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"So much of Gandhi Stays within You after Finishing, That It Is as if the Book Never Ended". Empathetic Engagement and Rhetoric in *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

Abstract: With his abiding insistence that humankind learn to identify with one another, regardless of colour, race or creed, Gandhi is perceived by many as the epitome of empathy. His autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was written as a moral guide to others, to assist them in their endeavours to tread a lifelong path of truth. Empathy, that ability to feel with others, is one of the central tenets of Gandhi's doctrine and many readers report empathetic engagement with the text. Certain narrative techniques are thought to be particularly effective in the evocation of empathy in readers, and, through the deployment of corpus stylistic analysis, both their presence in the text and their potential rhetorical efficacy will be investigated.

Keywords: *Gandhi*, *autobiography*, *narrative empathy*, *corpus stylistics*, *deixis*, *rhetoric*

1. Introduction

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* 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'. *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was written when the author was in his late fifties and published in two volumes, in 1927 and 1929 respectively (later united in a single volume in 1940). The autobiography's title exemplifies Gandhi's perception of his life as structured around the undertaking of a series of "experiments with truth", through which he endeavoured to achieve enlightenment and communion with God. By writing his autobiography in "the form of an objective record of his moral experiments in private and public life, narrated with scientific detachment",[1] and entitling it *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi tried to avoid associations with the Western genre of autobiography because "the focus on the self which is required by the genre was anathema to orthodox Hindus, eschewing as they did any assertions of selfhood".[2] The resultant autobiography, Parekh notes, is "concerned not with [Gandhi] but with his experiments; not with his psychological feelings and moods but with his spiritual struggles; not with the transient trivia of his life but with the abiding discoveries he had made in the laboratory of life; not with his self but with his soul".[3] This redirection of autobiographical focus from the self to the soul would, Gandhi believed, be most aptly achieved by focusing

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[1] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi,* vol. 39 (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1929), v; cited in Clara Neary, *Gandhi's Autobiographical Construction of Selfhood: The Story of His Experiments with Truth* (Switzerland: Springer International, 2023), 43.
[2] Neary, *Autobiographical*, 42.
[3] Bikhu Parekh, *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform: An Analysis of Gandhi's Political Discourse*, Revised Edition (New Delhi and London: Sage, 1999), 284.

exclusively on these spiritual experiments and their surrounding circumstances, supplemented only by those details of his personal history which directly pertained to the experiments themselves.

Though originally written in Gujarati, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* was almost simultaneously published in English, with the translation carried out by his personal secretary and close friend, 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. Regarded as "one of the great autobiographies of modern times",[4] the English translation of Gandhi's autobiography "is the most widely read version both within India and globally".[5] 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, and evidence its concomitant rhetorical effects. As Charteris Black notes, classical rhetoric "is interested in how speakers achieved their desired effects on audiences in particular contexts, and viewed rhetoric as an art capable of influencing civic life and shaping society".[6] The current study aims to investigate the textual and, specifically, linguistic means by which Gandhi potentially influenced readers of his autobiography by encouraging them to identify with his personal and religious ideals.

A one-time monarchist turned agitator for Indian home rule, a champion of civil disobedience, a reluctant but consummate politician, an advocate of moderate Hinduism and, latterly, a guru of what is now recognised as healthy and sustainable living, Gandhi is described as "arguably the most popular figure of the first half of the twentieth century" and "one of the most eminent luminaries of our time".[7] Einstein's famous assertion that "generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" captures "both the hagiographic tradition that has grown up around Gandhi and the concomitant enigma which voluminous writings on him have failed to penetrate".[8] Personifying "a peculiar mixture of the oriental and the occidental, and of the ancient and the modern",[9] Gandhi's personality mystified even those closest to him. Indeed, an insatiable urge to know the man honoured with the titles 'Father of the Nation' and *Mahatma* has caused the inevitable demythologizing which has taken place in recent decades, the most striking example being the 'celibacy tests' with young women salaciously disclosed in books such as Jad Adams' *Gandhi: Naked Ambition* (2010).[10] Yet, notwithstanding, Gandhi's "considerable influence over his countrymen"[11] remains undeniable.[12] As Parekh notes, an 'important dimension' of this influence resides in the fact that:

> [Gandhi's countrymen] *identified with him*, saw him as a concentrated expression of the qualities they admired in themselves, and knew that their self-respect and well-being were his supreme concerns. Even when they

[4] Barrett J. Mandel, "Full of Life Now", in James Olney, ed., *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1980), 67.

[5] Clara Neary, "'Truth is like a vast tree': Metaphor Use in Gandhi's Autobiographical Narration", *Metaphor and the Social World*, 7.1, (2017), 103-121. See also Neary, *Autobiographical*, 3.

[6] Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Analysing Political Speeches: Rhetoric, Discourse and Metaphor*, Second Edition (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2018), 3.

[7] Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, "Mohandas K. Gandhi: The Making of an Anti-Colonial Satyagraha Prophet", *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, 15.1 (2008), 144.

[8] Neary, *Autobiographical*, 11-12.

[9] R. K. Sinha, *M.K. Gandhi: Sources, Ideas and Actions* (New Delhi: Ocean, 2008), ix.

[10] Jad Adams, *Gandhi: Naked Ambition* (London: Quercus, 2010).

[11] David Arnold, *Gandhi* (Harlow: Longman, 2001), cited in Bhikhu Parekh, "Rev. of *Gandhi* by David Arnold", *English Historical Review,* 119.428 (2004), 828.

[12] Indeed, Gandhi's political adversaries were all too aware of his ability to "draw the masses like a magnet" (B. R. Nanda, *In Search of Gandhi: Essays and Reflections*, New Delhi: Oxford U.P., 2002, 59). Asserting Gandhi's complicity in the circumstances surrounding the Jallianwalla Bagh shootings of 1919, one British journalist controversially asked: "When a lot of people get killed in a riot, who is most to blame, a clumsy commander like Dyer, or a consummate sorcerer's apprentice like Gandhi?" (Nanda, *In Search of Gandhi*, 34).

disagreed with his ideas and found some of them archaic, *they identified with the man behind them* and deeply respected and loved him. […] This gave him an immense politico-moral authority which he was able to convert into political power.[13]

Gandhi's ability to make himself "identifiable with" lies at the heart of the spiritual and political authority he wielded. Whilst his influence was not simply a textual phenomenon – his personal charisma is well-documented and he enjoyed a huge following by the largely illiterate rural Indian populace – there is little doubt as to his success in employing "the enormous power of the printed word to disseminate information, to stoke reflection, to offer considered criticism, *and to forge durable relationships on a mass scale without the necessity of reader actually meeting author*".[14] Reviews by readers of the English translation of the autobiography suggest that this ability stems from the twin qualities of veracity and simplicity consistently ascribed to the text. Evidence of its perceived veracity abounds: "Alone of men, he keeps debunking himself and exposing his 'Himalayan blunders'";[15] and "[i]t must be reckoned exceptionally frank, even after the torrent of self-revelation by Great War veterans, actresses, and politicians".[16] Indeed, perceptions of Gandhi as unremittingly honest persist and comparatively jaded twenty-first-century readers continue to find his honesty refreshing, commenting upon the "almost complete lack of artifice in his writing"[17] and declaiming how "Gandhi surprised me with his transparency".[18] As noted by one reviewer, "as his self-humiliation mounts, his stature rises in the readers' eyes".[19] These 'durable relationships' Gandhi forged between himself and his reader are especially interesting, and are evidenced in the following reader review of the autobiography, written in 2000:

> I had expected this book to read as if the writer was a wise man, but it reads like the writer is another human. Gandhi maintains that human connection throughout the book, and while it is sad to end the book, so much of Gandhi stays within you after finishing, that it is as if the book never ended.[20]

The fact that *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* has consistently remained in print and is enduringly popular means that almost a century's worth of reviews of the text are available, which provides an opportunity to interrogate a contention by Suzanne Keen – currently among the foremost authorities on narrative empathy – that "[t]he capacity of a particular [text] to invoke reader's empathy may change over time (and some texts may only activate the empathy of their first, immediate audience".[21] Essentially, Keen argues here that the empathetic potential of a text can be temporally determined. These temporal ties equate, at least partially, with the social and political context in which the text is read: for example, an Indian reading Gandhi's autobiography today is the product of a significantly different socio-political background to one who read the text in pre-Independence India, when Gandhi's influence was at its zenith. Reviews of the autobiography, however, largely illustrate that the text was remarkably constant in successfully engaging its readers emotionally, although the precise nature of that emotional response alters over time. The responses of those who read and reviewed the autobiography in the immediacy of its original publication were potentially influenced by their feelings towards Gandhi's socio-

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[13] Parekh, "Rev. of *Gandhi*", 829, emphasis added.
[14] Chandrahas Choudhury, "Still Making Us Work: Gandhi's Autobiography", *Democratiya*, 16 (Spring/Summer 2009), 212, emphasis added.
[15] Mason Olcott, "Review of Gandhi's Autobiography, by M. K. Gandhi", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 261 (1949), 191.
[16] *The Times*, 23 September 1930.
[17] These reviews have been taken from commentary on Amazon.com and Amazon.co.uk and offer valuable insight into the nature of present-day engagement with the text. This is from Review 5.
[18] Review 3.
[19] Olcott, "Review of Gandhi's Autobiography", 191.
[20] Review 6.
[21] Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel* (New York: Oxford U.P., 2007), 74, emphasis in original.

political campaign. A. S. Woodburne, for example, remarks of the autobiography: "What was accomplished in South Africa was amazing.... He is doing a fine service in helping to rid Hinduism of some of the accumulated excrescences and to revitalize it with spiritual power".[22] Woodburne also points out that "[w]hatever may be one's views of his political and economic theories, one cannot but admire the moral integrity and courage of the man".[23] This point is borne out by Wheatley's recognition, in an otherwise negative review, that "[i]t must be admitted, however, that Gandhi is both a great and good man".[24] Twentieth-century readers, however, are temporally divorced from the historical context of pre-Independence India; as such, their emotional response to the autobiography appears to originate primarily from the text itself. There is a tendency to focus on the inspirational aspects of Gandhi's legacy, as attested by the following review: "This book will be an inspiration for anyone, who themselves strive to integrate ideals such as contentment, sacrifice and love for all beings in their dayly [sic] life".[25] Indeed, the text's power to inspire is particularly noted by latter-day readers: "The book has also influenced greatly the way I view life. A very spiritually uplifting book, even for non-Hindus".[26]

In his emphasis on universalism, Gandhi encouraged empathetic engagement between peoples as a means of collapsing racial and cultural boundaries and accentuating the humanity shared by all mankind; his success in forging such relationships appears to be grounded in his ability to stimulate empathy in others by foregrounding his common humanity. This is evidenced in another reader's claim that the text is "a must read for everyone, … a study not only of Ghandi [sic], not only of India nor [sic] nonviolence, it is a study of *what it is to be a human being*" (emphasis added).[27] Indeed, the self-purification necessary for Gandhi's observance of Truth – for adherence to Truth was one of the central tenets of his spiritual and political doctrine – was possible only if he strove towards "[i]dentification with everything that lives" (*Exp*, 453).[28] Gandhi did not recognise the boundaries of caste, gender, geography, ethnicity or culture as barriers to human empathy. As he notes in his autobiography: "To see the universal and all-pervading Spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself" (*Exp*, 453). Gandhi's empathetic ideals also stemmed from his religiously tolerant upbringing and an increasingly syncretic approach to religious ideology which saw him embrace Christianity, Islam and Jainism alongside the Hindu traditions of his birth, all of which impressed upon him the "infinite possibilities of universal love" (*Exp*, 156). The blend of cognitive and corpus stylistic methods employed in this article investigates the potential linguistic origins of the empathetic bond that many readers attest is forged between them and the text/author, a bond with significant rhetorical effects.

2. Narrative Empathy

The emotional consequences of artistic engagement have been debated by scholars as far back as Plato and it has long been known that empathy is "a phenomenon common to our experiences both in friendship and in fiction".[29] Indeed, continued awareness of the empathetic potential of fiction has led to the development of theoretical perspectives on empathy induced by narratives which have evolved from

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[22] Woodburne, *"Gandhi of India"*, 269-270.
[23] Ibid., 269.
[24] Elizabeth D. Wheatley, "'Ghandi [sic] and India', Rev. of *Mahatma Gandhi, His Own Story,* by C. F. Andrews; *Prophets of the New India*, by Romain Rolland; *The Case for India*, by Will Durant; *India, the Land of the Black Pagoda*, by Lowell Thomas; *Disillusioned India*, by Dhan Gopal Mukerji", *The Sewanee Review*, 39.1 (1931), 120.
[25] Review 1.
[26] Review 10.
[27] Review 4.
[28] Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, *An Autobiography, or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (London: Penguin, 2007, [1940]), 453. Henceforth, citations are included in the text as (*Exp*, page number).
[29] James Harold, "Empathy with Fictions," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 40 (2000), 342.

multi-disciplinary endeavours to move beyond individualised considerations of interpersonal and aesthetically-evoked empathy. 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",[30] 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[31] – 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".[32] It is this projection of oneself into a piece of art, this attempted identification with it whilst remaining simultaneously separate from it, that stimulates the emotional engagement characteristic of empathy.

Empathy is believed to have an evolutionary basis, as originally propounded by Darwin,[33] 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.[34] Mirror neurons, with their ability to "dissolve the barrier between you and someone else",[35] are critical to the process of empathetic engagement in humans; in a gesture reflective of his renown as a practitioner of empathy, neuroscientists have dubbed these neurons 'Gandhi neurons'.[36]

Narrative empathy is empathy provoked by and sought through the reading of literature and is thought to be associated with prosocial and altruistic behaviour.[37] The empathetic potential of literature has influenced both its production and consumption since the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century, and debate over literature's potential humanitarian consequences continues to rage. Research into narrative empathy is 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".[38]

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[30] Suzanne Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy", *Narrative*, 14.3 (October 2006), 208.

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

[32] Robert Vischer, "Uber das optische Formgefuhl: Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik (On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics)", translated in H. F. Mallgrave, et al, eds, *Empathy, Form and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893* (Santa Monica: Getty Centre, 1994), 92.

[33] Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872). While Darwin does not use the term 'empathy' explicitly in this essay, as Keen notes, it can be considered part of his consideration of sympathy (Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 5).

[34] Vittorio Gallese, "The 'Shared Manifold' Hypothesis: From Mirror Neurons to Empathy", *Journal of Consciousness Studies,* 8 (2001), 35-6.

[35] G. Slack, "'I Feel Your Pain': New proof of 'mirror neurons' explains why we experience the grief and joy of others, and maybe why humans are altruistic. But don't call us Gandhi yet", *Salon*, 5 November 2007, www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/11/05/mirror_neurons, n.p.

[36] Vilayanur Subramanian Ramachandran, "Mirror neurons and imitation as the driving force behind 'the great leap forward' in human evolution", *Edge,* 1st June 2000, www.edge.org/3rd_culture/ramachandran. See also Marco Iacoboni, "Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons", *Annual Review of Psychology*, 60 (January 2009), 653-670.

[37] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 208.

[38] Keen, "A Theory of Narrative Empathy", 207-8.

However, research into narrative empathy continues to focus largely on fiction genres; for example, a recent special issue of *The Journal of Literary Semantics* on narrative empathy (2023)[39] contained six articles, which, while generically diverse, all analysed fiction texts. De Jonge et al. (2022)[40] found that fictionality did not impact empathetic engagement, but, given Hogan's assertion that "personal memories are crucial to our emotional response to literature",[41] it seems more likely that representation of events within the realm of common human experience will be most effective at eliciting a corresponding emotional response. The autobiographical genre might be supposed particularly adept at the provocation of emotional engagement, characterised as it is by a focus on the subject's formative years and a movement from childhood to adulthood which must resonate with most readers. This contention is supported by Orwell's assertion that while Gandhi's autobiography "is not a literary masterpiece ... [it] is the more impressive because of the commonplaceness of much of its material", comprised as it is of the "normal ambitions of a young Indian student".[42] This hypothesis is further confirmed by research undertaken by Steig (1989)[43] on empathetic engagement, in which he found that a group of readers claiming a general inability to empathetically engage with literature admitted the only exception occurred when reading autobiography. Hence the narrative empathy evoked by an autobiographical text is potentially stronger than that elicited by its fictional generic counterpart. The recognition and identification of the author's ideals – integral to textual empathetic engagement – is greatly simplified by the conflation of author with narrator and subject typical of autobiographical writing.

3. Defining Deixis

Deixis is defined by Lyons as "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".[44] As such, deixis is comprised of those linguistic units that 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. 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'".[45]

Three of the traditional categories of deixis are considered here: 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)",[46] 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.[47] Finally, person deixis "concerns the encoding of the role of participants in the speech event in

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[39] See *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023).

[40] Julia de Jonge, Serena Demichelis, Simone Rebora and Massimo Salgaro, "Operationalizing Perpetrator Studies: Focusing Readers' Reactions to *The Kindly Ones* by Jonathan Littell, *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 51.2 (2022), 147-161.

[41] Patrick Colm Hogan, *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 308-312.

[42] George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *George Orwell: Essays* (London: Penguin, 2000 [1949]), 461.

[43] Michael Steig, *Stories of Reading: Subjectivity and Literary Understanding* (Baltimore: John Hopkins U.P., 1989).

[44] John Lyons, *Semantics*, vol 1 & 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1977), 636.

[45] Michael Toolan, *The Stylistics of Fiction: A Literary-Linguistic Approach* (London: Routledge, 1990), 127.

[46] Stephen C. Levinson, *Pragmatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1983), 62. Emphasis in original.

[47] 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" (*Pragmatics*, 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" (*Pragmatics*, 79), such as 'the house is two miles away from the church'.

which the utterance in question is delivered";[48] 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.[49]

4. Analytical Methodology

In her seminal work *Empathy and the Novel* (2007), Suzanne Keen decried the lack of investigation into long-held claims that certain narrative techniques are more successful in evincing readers' empathy and put forward several hypotheses of her own in this regard, some of which have been referenced above. More recent work in the field of literary studies has attempted to redress this. Within stylistics, in particular, there have been several attempts to trace the linguistic and textual origins of narrative empathy. As summarised by Fernandez-Quintanilla and Stradling,[50] these include investigations into the empathetic potential of foregrounding and defamiliarisation;[51]); free indirect style and deixis;[52] point of view and deixis[53]); narrative personal deixis;[54] and, finally, Stradling and Pager-McClymont posit the empathetic potential of pathetic fallacy.[55] Stockwell's (2009) identification of textual attractors also has an empathetic orientation.[56]

In his consideration of the nature of reader-immersion in a text, Toolan (2009) pre-empts much of the abovementioned work in his investigation into the possibility that texts contain emotive sites within which the stimulus for literary empathy and engagement is specifically located.[57] 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.[58] Such

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[48] Levinson, *Pragmatics*, 62.

[49] Lyons, among others, perceives empathetic deixis as an additional, 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, *Semantics*, 677).

[50] Carolina Fernandez-Quintanilla and Fransina Stradling. "Introduction: stylistic approaches to narrative empathy", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 103-121, 112-116.

[51] David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "Foregrounding, Defamiliarization, and Affect: Response to Literary Stories", *Poetics* 22.5 (1994), 389-407; David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "What is Literariness? Three Components of Literary Reading", *Discourse Processes*, 28 (1999), 121-138; David S. Miall and Don Kuiken, "A Feeling for Fiction: Becoming What We Behold", *Poetics* 30.4 (2002), 221-241; Frank Hakemulder, "Finding Meaning Through Literature", *Anglistik* 31.1 (2020), 91-110.

[52] Sylvia Adamson, "Subjectivity in Narration: Empathy and Echo", in Marina Yaguello, ed., *Subjecthood and Subjectivity: The Status of the Subject in Linguistic Theory*, (London: Ophrys, 1994 ,193-208); Sylvia Adamson, "From Empathetic Deixis to Empathetic Narrative: Stylisation and (De-)subjectivisation as Processes of Language Change", *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 92.1 (1994), 55-88.

[53] Alison Gibbons and Andrea Macrae, eds., *Pronouns in Literature: Positions and Perspectives in Language* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018); Sandrine Sorlin, "Introduction: Manipulation in Fiction" in Sandrine Sorlin, ed., *Stylistic Manipulation of the Reader in Contemporary Fiction* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 1-27.

[54] Caspar J. van Lissa, et al., Difficult Empathy: The Effect of Narrative Perspective on Readers' Engagement with a First-Person Narrator", *Diegesis*, 5.1 (2016), 43-62.

[55] Fransina Stradling and Kimberley Pager-McClymont, "The Role of Pathetic Fallacy in Shaping Narrative Empathy", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 123-143. https://doiorg.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/10.1515/jls-2023-2009.

[56] Peter Stockwell, *Texture: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Reading* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U.P., 2009).

[57] Michael Toolan, "Textual signalling of immersion and emotion in the reading of stories: can reader responses and corpus methods converge?". Paper presented at Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA) 2009 Conference, Middelburg (31 July 2009).

[58] Toolan, "Textual signalling", emphasis in original.

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.[59] 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 stylistic 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 still in its relative infancy yet can be highly effective (see for example Karpenko-Seccombe's (2023) investigation into intertextual foregrounding and defamiliarisation using corpus tools).[60]

Decades-worth of reader reviews of Gandhi's autobiography suggest that the whole text is a site of empathic potential. For the purposes of this article, and due to space restrictions, corpus stylistic methods are used here to pinpoint the use of individual-oriented deixis only, omitting analysis of volitive modality and that of mental process verbs of evaluative reaction. This analysis endeavours to specifically consider whether a formal aspect of Gandhi's autobiography could be credibly implicated in the text's proven ability to stimulate empathy in its readership, as well as to contribute towards answering a more general question posited by Toolan, which is "How (by what means, most crucially) does a poem, story, novel or play cause a reader to be moved, empathize, immersed, [or] involved?".[61] The corpus stylistics tool employed here, Wmatrix, statistically analyses an electronic corpus of linguistic data by tagging words both syntactically and semantically and then produces tables of results demonstrating the over- or underuse of each lexical item in the text in comparison to a representative corpus.[62] 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. Considering Gandhi's English to be closer to standard British English than Indian English, the British National Corpus (BNC Written) is used as the comparative corpus, whilst remaining aware of potential issues arising from this. For example, given the predominance of first-person pronoun use in autobiographies, comparative analysis of first-person pronoun use in the BNC Written is supplemented by a further comparison of Gandhi's autobiography with a second autobiography, also written by an English-educated Indian politician in the early half of the twentieth century, Jawaharlal Nehru.

5. Results

5.1 *Time Deixis*

5.1.1 *Comparison of Verb Forms*

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 autobiography (as indicated in Table 1). The most significant distinction occurs in the use of the past

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Tatyana Karpenko-Seccombe, "'The unlikeliest twins': The Role of Intertextual Foregrounding and Defamiliarisation in Creating Empathy in *Meursault, Contre-enquête*", *Journal of Literary Semantics*, 52.2 (2023), 191-212. https://doi-org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/10.1515/jls-2023-2012.
[61] Toolan, "Textual signalling".
[62] 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 Paul Rayson "Wmatrix: a web-based corpus processing environment", *Computing Department University of Lancaster* (2009), http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/.

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. This overall finding is supported by the corresponding underuse of present tense verb forms. 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 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). 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' (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. 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 ..." (*Exp*, 408). The prevalence of this 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 narrative devices have a significant and considerable impact on the empathetic potential of the text.

Item		O1	%1	O2	%2		LL
VHD	('HAD')	1897	1.16	3605	0.37	+	1368.6
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 1. Comparison of verb forms

5.1.2 *Comparison of Semantic Categories of Time*

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, with a log likelihood of +26.31. The most-frequently used examples in the text are *now, today, yet, daily, present, so far, at the same time, meanwhile,* and *current*. 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. 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.). 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" (*Exp*, 30) and "I am *now* of the opinion that...." (*Exp*, 31). Secondly, it is used to denote changes in the state of things over time: for example, of the Rajasthani Court we are told: "It is *now* extinct...." (*Exp*, 19). Thirdly, it is used when Gandhi addresses the reader directly: "One thing, however, I must mention *now*...." (*Exp*, 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" (*Exp*, 49). Finally, it is used to confer immediacy to past tense situations, an example being "*Now* I suddenly managed to muster up courage" (*Exp*, 52) and "But I had found my feet *now*" (*Exp*, 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 prox-imising 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",[63] 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 as indicated in Table 2. 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+++

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[63] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 95.

(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.* The autobiography correspondingly underuses terms associated with completion. 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" (*Exp*, 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" (*Exp*, 99). Consistency is further indicated using 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" (*Exp*, 46). 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. Using present tense markers to represent past events narratively reframes them as present-tense events, thereby increasing their potential to evoke emotive engagement.

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.

Table 2. Comparison of semantic categories of time

5.2 Place Deixis

To search for instances of place deixis, the text has been analysed 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), 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), 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. 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. 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.

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	Transport on land
M1	1848	1.13	10157	1.05	+	7.72	Moving, coming, going
M2	945	0.58	5347	0.55	+	1.39	Pulling, pushing etc
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.

Table 3. Semantic domain 'Moving, Location, Travel and Transport' (M)

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 all instances of direct speech were removed from the text prior to running this analysis. 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, all instances of direct speech have been removed to specifically gauge Gandhi's personal pronoun use outside of the direct speech contexts in which it so naturally and often necessarily occurs. 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 results. 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. 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 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.[64]

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, with which Leech and Short, among others, readily agree, positing 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".[65] Toolan also argues that second person pronouns promote distance, while third person pronoun use has something of a neutral effect, revealing little about the speaker-referent-addressee relationship.[66] 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 *underuse* of non-proximal second person pronouns ('you'; log likelihood of -1137.39), and the overuse of *most* neutral third person pronouns (the exception is 'they', LL-.28) 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 ('I') occur three times as frequently (5049 times) as first-person objective pronouns ('me', 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. Indeed, it is further 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)

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

[65] Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short, *Style in Fiction* (London: Pearson Longman, 1981), 275.

[66] Toolan, *Stylistics*, 129.

'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 and self-propelled towards action. Furthermore, 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), 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.

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:
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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 4. Comparison of pronoun use

6. Conclusion

The results of the analysis undertaken in this chapter support the hypothesis that autobiographical texts exhibit greater potential for empathetic engagement. One of the potential reasons for this is that recognition and identification of the author's ideals – integral to textual empathetic engagement – is greatly simplified by the conflation of author with narrator and subject typical of autobiographical writing. This study's results also corroborate the many reports of empathetic engagement which readers of Gandhi's autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* have reported in the almost one hundred years since its initial publication. Corpus stylistic analysis has facilitated the location of potentially empathetic sites in the text. Deictic markers of time, person and place all function as empathetic narrative devices in their contribution towards the reduction of temporal, spatial and psychological proximity between author/narrator/subject and reader. Temporal boundaries are collapsed so that the past becomes the present; personal pronouns are significantly overused, even in comparison with other autobiographical texts; and proximate spatial adverbs are significantly over-employed, all to facilitate readerly emotional engagement with the author/narrator/subject.

Consideration of individually-orientated 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",[67] avoiding charges of egocentricity by focusing on the journey, not of his life, but of his *atman* or soul. 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" and his tendency to get "carried away" by the text's "momentum", Gandhi's autobiography "was sometimes little different from its Western counterpart".[68]

Yet this potential egocentricity has not detracted from the near-persistent ability of Gandhi's autobiography to elicit empathy from its readers, an ability which also demonstrates the autobiography's success in overcoming the two most effective biases of empathetic engagement: the 'here-and-now' and 'familiarity' biases. The 'here-and-now' bias represents the negative correlation between empathetic engagement and geographical and temporal proximity: the further away in time and space the potential target of one's empathy, the less likely one is to empathise. The 'here-and-now' bias is connected to the 'familiarity' bias, which dictates that we are more inclined towards empathy for those who are similar or familiar to us.[69] The relative consistency with which readers – over a period of almost a century and from all parts of the globe – have empathetically engaged with Gandhi's autobiography suggests the text's success in overcoming these biases. It appears likely that a combination of multiple factors – including the presence of potentially empathetic narrative techniques – is complicit in readers' emotional engagement with the autobiography. In the case of *Experiments*, Gandhi's emphasis on universalism – evinced through empathetic engagement with mankind – may also play a significant role.

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[67] Gandhi, quoted in Parekh, *Colonialism*, 284.

[68] Parekh, *Colonialism*, 290.

[69] The origins of both empathetic biases are most likely evolutionary, as noted by Keen: "Whether it is construed as familiarity, similarity, or 'in-group' bias, the reduction of response to those who seem strange, dissimilar, or outside the tribe has been attributed to human evolution" (*Empathy and the Novel*, 19). According to psychologist Martin Hoffman, these biases are a result of a process of natural selection which prioritises the stimulation of empathy among members of the same gene pool (Martin Hoffman, *Empathy and Moral Development: Implications for Caring and Justice* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge U.P., 2000), 13.

Universalist arguments are especially relevant to considerations of cross-cultural and cross-temporal demonstrations of empathetic engagement. Psychologist Dylan Evans insists upon the universality of emotional experience, while recognising individual differences in cultural patterns of emotional response:

> In all places, and at all times, human beings have shared the same basic emotional repertoire. Different cultures have elaborated on this repertoire, exalting different emotions, downgrading others, and embellishing the common feelings with cultural nuances, but these differences are more like those between two interpretations of the same musical work, rather than those between different compositions.[70]

Yet assertions of the universality of human emotions, particularly empathy, continue to be disputed by, amongst others, feminist and postcolonial scholars who denounce universalist claims as evidencing the egocentric perspective of a patriarchal West. Suzanne Keen asserts that the all-encompassing nature of empathetic feeling amounts to "a cultural imperialism of the emotions"[71] while Ashcroft et al implicate universalism in the colonial process, decrying it as a "crucial feature of imperial hegemony" which, in its "assumption (or assertion) of a common humanity" concomitantly elides cultural difference.[72] Hassan, on the other hand, highlights the potentially negative repercussions of privileging cultural difference over cultural similarity: "It can discourage mutual obligation, cripple empathy … lead to hostility, exclusiveness, less respect for others than solidarity with ourselves".[73]

Gandhi's conceptualisation of universalism was wholly idealist; in a nation defined by difference, Gandhi encouraged his compatriots to derive comfort from the essential commonality of humankind. He believed it was only through recognising and accepting one's shared humanity, by comprehending the universality of human emotion, that mankind could embrace *ahimsa* (non-violence). Far from agreeing that conflation of the myriad cultural manifestations of human emotion equated to gender and ethnic homogenisation, Gandhi maintained that the most effective means of promoting cross-cultural understanding was by recognising and accepting commonalities – rather than differences – across cultures. Indeed, as articulated by Keen in the context of narrative empathy, "[w]hether or not human emotions are universal, the expression of *belief in universality* carries with it an optimistic program for transcending cultural differences".[74] By producing an autobiographical text which has stimulated empathetic responses and emotional engagement in readers both in and beyond India over a period of nearly one hundred years, Gandhi's writing illustrates the power of rhetoric to stimulate empathy with dissimilar, spatially- and temporally-distant others.

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[70] Relating this to narrative empathy Evans remarks that "[w]hen we read poems and novels written by authors from different cultures, we recognize the emotions they describe. If emotions were cultural inventions, changing as swiftly as language, these texts would seem alien and impenetrable" (Dylan Evans, *Emotions: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford and New York: Oxford U.P., 2001), 8.
[71] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 147.
[72] Bill Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 1998), 235.
[73] Ihab Hassan, "Queries for Postcolonial Studies", *Philosophy and Literature*, 22.2 (1998), 335.
[74] Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*, 136.