, clearly suggests how the decision was based on the communal identity of the Hindi language. Moreover, as Trivedi demonstrates, Urdu was perceived to be the language of the colonizer, which placed certain communities in an unfairly advantageous position. Decades before Premchand, Bharatendu Harischandra responded to this quandary through a questionnaire circulated by British Education Commission, Harishchandra said:

> If Urdu ceases to be the court language the Mussalmans will not easily secure the numerous offices of Government of which they have at

> present a sort of monopoly. By the introduction of the Nagari character they would lose entirely the opportunity of plundering and the people by reading one word for another and thereby misconstruing the real sense of the contents. . . . What wonders cannot be performed through their medium? Black can be changed into white and white into black.[51] (quoted in 964)

This is remarkably close to what the narrator in Fakir Mohan's *Chha Mana Atha Guntha* says regarding Odisha.

S. W. Fallon suggests in his Preface that the binary between esteemed Arabic and the vulgar vernacular of ordinary people served "to keep up that mystification which is the nefarious advantage of the few, and a wrongful injury to the many."[52] Since the situation in the case of Hindi was sensitive when he began his career, Premchand tried to ensure the purity of both Urdu and Hindi, not mixing them up while writing in either of the two languages, and even maintaining separate identity of the two, writing in both languages, and translating. Thus, for him, it was not a case of two scripts and one language, but a case of parting ways. Unlike Odia, Hindi did not face extinction; rather, it was a question of consolidating the gains of his predecessors, of expanding the ground that had already been gained over Persian-Urdu. Premchand did not feel the need to displace or reject Urdu, but expected the two languages to coexist, maintaining their sharply defined identity and difference, in the first few years in any case, of his Hindi career.

Premchand has been credited with the forging of the people's idiom. His choice of Hindi was also prompted by a realization that Urdu was too ornate, formal, and stylized for the common man.[53] However, it is inaccurate to attribute motives such as the ideology of "Hindi nationalism" without talking about Urdu nationalism (since historians already talk about Odia nationalism too non-pejoratively). In any case, how does one explain such statements of Premchand as: "The number of Muslim population may be 8 crores; but the number of Urdu-speaking Mussalman is no more than one fourth of that figure. Under these circumstances, and for the sake of nationalist considerations of the highest kind, is it not desirable that some necessary correctives and enlargement be introduced into Urdu in order to take it closer to Hindi? And, similarly, let Hindi be expanded to take it closer to Urdu . . . and, thus, whatever our writers write would not belong to one region but for the whole of Bharatvarsh."[54] Stressing the need for a common script, he adds, "If the whole country uses Nagari script . . . Nationalist consciousness will not allow them to stay away from this for long."[55] During the Indore convention of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, 1935, with Gandhi as

chair, Gujarati author Kanhialal Maniklal (K. M.) Munshi floated the idea of a Bhartiya Sahitya Sammelan to modify Hindi so as to make it more accessible in the non-Hindi regions and to start a journal to make available to the readers of Hindi the best of regional literature. Munshi expressed the hope that Hindi, thus modified, would eventually grow into a national script. In the editorial to the July issue of *Hans* (1935), Premchand stresses the need to mobilize the triad of province, regional language, and literary awareness toward a national or pan-Indian literary culture. The model "*prant mein rashtriya sahitya*" or "national literature in the province" would have bridged the gap between the region and the nation—a divide that Gandhi had sought to bridge ever since his 1914 arrival in India from South Africa. The editorial expresses the hope that "within a period of ten to twenty years" regional literatures will be integrated through Hindi. A letter by a certain Munshi Gulab Rai, MA, published as an extension of "Hansvani" (September 1935), spells out a plan of action for the proposed Rashtriya Sahitya Sabha. "In every province," Rai writes, "the Sabha must start a magazine that uses Hindi [Nagari] script, even if its language is regional." Further, at various regional literary gatherings, "for the benefit of the local participants, a discourse or two must be conducted in Hindi." In October 1935, when *Hans* was relaunched as the mouthpiece of Bharatiya Sahitya Sangathan, under the joint editorship of Premchand and K. M. Munshi, it was supported by an editorial board in which all the Indian languages were represented. The Board included Gandhi, Maithilisharan Gupta, as well others representing various language groups: Sajjad Zaheer (Urdu), Neelkanth Das (Odia), C. Rajagopalachari (Tamil), K. M. Pannikar (Malayalam), and so on.

All this seems to be a residual of the ideology of Nagari, a striking echo of the vision of *Nagari* as outlined by Akhil Chandra Palit. In 1905, Justice Sarada Charan Mitra set up "Ek Lipi Vistar Parishad" in order to promote the cause of Independence and present write-ups of various languages in a uniform script in 1905, which launched the magazine *Devnagar* as its mouthpiece in 1907.[56] This was indeed a momentous event in the history of the Indian languages movement across the subcontinent. In his article "Devnagari: Introduction and Discussion," Palit argues that diversity of language has divided people of one region from another, and English cannot eradicate this huge stumbling block in getting to know and understand one another. Diversity of script rather than the diversity of language, he said, was more damaging to the unity of Bharatavarsha. He argued that though Bengalis could somehow understand the speech of Biharis, Hindustanis, and Odias, the "Bihari script and those of Urdu and Odia" looked strange. Many felt, he said, the Persian script was a great obstacle in learning Urdu.

Palit asserted that "by looking at the magazine issues over a year, it becomes evident how the complex problem of script induced chaos has been sorted out easily and beautifully."

Premchand gets engaged in the linguistic issues around the time Fakir Mohan Senapti dies in 1918, several decades after the language issues were first debated seriously. In a way, a few issues had already been settled for good and were well nigh irrevocable. Premchand was to argue in a vein similar to that of Nandakishor Bala of 1899: "if the advocates of these two languages (Urdu that is leaden with unfamiliar and obsolete Arabic and Persian words, and a Hindi that is leaden with difficult Sanskritic words) stand before each other and speak using these literary idioms perhaps they would fail to communicate with each other."[57] Also, around these crucial years when Gandhi was beginning his journey throughout India to give the Indian nationalist, anticolonial struggle a new direction, Fakir Mohan was ending his life journey, having fought his battle with hegemonic literary cultures. Also around this time, Gandhi's impact on local Odia identitarian politics took a decisive turn, by accommodating his vision of Indian *Swaraj*. In 1921, after a brief period of power struggle between the two ideologues, the septuagenarian Madhusudan Das and the younger Gandhian, Gopabandhu Das, *desha* no longer meant just Utkala Desha, but both Utkala Desha and Bharatabarsha. Until his death in 1918, Fakir Mohan pondered, albeit playfully, on the state of languages and the languages of the state—what was ideal, what was pragmatic. He seems to have settled for the latter and his use and views on language are as diverse as they are democratic. But for Fakir Mohan, Odia and Odisha were his primary focus, with occasional references to Bharatavarsha. While he alluded often to the broader historical context, he nonetheless was unconcerned with the world outside Odisha. For Premchand, Bharatavarsha was the main point of reference.

By way of a further contrast between the two, the following difference might be noted: More often than not, Fakir Mohan would put into the mouth of the characters the idiom that they were most likely to use depending on their respective social class (poor/rich/feudal lord, etc.), community (Hindus/Muslims/white Europeans, etc.), or linguistic identity (Odia/Hindi/English, etc.). One can clearly see how Premchand would use the standard Urdu or Hindi for almost every character indiscriminately. In "Idgah," he makes every attempt to supply what is recognizably *khadi boli*, and very chaste Hindi in the descriptive passages, which are highly evocative. Even the dialogues spoken by the Muslim children are cast in the form of *khadi boli*, eschewing every possible use of Urdu words, excepting *maamijaan*, or *abbajaan*. It strikes one as odd within the framework

of realist fiction. When he had the option of hybridizing the medium, when he could have easily used commonly used Urdu words and phrases, Premchand insisted on maintaining separate identities. Though Oriya was faced with a situation where its very survival was at stake, Fakir Mohan would often use the language of the dominant other,[58] and engage with an entire range of issues. Rebati's story is not only about women's education, but also the learning of Oriya language, where there is a reference to the historical reality of "Madhu Rao's *Chhandamala*"—a language primer that the eponymous character reads from. He was equally concerned with different possibilities, including his preference for "*Bisuddha Gharei Bhasa*." In fact, when his very first novel was reviewed by a budding lexicographer, Gopal Praharaj, language became a key issue.

Even within the specificities of the Oriya language there were debates over *Kathit Bhasa* and *Sadhu Bhasa*. In "Randipua Ananta" ("Ananta the Widow's Son") and "*Punarmushikaobhava*," Fakir Mohan fuses both kinds of idiom. I would like to add the further fact, with a view to counterpoising him against Premchand, that Fakir Mohan constantly spoke of the "mother tongue." In the same breath, he would bemoan the Sanskritization of the "*Gadajati*" *bhasa*, even preparing a glossary of *Gadajati* terms in order to "museumize" them.[59] Though he would himself use a Sanskritized idiom in a narrative situation that would demand it, he said, "in the language (Odia), the number of *deshaja* words is reducing gradually, and in their place the number of Sanskritic words is increasing. If you do not mind, let me say that the language of the educated class is turning into difficult-to-digest *khichdi*."[60] Thus, although the effect of language politics on the writings of Fakir Mohan and Premchand worked in different ways, depending on local peculiarities of circumstances, it is possible to identify common strands that connect the development and evolution of languages, the issue of language and nationalism as it is dealt with in the literatures across various Indian languages.

Finally, I would like to reiterate the point I made at the beginning of the essay about the need to expand and de-discretize the apparently disparate archives that constitute the rubric "Indian Literary-Cultural History." This will help us evolve a methodology different from the ones that are being employed currently. The existing and emerging body of new scholarship, best exemplified through the compendia put together by Sheldon Pollock, Stuart Blackburn, and Vasudha Dalmia, et al.,[61] have all broken new grounds and are absolutely indispensable and exemplary for future research. Yet, for all their brilliance, they are limited in offering us with a mass of mechanically juxtaposed discrete archives. Their immense contribution will remain unutilized

if we do not engage in the more challenging task of interweaving the strands of the individual linguistic-literary histories. Otherwise, conclusions drawn on one set of archives might be seen as anomalous when seen in conjunction with another set. For example, the study of the Hindi/Urdu linguistic divide along communal lines cannot be applied to study such other divides as Hindi/Maithili or Bangla/Odia (one a dominant and the other a marginal linguistic group); nor does the paradigm explain the partition of Bengal into East and West even when the language (Bangla) is common to both. The 1947 Partition saw the creation of East Pakistan, but later in 1971, East Pakistan seceded from its Pakistani brethren in favor of a Bangla-speaking Bangladesh. Thus, the master-narrative of Hindi-Hindu/Urdu-Muslim division fails to explain other regional and linguistic divisions as the ones described earlier. Similarly, the afterlives of the two sets of controversies in India (Hindi Urdu and Bengali Odia), which had started on the basis of a master-slave paradigm, ended differently, with the peaceful and celebratory coexistence of Odia and Bangla, whereas the once-dominant Urdu is now the linguistic other of Hindi.

I have, thus, provided a blueprint for writing a fuller and more comprehensive literary history of India by discussing the shared and intertwined histories of languages of the subcontinent. In so doing, I have tried to demonstrate how the jigsaw puzzle comprising separate and discrete archives can be made to yield an integrative and recognizable pattern in which the different parts would more visibly relate to the whole. My discussion has also attempted to suggest how historians tend to fall in a trap of their own making, by first settling for an emotive teleology, which becomes a predetermining model for reading back a cultural past that answers to that teleology. An indication of this is the way two parallel (and interpenetrating) histories are read by liberal historians, one in the tragic, and the other in the celebratory vein. For, even while agonizing over the partition-inducing Hindi-Urdu controversy, we celebrate the other formations of language-based states—the Bengali Odia controversy. While we decry one kind of nationalism as divisive; we celebrate the other as liberating and empowering.[62] On the evidence displayed earlier, much of the discourse of linguistic discord can be seen as "derivative," since their frontiers were primarily defined by European scholars equipped with their newly acquired disciplinary tools, irrespective of whether or not the nationalist discourse that accompanied them was derivative.[63] The implication of all these for students of comparative literature is rather profound: we can now see Fakir Mohan and Premchand as not working in isolated linguistic spaces but as two writers who inherited and inhabited a shared discursive space and a shared history.

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Notes

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1. Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 245–48.

2. Sheldon Pollock, *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011); Shamsur Rahman Faruqui, "A Long History of Urdu Literary Culture, Part I: Naming and Placing a Literary Culture," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003), 805–63; Sudipta Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions From South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003), 503–66; Stuart McGregor, "The Progress of Hindi, Part I: The Development of a Transregional Idiom," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions From South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2003), 912–57.

3. Gayatri Chakraborty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2003).

4. See Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010); Francesca Orsini, *The Hindi Public Sphere, 1920–1940: Language and Literature in Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002); Harish Trivedi, "The Progress of Hindi, Part 2: Hindi and the Nation," in *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions From South Asia*, ed. Sheldon Pollock (Oxford University Press, 2003); and McGregor, "The Progress of Hindi, Part I."

5. Alok Rai does discuss the way Bengalis supported the Nagari-Hindi movement, but does so *en passant*. See his *Hindi Nationalism* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2000).

6. Bipin Chandra Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times* (Calcutta: Modern Book Agency, 1932), 358.

7. Loc. cit.

8. Ibid.

9. In Rai, *Hindi Nationalism*, viii.

10. Sudipta Kaviraj, "Writing, Speaking, Being: Language and the Historical Formation of Identities in India," in *Language and Politics in India*, ed. Asha Sarangi (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

11. Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," 533.

12. "Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, Dated the 2nd February 1835" http://www.columbia.edu.

13. M. K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments With Truth*, trans. Mahadev Desai (Ahmadabad: Navajivan Trust, 1927/1999). Emphasis mine.

14. I mean here to suggest the way print becomes an all-pervasive agent of the colonial government.

15. Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1788). This is presumably the first printed book (and the earliest grammar) in Bengali, cleansing the language of Persian words. See Farooqui, "Urdu Literary Culture, Part I," 811.

16. Robert Caldwell, *A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages* (London: Trübner & Co., 1856); John Beames, *A Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India* (1872).

17. Shan Muhammad, introduction to *The Aligarh Movement*: *Basic Documents (1864–1898)*, ed. Shan Muhammad (Meerut: Meenakshi Prakashan, 1978), xii.

18. Ibid., xxiv.

19. *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (JAS). Several arguments in favor of and against Urdu/Hindustani were offered in books and journals. Lord Strangford's elaborate paper published in *Quarterly Review* (1865) was in response to "Vamberley's Travels in Central Asia." Fallon's paper was another. John Beames quotes from Strangford to buttress his argument in favor of Hindustani: "If Hindustani, adopted by us as the future general language of India, is to be a language and a jargon, it must become so by means of its alliance with Persian, the speech which all Indian Mahomedans have at their heart, anil use as the feeder, or channel of other feeders, for all their abstract thought, their politics, science, and poetry" (18). "On the Arabic Element in Official Hindustani, Part II," *Journal of the Asiatic Society,* Part I, *History, Literature etc.*, no. iii (1867). He also quotes the Hindi propagandists: "'Hindi is more native to the soil, and lies closer to the hearts of the people than Arabic or Persian, and its use is therefore preferable to that of the last named languages.' This is the *Political* argument of the Hindi school. Dr. S. W. Fallon puts it thus: 'Hosts of Persian and Arabic words have been introduced *by natives of the country* (the italics are mine) who affect a foreign tongue, and make transfers in the mass out of worthless books imperfectly understood'" (*English-Hindustani Law and Commercial Dictionary*, Introductory Dissertation, xviii *ad fin*, as quoted in Beames, ibid., 147).

20. James Long, "Notes and Queries Suggested by a Visit to Orissa in January 1859," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of India*, no. III (1859): 190. Even earlier, Amos Sutton in his Preface to *An Introductory Grammar of Oriya Language* had commented on the resemblance between Bangla and Odia: "While, however the structure of the two languages, and a great proportion of the words employed, are the same, it is remarkable, that there should exist so great a difference in the pronunciation, a difference as great as that between English and French" (see Gaganendranath Dash, *Odia Bhasha Charchara Parampara* [Cuttack: Institute of Oriya Studies, 1983], xii).

21. Rajendralal Mitra, "On the Origin of the Hindavi Language and Its Relation to the Urdu Dialect," *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, no. V (1864): 504.

22. Ibid., 512.

23. Long, "Notes and Queries Suggested by a Visit to Orissa in January 1859," 190.

24. Ibid., 189

25. Taken from the "Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1870," 192–216, reprinted in John Beames, *Essays on Orissan History and Literature*, ed. Kailash Pattanaik (Jagatsinghpur: Prafulla, 2004), 94.

26. Muhammad, *Aligarh Movement*, 326.

27. Ibid.

28. Jatashankar Jha, *Beginning of Modern Education in Mithila: Selections from Educational Records, Darbhanga Raj, 1860–1930* (Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1972), 69.

29. George A. Grierson, "A Plea for the People's Tongue," *The Calcutta Review* LXXVI (1880): 151–68.

30. Rai, in *Hindi Nationalism*, calls it "the most fateful decision in the evolution of modern Hindi," and perceives it as one of the factors that eventually led to the partition of India (17). But as we have seen, the decision was seeded much earlier in the 1860s. Administrators were merely implementing what was "scientifically" and statistically proved.

31. *Utkal Dipika* (June 6, 1894). The relative level of difficulty in learning these languages is captured by a still extant proverb in Bihar: *Ārabi nikāle charbi, Phārsi nikāle tel, Urdu hai kuchh kuchh Hindi hai khel.* ("Trying to learn Arabic will melt your fat; Persian will take out oil; Urdu does it a little; but Hindi is child's play.")

32. *Utkala Sahitya* 3, no. 12 (Cuttack: Utkal Sahitya Press, 1899), 273.

33. See Rai, *Hindi Nationalism*.

34. Nandakishor Bala, "2nd Khanda chhāndamālā," in *Utkal Sahitya* 3, no. 10 (Cuttack: Utkal Sāhitya Press, 1899), 220–29.

35. Bhāratara Bhabisyata Bhāshā, *Utakala Sāhitya* 4th Bhāga 1ma Sankhyā 1307 (1900 AD), 17–20.

36. Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Fakirmohan Granthābalī*, Trutiya Khanda or *Complete Works*, vol. 3, ed. Debendra Dash (Cuttack: Granthamandir, 2008).

37. *Bangadarshan*, 1285 Jaishta (May 1879). Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, "The Bengali Language: The Language of Writing," trans. Gautam Chakravarty, *Indian Literature,* vol. lvii, no. 3 (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, May/June 2014 [1883]) 26–33.

38. Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Fakirmohan Granthābalī*, vol 3., 137.

39. Ibid., 136.

40. Ibid., 24.

41. Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," 530.

42. Jatindra Kumar Nayak, *The Historical Novel in Oriya* (Cuttack: Cuttack Students' Store, 1982), 81.

43. Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Lachhama*, trans. Chandan Das (New Delhi: Three Rivers Publishers, 2013), 28, 29.

44. Kaviraj, "The Two Histories of Literary Culture in Bengal," 541.

45. Premchand, *Bade Bhai Saheb*, accessed July 9, 2015, http://www.scribd.com.

46. Fakir Mohan Senapati, *Fakirmohan Granthābalī*, vol. 2, 416.

47. See Dalmia, *The Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions*; Zafar Raza, *Premchand, Urdu-Hindi Kathākār* (Ilahabad: Lokbharti Prakashan, 1993); Kamal Kishor Goyanka, ed., *Premchand ki Hindi-Urdu Kāhāniyan* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanapith, 1990).

48. Amrit Rai, *Premchand*: *A Life*. Harish Trivedi, trans. (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1982), 104. Also see Mukund, "Balmukund Gupta: Hindī men bindī (1900)," accessed August 12, 2015, http://www.columbia.edu.

49. Rai, *Hindi Nationalism*, 288. Also see Aijaz Ahmad's surprise at Rai's contention. For the latter, see *Lineages of the Present*, 338.

50. See Krupa Shandilya's essay in this issue for further discussion of this issue.

51. Trivedi, "The Progress of Hindi, Part 2," 958–1022.

52. S. W. Fallon, "English-Hindustani Law and Commercial Dictionary, Introductory Dissertation," xii–xiii (quoted in John Beames, "On the Arabic Element in Official Hindustani, Part ii," *Journal of the Asiatic Society,* Part I, *History, Literature etc.*, no. iii [1867]: 147).

53. Trivedi brilliantly showcases the difference in "The Progress of Hindi, Part 2" and I use his examples of the translations to make this point.

54. "Urdu, Hindi and Hindustani," in *Kuch Vichar* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Granth Niketan, 1990), 114.

55. Premchand, *Rastrabhasa Hindi aur Uske Samasyaen* (New Delhi: Bharatiya Granth Niketan, 1990), 138.

56. Krishna Bihari Mishra, *The Origin and Growth of Hindi Journalism in Kolkata* (Press Club: Kolkata, 2005).

57. Premchand, *Rastrabhasa Hindi aur Uske Samasyaen*, 108.

58. It is intriguing to note the near-total absence of Bangla words, phrases and even characters. In the absence of evidence, one can only offer conjectural reasons for such a

conspicuous omission. It may have been because many *pravashi* Bengalis happened to be his close friends, who worked alongside "pure Odias" in the interest of Odias.

59. Fakirmohan Senapati, *Fakirmohan Granthābalī,* vol. 3, 334.

60. Loc. cit.

61. Sheldon Pollock, *Literary Cultures in History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003); Stuart Blackburn and Vasudha Dalmia, *India's Literary History: Essays on the Nineteenth Century* (Delhi and Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2004).

62. Of course, nationalist historians do otherwise: celebrate both Hindi and Urdu as two "national" languages, one in India, the other in Pakistan. For such liberal and not-so-liberal histories, see Dalmia, *The Nationalisation of Hindu Traditions*; Rai, *Hindi Nationalism*; Goyanka, ed., *Premchand ki Hindi-Urdu Kāḥāniyan*; Raza, *Premchand, Urdu-Hindi Kathākār*; Samsher Rahman Faruqui (in Pollock); Dash, *Odiā Bhāshā Charchāra Paramparā*; Nivedita Mohanty, *Oriya Nationalism: Quest for a United Orissa, 1866–1956*, rev. & enl. ed. (Jagatsinghpur: Prafulla, 2005); and Bishnu Mohapatra, "Ways of 'Belonging': The Kanchi Kaveri Legend and the Construction of Oriya Identity," in *Studies in History*, 12.2 (New Delhi: Sage, 1996), 203–21.

63. See Partha Chatterjee, "Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?" in *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (New Delhi: OUP, 1985/1999). What I have in mind here is the following: prior to the "linguistic moment" in Indian cultural history that was heralded by the European scholars, there was an alternative, albeit under-theorized view of the *desha* or *jati* before the superimposition of the concept of the modern nation state took place.