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'Negotiating Narrative Empathy in Gandhi's Life-Writing'

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<u>'NEGOTIATING NARRATIVE EMPATHY IN GANDHI'S LIFE-WRITING'</u>

Abstract

Narrative empathy – that 'vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect' often provoked by and sought through the reading of literature– is also thought to be associated with prosocial and altruistic behaviour (Keen, 2007). In recent years, the obvious potential of this 'empathy-altruism hypothesis' for exploitation in both literary and non-literary works has stimulated much inter-disciplinary research into the narrative techniques that most effectively promote narrative empathy. Although individual differences abound in both authorial intentions regarding and reader responses to narrative empathy, the construction and presentation of characterisation, narratorial perspective and structure, text length, genre conventions, context and metanarrative commentary are all currently thought to be factors in the provocation of narrative empathy.

  With this in mind, this paper will partially employ Michael Toolan's (2009) framework for the interrogation of potentially empathetic sites in literature to engage with narrative empathy in the autobiography of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. With its emphasis on universalism – the commonality of all mankind – empathy lies at the very heart of Gandhian ideology and was among the chief doctrines he endeavoured to instil in the hearts and minds of his followers. Described in contemporary reviews as 'the exposition of the development of his moral and religious beliefs', his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (1927, 1929) is but the largest single autobiographical work in a total of one hundred volumes of writing penned by the 'Mahatma' or 'Great Soul' who became renowned for his struggles against social inequality and promotion of a 'brotherhood of man'.

Keywords: narrative empathy, Gandhi, corpus stylistics, empathetic deixis.

1. Introduction

Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was published in two volumes, in 1927 and 1929 respectively, when the author was in his late fifties, and its title exemplifies the manner in which Gandhi's life was structured around the undertaking of a series of 'experiments with truth', through which he endeavoured to achieve enlightenment and communion with God. Though originally written in Gujarati, it was almost simultaneously published in English, with the translation carried out by close friend and aide-de-camp Mahadev Desai. However, proficient as he was in English, and protective of all material published under his name, Gandhi was heavily involved in this translation, a translation which ensured the text's accessibility to the whole English-speaking world.

Consideration of the text's various reviews – contemporaneously to its initial publication, at the time of republication as a single volume in 1940, and indeed twenty- and twenty-first century readings – are indicative of the significant emotional and empathetic engagement experienced by its readers. Indeed, in his emphasis on universalism, Gandhi encouraged empathetic engagement between peoples as a means of collapsing racial and cultural boundaries and accentuating the shared commonality of mankind. In an effort to trace the textual origins of such empathetic engagement, this paper investigates the presence of potentially empathetic linguistic techniques in Gandhi's autobiography (henceforth referred to as *Experiments*).

2. Defining Empathy

2.1 Origins

Defined as 'a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect, [which] can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading (Keen, 2006: 208), the term 'empathy' was originally applied, not to inter-personal relationships, but rather to our relationship with art, and can be traced back to late-nineteenth-century Germany. Philosopher Robert Vischer, who coined the term *Einfuhlung* - a literal reference to the practice of 'feeling one's way into' art which was translated into the English word 'empathy' in 1909[1] - emphasised the centrality of imaginative projection to empathetic engagement with art, noting that during artistic engagement, the viewer 'unconsciously projects its own bodily form – and with this also the soul – into the form of the object' (Vischer, 1994 [1873]: 92). It is this projection of oneself into an object, this attempted identification with it whilst remaining simultaneously separate from it, which results in the emotional engagement characteristic of empathy.

2.2 Psychological Processes

Empathy is believed to have an evolutionary basis, as originally propounded by Darwin[2], acting as a key social tool which enables humans and animals alike to recognise and respond appropriately to the needs of others. Neuroscientists currently believe that the communication of empathy in humans is controlled by a group of neurons, dubbed 'mirror neurons', which automatically reflect or 'mirror' the perceived emotions of another individual. As such, empathy can be conceptualised as a two-stage cognitive-affective process, with the mirror neural mechanism activating 'an initial spontaneous sharing of feeling' which is subsequently overlaid with '[m]ore complex cognitive responses to others'

mental states' (Gallese, 2001: 35-6)[3]. Mirror neurons, with their ability to 'dissolve the barrier between you and someone else' (Slack, 2007), are critical to the process of empathetic engagement in humans; in a gesture reflective of his renown as a practitioner of empathy, neuroscientists have recently dubbed these neurons 'Gandhi neurons' (Ramachandran, 2000).

2.3 Narrative Empathy

To undertake the study of empathy in Gandhi's autobiography we will move from a theoretical consideration of empathy in the 'real' world to one of empathy in the world of narrative, that is, narrative empathy. It has long been known that, as asserted by Stockwell, 'literary works – whether fictional or not – have an emotional and tangible effect on readers and on the real world in which we live with literature' (2002: 6), and the empathetic potential of literature has influenced both its production and consumption since the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, with debate over literature's potential humanitarian consequences continuing to rage. Research into narrative empathy is currently experiencing something of a resurgence; Suzanne Keen remarks that speculations about the consequences of literary-reading currently 'dovetail with efforts on the part of contemporary virtue ethicists, political philosophers, educators, theologians, librarians, and interested parties such as authors and publishers to connect the experience of empathy, including its literary form, with outcomes of changed attitudes, improved motives, and better care and justice' (Keen, 2006: 207-8). In her belief that exposure to literature assists in the reader's evolution into 'a sensitive and empathetic interpreter of others'[4] philosopher Martha Nussbaum is among the chief proponents of ethical criticism, an interdisciplinary field which asserts a causal connection between literary reading and prosocial, that is, altruistic, behaviour. Existing research into narrative empathy considers only empathy evoked by fictional narratives, thereby excluding the empathetic potential of non-fictional narratives, such as autobiography. Given recent

research by Michael Steig in which a group of readers claiming a general inability to empathetically engage with literature admitted the only exception occurred upon exposure to autobiographies, research into non-fictional narrative engagement is clearly needed[5].

3. Analytical Methodology

Suzanne Keen, currently among the foremost authorities on narrative empathy, decries the lack of investigation into long-held claims that certain narrative techniques are more successful in evincing readers' empathy. In his consideration of the nature of reader-immersion in a text, Michael Toolan somewhat redresses this oversight as he investigates the possibility that texts contain emotive sites within which the stimulus for literary empathy and engagement is specifically located.

Toolan asserts that the attempted 'drawing of the reader into empathy or sympathy with a depicted character [is] achieved by furnishing the textual means with which the reader can 'see into' or *see along with* that character's imagined consciousness', a circumstance achieved through authorial depiction of 'a credible scene or situation', alongside the provision of readerly access to the character's internal perspective (Toolan, 2009, emphasis in original). Such access to 'what a character, from their particular standpoint, sees, does, and thinks' typically involves effective use of 'individual-oriented deixis', language expressing volitive modality and mental process verbs of evaluative reaction (Toolan, 2009).

As an appropriate methodology, reader response testing can be first used to locate potentially emotive sites in a text, followed by the application of corpus stylistics' tools to investigate the linguistic composition of such sites. As a robust and methodical linguistic tool which facilitates in-depth lexical and semantic analysis of large tracts of text, the use of corpus stylistics to identify potentially emotive sites in a text is easily justified. Toolan

further propounds his reasons for employing it, confident as he is that corpus stylistics is 'good on repetition', which he, following Jakobsen, believes is at the heart of a text's literariness (2009). In the case of Gandhi's autobiography, decades of reader reviews implicate the whole text as a site of empathic potential. Using corpus stylistics methodologies to pinpoint the use of individual-oriented deixis in *Experiments* – to which I have limited myself due to the restrictions of this paper - I will highlight just some of the linguistic techniques which are potentially capable of evoking empathy in the reader of Gandhi's autobiography. In doing so, I endeavour to contribute towards an answering of the following question posited by Toolan: 'How (by what means, most crucially) does a poem, story, novel or play cause a reader to be moved, empathize, immersed, [or] involved?' (2009).

My corpus stylistics tool, Wmatrix, statistically analyses an electronic corpora of linguistic data by tagging words both syntactically and semantically[6] and then produces tables of results demonstrating the over- or underuse of each lexical item in the text in comparison to a representative corpus. Statistically, any result indicating a log likelihood (LL) value greater than 6.63 is deemed significant, and comparative over- or underuse is indicated by a plus or minus sign next to this value. In the absence of a specific autobiographical corpus, and considering Gandhi's English to be closer to standard British English than Indian English, I use the British National Corpus (BNC Written) as the comparative corpus, whilst remaining aware of potential issues arising from this[7].

4. Defining Deixis

Contemporary linguistics employs the term *deixis* to indicate 'the location and identification of persons, objects, events, processes and activities being talked about, or referred to, in relation to the spatiotemporal context created and sustained by the act of

utterance and the participation in it, typically, of a single speaker and at least one addressee' (Lyons, 1977: 636). As such, deixis is comprised of those linguistic units which signal not only the existence of, but most importantly the overall whereabouts of entities referred to in a discourse situation relative to the speaker and other interlocutors[8]. Typical examples of deictic 'signposts' include the use of demonstratives, personal pronouns, tense, and time and place adverbs, whilst essential to an understanding of deixis is its egocentricity as 'a speaker situates referents, both temporally and spatially, in relation to him- or herself, speaking "here and now"' (Toolan, 1990: 127).

Here I will consider three of the traditional categories of deixis: time, place and person. Time deixis refers to 'the encoding of temporal points and spans *relative* to the time at which an utterance was spoken (or a written message inscribed)' (Levinson, 1983: 62, emphasis in original), and is typically encoded using adverbs of time and, particularly, grammatical tense. Place deixis relates to the spatial locations of objects, and their relative proximity or distance from the interlocutors, or from objects with which the interlocutors are familiar and/or aware[9]. Finally, person deixis 'concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event in which the utterance in question is delivered' (Levinson, 1983: 62); it is normally encoded through use of pronouns.

When these deictic forms of varying categories of time, place or person are used to indicate the level of *psychological* proximity which exists between speaker, addressee and/or referent in the discourse situation they can be considered as comprising examples of *empathetic deixis*[10].

5. Results:

5.1 Time Deixis

Given the traditional retrogressive focus of autobiography, it is not surprising that the Part Of Speech (POS) tagger in the Wmatrix analysis indicates that, when comparing verb forms in Gandhi's *Experiments* to those in the BNC Written, there is a significant predominance of past tense verb forms in the text[11] (as indicated in red in Table 1), a finding supported by the corresponding underuse of present tense verb forms[12] (as indicated in blue). However, it is significant that there is one instance in which the present tense verb form is overused in *Experiments*, and that is for the singular present tense of 'to be' i.e. 'am', (indicated in green; VBM = LL+40.08). Its use in the text is limited to two contexts: direct speech representation, and Gandhi's present tense musings on past tense events, both of which effectively increase the psychological proximity between text and reader [13].

Analysis carried out by the semantic tagger yields further interesting results (see Table 2). As mentioned above, while the past tense of verb forms is predictably overused in the text, and the present tense is concomitantly underused, the semantic tagger's 'Time' category (T1.1.2; highlighted in bold) which catalogues and categorises those general terms relating to a present period or point in time, indicates a significant *overuse* of such terms in the text as a whole, with a log likelihood of +26.31[14]. As autobiography typically endeavours to relate events from the writer's past, such over-reliance on time adverbials related to the *present* is worth consideration[15].

For example, investigation of the context in which the time adverbial 'now', the most frequently used in this category, appears in *Experiments* reveals its use in the text for one of five reasons. Firstly, as a means of comparing past beliefs to present beliefs: textual examples include 'My shyness was one of the reasons for this aloofness, which I **now** see was wrong' (30) and 'I am **now** of [the] opinion that …' (31). Secondly, it is used to denote changes in the state of things over time: for example, of the Rajasthanik Court we are told: 'It is **now** extinct ….' (19). Thirdly, it is used when Gandhi addresses the reader directly: 'One thing,

however, I must mention **now** …' (38). Fourthly, it appears frequently in instances of direct speech, and refers in such cases to the present tense rendering of a past tense event: for example 'Turning to my mother he said: "**Now**, I must leave ..."' (49). Finally, it is used to confer immediacy to past tense situations, an example being '**Now** I suddenly managed to muster up courage …' (52) and 'But I had found my feet **now'** (59). In its consistent comparison of past with present beliefs, prioritisation of present attitudes and states over those in the past, frequent direct authorial addresses to the reader, rendering of large tracts of conversation into direct speech, and deliberate employment of temporally proximising adverbs, the text effectively bridges the gap between past and present, collapsing temporal boundaries so the past becomes, to the reader, the present. As Keen asserts, by emphasising the *present*, rather than the *past* tense, Gandhi's text 'create[s] effects of immediacy and direct connection' (2007: 95), consequently increasing the potential for readers' empathetic engagement.

Further consideration of other semantic categories of time indicates, for example, that this text significantly overuses terms associated with commencement and continuity[16] as indicated in red in Table 2, and correspondingly underuses terms associated with completion - as indicated in blue[17]. Hindu society, with its belief in *samsara,* the karmic cycle of death and rebirth, differs from Western society in its conceptualisation of time which it perceives not as a continuum, but as an endless cycle, so that past, present and future all effectively merge into one.

In summary, the statistically significant overuse of the present tense of 'to be' and present tense adverbs of time cumulatively result in an increase in readerly proximity to the text and, consequently, greater potential for a reader's empathetic engagement. Frequent use of direct speech further facilitates this emotional engagement, effectively bringing the past to life via the rendering of the actual words spoken during a discourse event. For the reader,

portrayal of the past in a present tense representation all but remakes it into a present tense event, thereby increasing the potential for emotive engagement.

Table 1:   COMPARISON OF VERB FORMS

Item		O1	%1	O2	%2		LL
VHD	('HAD')	1897	1.16	3605	0.37	+	1368.64
VBDZ	('WAS')	3131	1.91	8369	0.86	+	1249.32
VVD	(PAST OF LEXICAL VERBS)	6189	3.77	22749	2.35	+	991.77
VVZ	(-S FORM OF LEXICAL VERBS)	423	0.26	7602	0.79	-	701.58
VBZ	('IS')	851	0.52	11171	1.15	-	638.28
VBR	('ARE')	291	0.18	5435	0.56	-	525.11
VVI	(INFINITIVE)	5664	3.45	24649	2.55	+	399.76
VMK	(MODAL CATENATIVE)	130	0.08	93	0.01	+	228.33
VHZ	('HAS')	229	0.14	2901	0.30	-	154.55
VBDR	('WERE')	873	0.53	3319	0.34	+	122.18
VHG	('HAVING')	157	0.10	336	0.03	+	94.76
VDD	('DID')	346	0.21	1086	0.11	+	93.05
VDI	('DO', INFINITIVE)	177	0.11	483	0.05	+	67.49
VV0	(BASE FORM OF LEX. VERB)	1513	0.92	11012	1.14	-	61.85
VM	(MODAL AUX.)	2830	1.72	14301	1.48	+	54.71
VVNK	(PAST PART. CATENATIVE)	27	0.02	19	0.00	+	47.88
VBM	('AM')	196	0.12	673	0.07	+	40.08
VHI	('HAVE', INFINITIVE)	415	0.25	1763	0.18	+	33.81
VDZ	('DOES')	38	0.02	489	0.05	-	26.88
VVG	('-ING' PART. OF LEXICAL VERB)	2045	1.25	13564	1.40	-	25.09
VDN	('DONE')	79	0.05	235	0.02	+	24.52
VVGK	('ING-' PART. CATENATIVE)	9	0.01	186	0.02	-	20.07
VB0	('BE', BASE FORM)	4	0.00	119	0.01	-	17.44

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and **%2** values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates **overuse** in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates **underuse** in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on **log-likelihood (LL)** value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

Table 2:   COMPARISON OF SEMANTIC CATEGORIES OF TIME

Item	O1	%1	O2	%2		LL	Semantic Category of Time	
T1.3	815	0.50	8327	0.86	-	260.41	Time:	Period
T3-	248	0.15	3043	0.31	-	151.70	Time:	New and young
T1.1	75	0.05	47	0.00	+	141.80	Time:	General
T3+	63	0.04	961	0.10	-	70.93	Time:	Old; grown-up
T1.1.3	638	0.39	4846	0.50	-	38.39	Time:	Future
T4+	22	0.01	367	0.04	-	30.79	Time:	Early
T1.1.2	**632**	**0.39**	**2961**	**0.31**	**+**	**26.31**	**Time:**	**Present; simultaneous**

T3---	17	0.01	266	0.03	-	20.40	Time:	New and young
T3++	21	0.01	295	0.03	-	19.06	Time:	Old; grown-up
T3	76	0.05	722	0.07	-	17.75	Time:	Old, new and young; age
T1.1.1	349	0.21	2598	0.27	-	17.65	Time:	Past
T3--	12	0.01	197	0.02	-	16.17	Time:	New and young
T1.3++	33	0.02	83	0.01	+	14.93	Time	period: long
T2++	448	0.27	2162	0.22	+	14.33	Time:	Beginning
T1	399	0.24	1913	0.20	+	13.57	Time	
T1.2	270	0.16	1251	0.13	+	12.30	Time:	Momentary
T2-	278	0.17	2035	0.21	-	12.02	Time:	Ending
T1.3+	86	0.05	733	0.08	-	11.48	Time	period: long
T2+++	46	0.03	150	0.02	+	11.07	Time:	Beginning
T4-	78	0.05	330	0.03	+	6.50	Time:	Late

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in **Gandhi's autobiography**.
O2 is observed frequency in **BNC Written Sample**.
%1 and **%2** values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates **overuse** in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates **underuse** in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on **log-likelihood (LL)** value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

5.2 Place Deixis

To search for instances of place deixis, I have analysed the text using the semantic domain 'Moving, Location, Travel and Transport' (M) (see Table 3). Within this domain the most relevant statistically significant variance in the frequency of use of lexical items in *Experiments* and the BNC Written occurs within the sub-domain 'Location and Direction' (M6, indicated in red), which picks out all lexical items connected semantically with the location and direction of objects or places relative to the speaker, addressee or known referent. It seems that, with a log likelihood value of +65.7, Gandhi's autobiography employs significantly more place adverbs, demonstratives and related lexical items indicative of location and/or direction than the BNC Written. Furthermore, of the 140 items tagged as such, the single most frequently employed is 'this' (which occurs 674 times), a demonstrative pronoun extremely effective in suggesting proximity to the item, event or state it modifies. The statistically significant overuse of 'this' indicates textual manipulation which ensures

that events and states, both in the past and present, appear spatially and psychologically closer. Interestingly, consideration of the use of spatially deictic verbs, as evidenced in the second most significantly used sub-category 'Moving, Coming and Going' (M1), (indicated in blue), indicates that, textually, Gandhi was more likely to 'go' than to 'come', as verbs associated with spatial movement away from the speaker (Gandhi) predominate in this text[18]. This is perhaps illustrative of the text's predominant focus on Gandhi's peripatetic years, concluding as it does a mere five years after Gandhi's permanent return to India signalled an end to his travels.

Table 3:	SEMANTIC DOMAIN 'Moving, Location, Travel and Transport' (M)						
Item	**O1**	**%1**	**O2**	**%2**		**LL**	**Sub-categories**
M7	442	0.27	5888	0.61	-	345.89	Places
M5	20	0.01	643	0.07	-	99.18	Flying and aircraft
M6	2044	1.25	9859	1.02	+	65.70	Location and direction
M8	182	0.11	610	0.06	+	40.25	Stationary
M3	310	0.19	2171	0.22	-	8.32	Vehicle and transport on land
M1	1848	1.13	10157	1.05	+	7.72	Moving, coming and going
M2	945	0.58	5347	0.55	+	1.39	Putting, pulling, pushing, transporting
M4	140	0.09	843	0.09	-	0.05	Sailing, swimming, etc.

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and **%2** values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates **overuse** in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates **underuse** in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on **log-likelihood (LL)** value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

5.3 Person Deixis

Due to the inevitable preponderance of first person pronoun use associated with representations of direct speech, for the purposes of an initial consideration of person deixis I have removed all instances of direct speech from the text prior to running this particular analysis19. Consideration of person deixis – that form of deixis which indicates the

relationships between speaker, addressee(s) and referents in a discourse situation - yields similarly illuminating results20. Given the autobiographical nature of Gandhi's text, the significant overuse of first person singular pronouns is not surprising; however, the immensity of the overuse is: as indicated in red in Table 4, the first person singular subjective personal pronoun 'I' occurs in the text a total of 5049 times (see PPIS1), with a log likelihood of +6332.75, while the first person singular objective personal pronoun, i.e. 'me' (see PPIO1) has a log likelihood of +3026.32 (1666 occurrences). Comparison with personal pronoun use in Nehru's autobiography, in which 'I' occurs 2642 times (LL+1281.73), and 'me' occurs 725 times (+583.05) effectively illustrates the magnitude of such use by Gandhi[21].

Application of deictic opposition to the use of personal pronouns effectively distinguishes proximate from non-proximate indicators, and is a fundamental part of any consideration of person deixis; on this basis, Toolan asserts that first person pronoun use stimulates proximity between author and reader[22], second person pronouns promote distance, while third person pronoun use has something of a neutral effect, revealing little about the speaker-referent-addressee relationship (1990: 129). The significant preponderance of *most* first person singular and plural pronouns (see also 'us', PPIO2, LL+31.73; the exception is 'we', LL+1.87), used throughout the text coupled with the statistically significant *under*use of non-proximal second person pronouns ('you'), indicated in blue (log likelihood of -1137.39), and the overuse of *most* neutral third person pronouns[23] (the exception is 'they', LL-.28) – highlighted in green – thus cumulatively stimulate empathetic engagement with Gandhi's autobiography. The hugely significant overuse of first person pronouns in *Experiments*, evidence and constant reaffirmation of Gandhi's subjective position throughout the text, similarly cultivates a sense of intimacy between text and reader which in turn increases the perceived veracity of Gandhi's self-portrait.

Furthermore, the fact that first person subjective pronouns occur three times as frequently (5049 times) as first person objective pronouns[24] (1666 times) suggests that Gandhi places himself in the subject position thrice as often as the object position - his persistent assertion of his textual centrality resulting in a portrayal of himself as the performer rather than recipient of action. Interestingly, while first person *plural* objective personal pronoun 'us' is also significantly overused (LL31.73; see PPIO2), the corresponding first person plural *subjective* personal pronoun, 'we', is neither significantly over- nor underused (LL1.87; see PPIS2)[25], indicating that as part of a group Gandhi is more likely to occupy and indeed share the object position; essentially, it is only on such occasions that he relinquishes the role of actor.

Table 4: **COMPARISON OF PRONOUN USE**

Item		O1	%1	O2	%2		LL
PPIS1	('I)	5049	3.53	6898	0.71	+	6332.75
PPIO1	('ME')	1666	1.17	1373	0.14	+	3026.32
PPY	('YOU')	15	0.01	4640	0.48	-	1137.39
APPGE	('MY', 'YOUR' OUR' etc)	3738	2.61	14933	1.54	+	747.09
PPHO2	('THEM')	573	0.40	1535	0.16	+	306.21
PPHO1	('HIM', 'HER')	607	0.42	1917	0.20	+	232.79
PPX1	('YOURSELF', 'ITSELF' etc.)	294	0.21	850	0.09	+	136.00
PPH1	('IT')	1530	1.07	8211	0.85	+	66.22
PNQO	('WHOM')	60	0.04	129	0.01	+	45.38
PPIO2	('US')	172	0.12	703	0.07	+	31.73
PN1	('ANYONE', 'NOBODY' etc.)	437	0.31	2193	0.23	+	30.63
PPHS1	('HE', 'SHE')	1361	0.95	7823	0.81	+	30.04
PN121	('NO-ONE', 'SOMEONE')	34	0.02	74	0.01	+	25.28
PPX2	('YOURSELVES' etc.)	75	0.05	252	0.03	+	24.83
PNX1	('ONESELF')	8	0.01	6	0.00	+	15.34
PPGE	('MINE', 'YOURS' etc.)	40	0.03	145	0.01	+	10.82

Key:
O1 is observed frequency in Gandhi's autobiography.
O2 is observed frequency in BNC Written Sample.
%1 and **%2** values show relative frequencies in the texts.
+ indicates **overuse** in O1 relative to O2.
- indicates **underuse** in O1 relative to O2.
The table is sorted on **log-likelihood (LL)** value to show key items at the top. Results that are not statistically significant have been removed.

6. Conclusion

Consideration of empathetic deixis in Gandhi's autobiography reveals its potential for encouraging empathetic engagement between reader and text; however, it also raises some questions about the nature of empathetic expenditure. Analysis of person deixis, for example, indicates a hugely significant overuse of first person pronouns in the text. Yet Gandhi, having denounced the archetypal autobiography as a product of the self-obsessed West, insisted that his would be written in a 'morally innocent manner', avoiding charges of egocentricity by focusing on the journey, not of his life, but of his *atman* or soul. Gandhian scholar Bhikhu Parekh indicates what he believes to be Gandhi's failure in this regard, asserting that, in Gandhi's persistent portrayal of 'his moods, fears, feelings, hopes and anxieties', his 'instances of egotism'[26] and his tendency to get 'carried away' by the text's 'momentum', Gandhi's autobiography 'was sometimes little different from its Western counterpart' (290). The extent to which such egocentricity may interfere with a text's capacity for empathetically engaging its reader, and the consequences for potentially empathetic narrative techniques, is an issue worthy of further study.

ENDNOTES

[1] Experimental psychologist E.B. Titchener is credited with this translation.

[2] While Darwin does not use the term 'empathy' explicitly in his essay *The Expression of the Emotions in Man & Animals* (1872), as Keen notes, it can be considered part of his consideration of sympathy (2007: 5).

[3] Debate continues to rage on this matter, but Stephanie Preston and Frans de Waal, Jean Decety, and Vittorio Gallese have all successfully argued the links between the mirror neuron system and empathy; see Preston, S. D. and de Waal, F.B.M. (2002) 'Empathy: Its Ultimate and Proximate Bases', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 25(Feb): 1-20, 49-71; Decety, J. (2002) 'Naturaliser l'empathie [Empathy naturalized]', *L'Encéphale* 28: 9-20; Decety, J. and Jackson, P.L. (2004) 'The functional architecture of human empathy', *Behavioral and Cognitive Neuroscience Reviews* 3: 71-100; Gallese, V. and Goldman, A.I. (1998) 'Mirror neurons and the simulation theory', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 2: 493-501; Gallese, V. (2001) 'The 'Shared Manifold' hypothesis: from mirror neurons to empathy', *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8: 33-50; and finally, Jabbi, M., Swart, M. and Keysers, C. (2007) 'Empathy for positive and negative emotions in the gustatory cortex', *NeuroImage* 34(4): 1744-1753.

[4] See Martha C. Nussbaum (1997) *Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Also *Love's Knowledge: Essays on Philosophy and Literature.* Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, and *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination & Public Life*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1995.

[5] See Steig, M. (1989) *Stories of Reading: Subjectivity and Literary Understanding*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

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[6] As a semantic field tagger, USAS boasts an accuracy rate of 92% while CLAWS, the POS tagger, has a success rate of 96-97% for written texts; see Rayson, 2009.

[7] For example, given the predominance of first person pronoun use in autobiographies, analysis of first person pronoun use in the BNC Written is supplemented by comparison with a second autobiography, also written by an English-educated Indian in the early half of the twentieth century.

[8] Toolan notes the importance of this distinction, as anaphora similarly 'points' towards referents in a discourse context yet does not indicate their location (1990: 126).

[9] Also known as space deixis, Levinson notes that there are two types of place deixis: one involves 'the encoding of spatial relations *relative* to the location of the participants in the speech event' (1983: 79, emphasis in original), for example 'the house is two miles away'; the second comprises 'the specifications of locations relative to anchorage points in the speech event, such as 'the house is two miles away from the church' (see Levinson, 1983).

[10] I am aware that Lyons, among others, perceives empathetic deixis as an additional and separate category of deixis, but I believe that time, place, person and social deixis all contain the potential for empathetic deixis. Indeed, Lyons himself asserts that, in a narrative '[i]t frequently happens that "this" is selected rather than "that", "here" rather than "there", and "now" rather than "then" when the speaker is personally involved with the entity, situation or place to which he is referring or identifying himself with the attitude or viewpoint of the addressee' (Lyons, 1977: 677).

[11] The most significant distinction occurs in the use of the past tense form of 'to have' i.e. 'had', which was, comparatively, greatly overused in the autobiography (LL+1368.64; see VHD); followed by 'was' (LL+1249.32; see VBDZ); and the past tense of lexical verbs

(LL+991.77; see VVD); 'were' (LL+122.18; see VBDR), 'did' (LL+93.05; see VDD) and 'done' (LL+24.52; see VDN) are also significantly overused.

[12] Hence, the –s form of lexical verbs is significantly underused (LL-701.58, see VVZ), as is 'is' (LL-638.28, see VBZ) and its plural counterpart 'are' (LL-525.11, see VBR), while the base form of lexical verbs, most commonly used in the present tense, occurs approximately seven times less frequently in Gandhi's text than in the BNC Written (LL-61.85, see VV0). Similarly, 'does' and the -ing participle of lexical verbs, a progressive form used most frequently to connote the present, are both also considerably underused (LL-26.88 (see VDZ) and LL-25.09, see VVG) respectively).

[13] A textual example of this is: "Whilst I am unable to endorse his claim about the effect his treatment *had* on me, it certainly *infused* in me a new hope and a new energy ..." (408). The prevalence of this particular present tense verb form, given the extreme underuse of present tense verb variables throughout the text, accentuates the degree to which Gandhi both employed direct speech in the text and gave his present opinions on past events. Both of these narrative devices have a significant and considerable impact on the empathetic potential of the text.

[14] The most-frequently used examples in the text are *now, today, yet, daily, present, so far, at the same time, meanwhile,* and *current*.

[15] Indeed, and in support of this result, it is interesting to note that Gandhi significantly underuses general terms relating to a past period or point in time as indicated in Table 2 by semantic tag category T1.1.1 (LL-17.65) , which captures those lexical items relating to a past point in time (such as 'used to', 'already' etc.).

[16] The semantic category T2+ denotes lexical items signifying 'Time: Beginning', with the number of 'pluses' signifying a progressively stronger sense of 'beginning' (and

concomitantly weaker sense of 'ending'). The significant overuse of lexical items within the semantic categories T2++ (LL+14.33) and T2+++ (LL+11.07) illustrates the relative frequency of words associated with commencement and infrequency of those associated with 'ending', as indeed evidenced by T2- which represents those words associated with 'Time: Ending' (LL-12.02). Examples of T2++ in the text are: *still, remained, remain, going on, ever since, continue(d), go on, went on, gradually, constantly, persisted, constant* and *remaining*; examples of T2+++ are : *permanent, eternal, invariably, perpetual, everlasting, permanently, endless* and *unceasingly.*

[17] For example, the temporally-continuous term 'still' is used both to illustrate how Gandhi's memory acts as a link between past and present – he frequently remarks, for example, how past events remain "still so vivid in my mind" (41) - it is also used to depict more tangible temporal links. For example, of his ongoing practice of walking to work daily, he tells us "I am still reaping the benefits of that practice" (99) . And consistency is further indicated through the use of similar temporally continuous terms, as evidenced by the following statement, regarding a favourite morally-didactic childhood book: "it is my perpetual regret that I was not fortunate enough to hear more good books of this kind read during that period" (46)

[18] Of the four most frequently used verbs in this semantic category, 'go' and 'went' occur a total of 204 times, while 'come' and 'came' appear a total of 139 times.

[19] Of the 171, 296 words in *Experiments,* a total of 20,577 words are in direct speech: 7685 of these are spoken by Gandhi, while the remaining 12,892 words are attributed to others. For this analysis of person deixis I have removed all instances of direct speech in order to specifically gauge Gandhi's personal pronoun use outside of the direct speech contexts in which it so naturally and often necessarily occurs.

[20] Comparison of Gandhi's text to the non-autobiographical BNC Written may appear uninformative in this instance, until the inclusion of life-writing and autobiographies within the BNC Written is remembered; in addition, the staggering size of the disparity between the two 'texts' makes such comparison noteworthy.

[21] The two autobiographies are of roughly similar length –Nehru's has 161,365 words to *Experiments* 171,296. Interestingly, although there are few incidents of direct speech in Nehru's autobiography, of the 58 times when first personal singular pronoun 'I' does occur, the majority are found within direct speech quotations from Gandhi!

[22] Leech and Short, among others, readily agree that 'the very exposure ... to a character's point of view – his thoughts, emotions, experience – tends to establish an identification with that character, and an alignment with his value picture' (1981: 275).

[23] The following third person pronouns are significantly overused: third person plural objective personal pronoun ('them'; LL+306.21, see PPHO2), singular objective personal pronoun ('him'/'her'; LL+232.79, see PPHO1), singular neuter personal pronoun ('it'; LL+66.22, see PPH1) and singular subjective personal pronoun ('he'/'she'; LL+30.04, see PPHS1); the only exception to such overuse is third person plural subjective 'they' (LL-.28; PPHS2).

[24] ("while 'me' is greatly overused, with a result of LL3270.35 this result is only half that of the result for the first person singular subjective personal pronoun 'I', occurring as it does 1883 times").

[25] It is interesting to note that, before the removal of instances of direct speech, the text exhibits greatest pronoun overuse in the case of first person pronouns, both singular and plural, with (in decreasing order) 'I' (LL7197.58), 'me' (LL3270.35), 'us' (LL85.49) and 'we' (LL47.74) being significantly overused. As we have seen, with the exclusion of direct speech, overuse of first person plural pronouns substantially decreases, with the log likelihood for 'us' being reduced to 31.73 (from 247 to 172 occurrences), while the overuse

of 'we' is in fact no longer significant (LL1.87). This indicates that first person plural pronoun use in *Experiments* occurs predominantly in instances of direct speech, attributable to both Gandhi and to others. As such, the disparity between use of first person singular and first person plural referents should be considerably greater and more noticeable when direct speech is excluded: indeed, when direct speech is included, 'I' is used 7.84 times more often than its plural counterpart 'we', while 'me' is used 7.62 times more often than 'us'; when direct speech is excluded, 'I' and 'me' are both used 9.7 times more than their plural counterparts. As such, Gandhi's self-portrait is of a singular figure, psychologically and spiritually self-reliant, self-propelled towards action, indeed, bordering on the solipsistic.

[26] As an illustrative example, Parekh highlights disparities between Gandhi's accounts in *Experiments* and *Satyagraha in South Africa* (1924, 1928) of the circumstances which conspired to ensure his prolonged stay in South Africa: 'His account of his reasons for deciding to stay on there is nearly five times as long in the *Autobiography*; he uses the first person singular three times as often; and he places much greater emphasis on his apparent indispensability in the struggle against racial discrimination' (1999: 290).

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