Heterotopias
Nationalism and the Possibility of History in South Asia

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THE STRANGE VIOLENCE OF SATYAGRAHA*
Gandhi, Itihaas, and History
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Mahatma Gandhi's book-length account of his early satyagraha in South Africa is titled, in the original Gujarati, as Dakshin Afrikana Satyagrahano Itihaas (A History of the Satyagraha in South Africa). But the English version is marked by the curious disappearance of any equivalent to the word itihaas, usually translated as history: it is simply Satyagraha in South Africa.

This disappearance could have been because, as Gandhi insisted on one occasion during a conversation with Romain Rolland: 'Whatever conclusions I have reached have not been through historical studies at all. History has played the least part in my make.

The preface of Dakshin Afrikana Satyagrahano Itihaas indicates this work's divergence from history in the conventional sense of the word.

That is the beauty of satyagraha. It comes to us; there is no need to go searching for it.... such a dharmayudh [religious battle; 'righteous struggle'] comes unsought, and a religious person is ever prepared for it. A struggle that has to be planned beforehand is not a righteous struggle. The righteous struggle is planned and conducted by God himself/itself. That struggle can be waged only in the name of God, and it is only when the very foundations of the satyagrahi become unstable, when the satyagrahi feels weak and finds utter darkness on all sides, that God comes to the rescue.

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Setting aside for later consideration some of the other questions that this passage raises, note that in this itihaas of satyagraha there is no contextualization and territorialization of satyagraha within secular historical processes. To the extent that this passage refers satyagraha to God, and to a religious battle or righteous struggle, it produces a time and sensibility inconsonant with history as conventionally understood.

This circumspection about history was accompanied by a similar reticence to affirm another category—autobiography. In the preface of Satyana Prayago Athava Atmakatha, Gandhi writes that a friend asked him: 'Why are you writing an autobiography? This is a western practice. I know of no one in the East who has written one.... Don't you think it would be better to be cautious and not yet write anything like an autobiography...?'

Gandhi addresses the question:

But why would I wish to write an autobiography? Using the excuse of an autobiography, I want to tell the story of my numerous experiments [prayogo] with truth [satya]. As my life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that this story will become like an account of life. But if only my experiments emerge from every page of it, then I would consider the story to be innocent [of being an autobiography].

Here, atmakatha or autobiography is only an excuse, or as in the official English translation, a 'pretext': the constitution of his writing by experiments with satya makes it something else.

As these formulations suggest, it is by no means the case that itihaas and atmakatha are unique genres, distinctively Indian ways of narrating which Gandhi finds more appropriate because they are more attuned to the genius of Indian culture. Nor is it just that there is a multiplicity of ways available of thinking times and lives, and that Gandhi has chosen ones distinct from history and autobiography. It is rather that satyagraha, and atmakatha to the extent that his life was one of satyagraha, are so heterogeneous to history and autobiography as to be invisible to and through these categories. Thus the formulation in chapter 17 of Hind Swaraj. There the Reader asks: 'This satyagraha or soul-force of which you talk—is there any historical evidence of it?'

The Editor replies:

You ask for historical evidence. So we have to know what we call itihaas. The meaning of the word itihaas is 'thus it happened'. If we work with that meaning, then I can give you copious evidence of satyagraha. If we interpret itihaas by the meaning of the English word, which concerns the doings of emperors, then there can be no evidence of satyagraha. How can you expect to find silver ore in a tin
Throughout the rest of the chapter, the word *itihaas* is never used by the Editor, only the English word 'history' in quotes. The critique, clearly, is of history, not of *itihaas* (though that distinction between history and itihaas is attenuated in the English translation). If we adhere to the commonsensical understanding of the word 'happening', then this simply does not make sense. By this understanding, 'history' is nothing if not the taking note of happenings. Even if 'history' in Gandhi's time was concerned with only those happenings that concerned emperors and wars, surely the emergence of social history, and its concern with even the lowest levels of everyday life, indicates that history is now concerned with every happening?

But the absence of satyagraha in history is not this commonsensical matter of levels. The focus in this argument is on happening: if history cannot take note of satyagraha, this is because satyagraha is a happening, and 'history', can only take note of noise (*kolhaaf*) and not of happening.

These arguments are further elaborated later in chapter 17 of *Hind Swaraj*:

Thousands, even lakhs, live their lives bound to love (*prem vasak*). The quarrels of crores of families are accommodated in the thought of love. Many peoples have lived in togetherness (*samp thi*, 'in peace'), and 'history' [English word in original] does not take note of this, 'history' [English word in original] cannot even take note of this. When the course of this compassion, love and truth (*daya, prem, swabhav*) is blocked, when there is an interruption in it, only then does it get notice in the chronicles. Two brothers in a family fight. They use satyagraha against each other. They again fall in together. Who takes note of this? But if the hostility between the two brothers increases through the instigation of lawyers, or for some other reason, and they resort to weapons or courts (courts are a form of weaponry, of brute force), their names would appear in the press, and all and sundry (*aadeshi-paadeshi*) would know of it, and in time it would be noted in the chronicles. As it is for families, communities and associations, so it is for peoples. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families, and another for peoples. History [English word in original] is a record of incidents that are against our proper orientation (*aswabhavik*). Satyagraha is *swabhavik*, so it cannot even be noted.

Taking cues from these formulations, I would like to explore two questions in this chapter. The first, more preliminary, one: what is the history and autobiography that Gandhi describes as not able to take note of happening, as noting only as 'noise', as being against our proper orientation? I would like to suggest that initiated here is a critique of the modern agent, the figure who would be emperor of his everyday life. He attacks the life that he identifies with 'modern civilization'—what Charles Taylor describes as the 'human life concerned with production and reproduction, that is, labour, the making of the things needed for life, and our life as sexual beings, including marriage and the family'.

Gandhi insists that the life which is produced and sustained by modern civilization is not proper to the human. This life does not break enough with the animal; indeed, it is found and founded on the modern concept of animality. In this life, the animal is the figure who the human always is and yet transcends. And since the line between the animal and the human always passes through the human, this distinction between the animal and the human always justifies colonialism, imperialism, and domination, with howsoever anguished a conscience these are practised. The questioning of the category 'life' in 'modern civilization' is perhaps why Gandhi does not attempt separate critiques of autobiography and history (which for him are primarily genres which narrate this life).

Second, and more pressinglly, this essay will explore: what 'is' *itihaas* (if indeed it 'is')? I suggest that itihaas involves nothing less than asking the question of *haas*—the question of what 'is/vas'. Symptomatic of this question is the insistence that the 'thus it happened' of itihaas cannot be part of history. To insist on itihaas is to displace professional history—which treats the happening of events as transparent and seeks only to determine the context of this happening—by insisting on a prior question: what is 'to happen', 'to be'? In this insistent questioning, *itihaas* reveals an other everyday life—one heterogeneous to the history's everyday life, one that is the happening of satyagraha. This happening occurs, note, in a different place and time from the noise of history. Thus, satyagraha and itihaas involve an everyday life heterogeneous to the ordinary life of 'modern civilization'.

I would like to approach the Gandhian thought of the happening of *itihaas* through attentiveness to two sets of terms that recur in Gandhi's discussions of it—*swabhav* and *swabhavik*. Gandhi describes the other everyday life of *itihaas* as *swabhavik* and history as *aswabhavik*. This word *swabhavik* he translates as 'natural'. But *swa* is also a cognate of the family of words involving *se*, 'proper', 'ownmost'. *Bhav*: orientation. *Swabhavik*: 'of one's proper (or ownmost) orientation'. *Swabhavik* is not 'natural' in a commonsensical English sense of the
Gandhi ventures, through the term swabhavik, another thinking of the distinction between the animal and the human. This thinking, insists on an abyssal gulf between the human and the animal, and on the basis of this gulf also insists on a unilateral and immeasurable obligation to the animal, and more broadly to the stranger. The swabhav of the human is to be constituted in a relation of towardness towards the strange.

The second word is satya. This is translated quite inadequately (perhaps with an unavoidable inadequacy—Gandhi was also a victim of the very colonial epistemic violence that he identified and criticized) and conventionally by Gandhi as 'truth.' It is also a component of the word satyagraha, a word coined during the South African struggles that Gandhi led, and usually etymologically rendered (resigning ourselves for now to an inadequate translation) as the desire (agraha) for satya or truth. Satya is not representational truth, nor even a substantive truth: inseparable as it is from the thought of sat or being, satya is that which gives the very possibility of truth and untruth.

As such, to desire satya intimates a politics beyond the measure intimated in representational or empiricist understandings of truth. It is precisely in this that the radicalism of itihaas and satyagraha lies. Symptomatic of this is the insistence on practising resistance—the most intense and essential moment of politics—through satyagraha. Through satyagraha, there is initiated a politics that, never claiming agency, essentially thinks resistance. In the encounter of agents—an encounter necessarily constituted by measure—there is always in principle the possibility of perfect justice, of the socius as a totality without remainder, not haunted by the spectre of the margin. Resistance remains empirically rather than constitutively political: if it is occasioned by a particular grievance, then resistance will go away once this grievance is dealt with by the proper measure of justice. In the thinking of resistance through the subject, the order of domination is reinscribed.

Satyagraha, by contrast, is premised on the acknowledgement of a constitutively political resistance—a resistance that, because it emerges in the encounter of incommensurables, stubbornly persists even after the justice of measure. As such a resistance, satyagraha attempts the practice of a politics that remains outside domination. What is this politics outside domination? In what sense is it 'non-violent'? What is its relation with the liberal concept of non-violence?—these are some of the questions broached here.

REPRESENTING HUMANITY IN THE UNIVERSAL AND THE SPECIFIC

"... But why would I wish to write an autobiography?" Here, an exclamation mark poses as a question. Gandhi treats it as self-evident that he would not wish to write an autobiography (or, we might add, history). The heterogeneity between these practices and satyagraha seems so strong to him as to not require any elaboration, as to peremptorily foreclose these practices as options.

But what was the history and autobiography that he was rejecting? To approach this question, let us take our first cues from Gandhi's interlocutor's remarks in the English translation of the Atmakatha: 'I know of nobody in the East having written one [an autobiography], except amongst those who have come under Western influence.'

Nobody is named here. But the reference could have been to works such as what is conventionally regarded as the first autobiography in Gujarati—Narmadshankar Lalshankar's well-known Mari Hakikat (My Truth/Events). It begins:

That somebody like me should himself write his hakikat and, what is more, publish it himself in his own lifetime—this will seem indiscræet to people: I am not a pundit, not a warrior, not a religious leader, not a philanthropist, etc. From my writings many people feel that I talk a lot about myself, and this feeling is correct, because when they do not understand the true core of my writings, when they do not take into account my night-and-day work, and they ridicule and insult me, then I get very irked..."

By the early twentieth century, there was a well-established tradition (put in place partly by the later Narmad) of understanding the early Narmad as a liberal who was profoundly influenced by western literary traditions and practised a modernist individualism. For the purposes of the argument, we do not need to concern ourselves with the validity of such an understanding. Suffice it to say that to the extent that Narmad as this sort of subject must retain his calculable permanence, the narrative cannot allow for the event as the 'happening that must surprise both the freedom and the will of every subject,' that must rend this subject. The event it allows for can only be subordinate to the subject Narmad, and refer to its experience—as for instance the most urgent reason for the hakikat, the ire that he feels at those who ridicule and insult him. The everyday life of Narmad as such a figure...
consists in traversing and taking the measure of this subordinate realm of events. Perhaps thinking in this vein of the autobiography, Gandhi's interlocutor protests: the autobiography is a western practice.

Such protests were not uncommon by the early twentieth century. But they usually identified the western nature of autobiographical practice with individualism rather than with agency, and went on to affirm a more collective agent.

Symptomatic of this move is the autobiography attempted by Indulal Yagnik, an early follower of Gandhi who later became a critic, but nevertheless continued to occasionally describe himself as Gandhian. When, some decades after Gandhi's Atmakatha, Yagnik wrote the preface to his own Atmakatha, he too insisted that he was not writing an atmakatha. As a shy person, he had no desire to write about himself. 'The thought of writing not of my individual life but of the lifeworld of the people of Gujarat increasingly became an inspiration...’ Yagnik's Atmakatha, thus, is not about the individual subject Yagnik; as it unfolds, it is about the common names Gujarat, Bharat, and khedut or peasant.15

Two inseparable registers of such common names, and indeed of agency, are particularly relevant for our purposes—their specificity, and their activity. In presenting common names, the Atmakatha presumes a socius—an entity marked by specificity. The search for specificity, it has sometimes been claimed, is constitutive of the historical discipline:

History is interested in individualized events ... but it is not interested in their individuality; it seeks to understand them—that is, to find among them a kind of generality or, more precisely, of specificity ... (this is why 'specific' means both 'general' and 'particular'). Such is the seriousness of history: ... it is not a vast collection of biographies ... it does not deal in individuals but in what is specific about them for the good reason that, as we shall see, there is nothing to say of individual singularity; what matters is its ability to become the particular—that is, to establish a relation with the general, and produce the specificity of the socius.

Put differently, the criterion of historicity is the specific. In any strict accounting, it is this socius (and not the past) that is the object of history in our modern sense.

Central to this thinking of specificity is measure. Only measure—exemplified in the measure of a homogenous time—can distinguish between individual singularity and generality and produce a context in which to determine the specificity of events. In this very introduction of measure, what is also made impossible is the happening as the singularity that is immeasurable. In the discourse of specificity, an event can only be that which departs from a measure, and is yet returned to that measure. An event that does not return, that exceeds the measure—of this all that can be said is that there is 'nothing to say'.

Could it be such a thinking through the socius that produces Yagnik's insinuation in the Atmakatha that what he is writing is not so much an autobiography as a history? By his own account, he adopts a historical perspective because he adheres to historical protocols of verification. But there is a more serious sense, suggested by Veyne, in which Yagnik's Atmakatha is historical (rather than only a source for the writing of history): Yagnik describes his life primarily to the extent that he is part of a socius. In the first volume, for instance, many of the early chapters are about persons and institutions in the town of Nadiad (where he was born) that were important in the making of modern Gujarati identity. Yagnik's birth and youth, in this account, is not that of a proper name; it is that of a socius called Gujarat.

By a similar logic, no account of his marriage was provided in volume one. Faced with charges after its publication that he had suppressed unpalatable facts, Yagnik provided an account of the marriage in a separate chapter in the second volume.17 Defending his decision to not provide an account in the earlier volume, Yagnik insisted that he did not see its relevance to readers. At issue here is the question of the measure of relevance for his Atmakatha. By this measure, even the individual subject is not in itself relevant ('there is nothing to say of individual singularity'); what matters is its ability to become the particular—that is, to establish a relation with the general, and produce the specificity of the socius.

The account provided of his marriage is also framed by the second register—the activity which is necessary to claim the status of an agent. Betrothed when his wife was three and he thirteen, he was later enthused by the idea of independence for women. 'I would rejoice in seeing the new women of Bombay, practicing equality with men both inside and outside the home, mixing in a carefree way at meetings.' But fearing the shock that his aged mother would receive if he broke off the betrothal, he reconciled himself to the marriage: 'why then could I not ... have a traditional [roodhigat] marriage and reform an already given situation?'

But sudhaar (reform) of his wife into a more active figure proved more difficult than Yagnik had anticipated. He had hoped that by mixing with more independent women, his wife, Kumud, would read
and 'become intelligent and eloquent'. But 'she would not fly at all on her own wings. That she would cling to me with her strong affection for her entire life—this I found intolerable.' She 'would not understand anything of my work, could not take any interest in it.' As relations became strained, she attempted suicide. Her relatives took her back to Nadiad; a little while later, Yagnik wrote a letter to Kumud breaking off relations with her.

Kumud began a 'new chapter' in her life. 'By now she had realized that I ... would only give respect to a wife who ... [was] an equal and a helper.' She began to acquire new skills in order to become 'self-reliant' (swashraya)—learning English, Sanskrit, music, typing ('in order to be helpful in my correspondence'), eventually taking up a job as a teacher in Nadiad. Despite her several letters and repeated efforts, Yagnik refused to meet her. In 1929, she died of tuberculosis.

By the criteria of nationalist sudhaar, Kumud's initial failure lies in her passivity and inertia. She fails to constitute herself as a figure capable of activity—as an intelligent and eloquent woman, as somebody who would fly on her own. She fails also to establish a relationship with Gujarat, kisan, or Bharat, to depart from or return to these common names. And it is on the register of the active that nationalist sudhaar's distinctive violence against Kumud takes place: Yagnik's effort is to make Kumud a rights-bearing subject—just like the socius of the new women of Bombay. It is because she cannot become an agent that Yagnik had to abandon Kumud.

AN EMPIRICIST HUMANITY

Apart from Gandhi, there was a tradition of uneasiness about the profound violence involved in producing the subject on the registers of specificity and activity. This uneasiness is evident in Yagnik's own writings. By the time he writes the second volume of the Atmakatha, Yagnik is remorseful about his violence towards Kumud, and describes it as his 'hidden sin,' 'serious crime,' and 'terrible mistake.'

Let us not get sidetracked by the question of whether Yagnik meant this. More pressing is another question: what is the perspective from which Yagnik criticizes the violence of sudhaar?

Unable to affirm roodhi or 'tradition' (retaining—though only for the limited purpose of reprising Yagnik's arguments—the commonsensical understanding of that word as a hermeneutic that, staying with the past, resists the modern), which he continued to be critical of, Yagnik locates his criticisms in manavta, humanity. He was bound to her after the marriage by the knot of humanity.

Yagnik developed the category manavta through an emphasis on irreducibility, which was used by him to reject invocations of manavta derived from the common name. 'I had not done an experimental marriage, nor had I begun an experimental life together. But in thinking, deep down in my mind, of my relation with Kumud as an experiment, I practiced a wrongful conduct.'

Experiment: the paradigmatic practice that produces conceptual knowledge. An experiment engages with the empirical only to abstract from it, to draw out its specificity rather than treat the empirical as irreducible. In its own terms, an experiment is not a violence: it merely teases out the proper form of the empirical. To characterize experimental practice as violent is to deny these terms, to insist that the object, which the experiment addresses, is irreducible, that it cannot therefore be abstracted from. Yagnik's marriage with Kumud is of this order: an irreducible event. As such an irreducibility, it resists the order of the specific and the socius: it produces another everyday life. To abstract from this irreducibility is the sin which Yagnik has committed.

On the next page, Yagnik reflects again on how this violence of abstraction had run amok:

I had made a soul-less idol of stone out of progressive thought on married life. ... My worship of this thought, rather than following my humanism, became devoid of humanity and took a soul-less form. Obedient to this form, I became a traitor to humanity and Kumud.

An abstract concept has become stone. As a story, irreducible concept, it liquidates the solidity and irreducibility of that which is rightfully irreducible: humanity. Retrospectively, Yagnik feels that he should have opposed this misplaced irreducibility by following the command of the truly irreducible, humanity. 'From that time [of the marriage], I was forever bound to her by the knot of humanity. By breaking that, I committed a serious sin.'

There is a name for this attempt to think opposition to the concept through the irreducible. Derrida's remarks of Levinas' thought (when it thinks the Other through irreducibility) are especially salient: the true name of this renunciation of the concept ... is empiricism. For the latter, at bottom, has ever committed but one fault: the fault of presenting itself as a
philosophy. And the profundity of the empiricist intention must be recognized behind the naiveté of certain of its historical expressions. It is the dream of a purely heterological thought at its source. A pure thought of pure difference. Empiricism is its philosophical name, its metaphysical pretension or modesty.¹⁸

As the dream of a purely heterological thought, empiricism proceeds by insisting on the heterogeneity of the concrete to the generality of the concept. Such empiricism has constantly insisted on the Other—that which resists the socius, and does not return to it, that experience which cannot be subordinated to the subject and thus threatens it.

Yet, Yagnik's empiricist insistence on irreducibility (what for Veyne would be 'individual singularity'), and on opposition to the concept, remains anomalous. To begin with, there is the very positioning of the chapter—it occurs out of chronological order, as the very last chapter in the second volume. Furthermore, the chapter remains isolated in its insistence on irreducibility—the rest of the Atmakatha, both before and after the chapter, adheres by the logic of the socius, which in its concern with specificity belongs to the order of the concept.

Perhaps this is not a mere failure on Yagnik's part. It is symptomatic also of the limits of thinking irreducibility in this manner—through the empirical. Yagnik's insistence on irreducibility cannot address two questions: it does not think of how an irreducibility would encounter the concept and, consequently, of how two irreducibilities might encounter each other without the mediation of the concept. These two questions constantly undo any affirmation of the irreducible. Though rejected in this chapter of the Atmakatha, the concept of the socius remains constitutive of Yagnik's Atmakatha, as of empiricism itself.

THE LIFE OF MODERN MEDICINE

"... But why would I wish to write an autobiography?" Encountering Gandhi's treatment of this self-evident matter, we have, through attentiveness to Narmad and Yagnik, teased out presumptions about the specificity and activity of history and autobiography, and have also encountered Yagnik's argument about the violence of these practices.

This is not Gandhi's argument, even if he never broke from it systematically. For the itihaas that he affirmed was not an empirical concreteness that was liquidated by specificity and activity. It was rather another everyday—that of a world invisible to (and also 'made invisible by'), and which could not be apprehended by history and autobiography.

Before we attend to this other everyday (which is the happening of satyagraha), we need to ask: why was it self-evident to Gandhi that he would not write an autobiography or history?

It would be hasty to think of this as a lacuna or lapse, as a failure by Gandhi to think his argument about history. If he did not develop separate arguments about history and autobiography, if he could treat his position on these practices as self-evident, this was because he had already developed a critical argument about the category that made possible the subject of history and autobiography—life.

This argument is developed most systematically in the course of his consideration of 'modern civilization' (his translation of the words aadhunik sudhaar or aajkalnu sudhaar). Unlike Yagnik's Atmakatha, for which the critique of reformism or sudhaar that attempted to modernize Gujarati society comes at a moment of retrospective remorse, Hind Swaraj is organized as a critique of 'modern civilization', and as an attempt to provide an alternative to it.¹⁹ In chapter 6, the Editor describes 'object of life' (purusharth) of modern civilization as the 'care and comfort of the body.'²⁰ Four chapters later he considers various dimensions of aadhunik sudhaar: its 'annihilation of space and time' (exemplified, for him, by the railways), its law (exemplified in Pax Britannica and the rule of law), its distinctive sociality (exemplified in Hindu-Muslim relations), and its life (exemplified in modern medicine). The most relevant of these for our purposes is the one on medicine—chapter 12, two pages in Gujarati. It argues that the English 'have certainly effectively used medical knowledge to consolidate their hold over us.'²¹ Making first the point that the British used their influence with the Mughal emperor to further their hold in the subcontinent, it quickly moves beyond this external relation between medicine and power, and argues

The [modern] doctor's task is only to take care of the body. Vah, ['properly speaking'], it is not even care of the body. Their task is rid the body of its diseases. How do diseases occur? Through our own negligence. I overeat, I have indigestion, I go to a doctor, he gives me pills, I am cured, I overeat again, and again take pills. What has happened here is this. If I had not taken the pills, I would have suffered the punishment of indigestion, and I would not have eaten beyond my limits again. The doctor came in between and he helped me eat beyond my limits. Through this my body received relief, but my mind became weakened [maaru man nobdu thayu]. Consequently, my condition will be such that I cannot keep the slightest restraint over the man ['mind'] ... Had the doctor not intervened, nature would have done its own work, my mind would have become firm, and eventually I would have been free of poison and content.²²
The pervasiveness of Cartesian habits, combined with the peculiarities of Gandhi's English translation (which draws on a vocabulary conventionally associated with communitarianism and organicism) usually prejudice our understanding of this argument. On a less than meticulous reading, we might think that the argument draws on the mind–body distinction only to insist on the need to transcend it. The chapter argues that the failure of modern medicine lies in its lack of holism, in focusing on the body to the exclusion and detriment of the mind. And 'properly speaking', modern medicine does not treat the body as a whole, but only systems within the body. Furthermore, the chapter seems to call for a holistic response that unites the unfortunately sundered mind and body.

But, if this is the critique, then Gandhi's extreme hostility to medicine is simply misplaced, even embarrassing. When he says in his English translation that 'hospitals are institutions for propagating sin', we are compelled by the logic of this critique to discreetly dissociate ourselves from such excessive remarks. Surely, we might then remark, this is simply ill-considered and unjust; all illnesses are not caused by indulgence or negligence; in some situations modern medicine does some good, saves some lives?

These are questions that dogged Gandhi, and that critics repeatedly raised. He had to respond to them often, and to some extent Hind Swaraj itself already answers these questions. It will be necessary one day to attend to his response to these questions. Before doing so, we need to produce his argument about modern medicine more carefully. I would like to suggest that rather than being a holistic critique of modern medicine, the stakes of the Gandhian critique lie rather in identifying the emergence of this holism, in specifying its inseparability from modern medicine. Gandhi found it difficult to develop the vocabulary to think systematically through the revolutionary moves he had made, and often had to draw on the very language out of which he already worked himself. His argument has to parsed out carefully.

To begin with: here is an 'I' that is neither body nor mind, and that both restrains and can be undone by them. This I—who is this I, whose concept Gandhi does not explicitly name?

Here the 'I' names nothing less than that which gives the possibility of I-ness—the atman.24 Without getting into an extensive consideration of the philosophical traditions around the atman, we might note the significant role that it plays in his politics. In Hind Swaraj, one chapter is titled darugodo (ammunition: Gandhi's English title is 'Brute Force') and questions violence as a means of achieving swaraj. The next chapter titled 'Sathyagraha-Atmabala', advocates soul force or sathyagraha (in the English, 'more popularly, but less accurately, passive resistance'; 'passive resistance' is the title of the chapter in the English version) as the only means of achieving true swaraj. Gandhi translates the word atman, in keeping with conventional practices, as 'soul'. But it is by no means a soul, and even less is it a self in the sense of subject—the auto of autobiography or atmakatha. Rather the atman (a cognate of 'atmos', which survives in words such as atmosphere) is that which gives the originary possibility of selving. He often posits the atman as that which governs the mind (man) and the body (shareer, at places also deha). Where such governance—what he sometimes describes as self-discipline—is attenuated, the atman itself is attenuated. Thus, the three sentences: 'my mind became weakened', consequently 'I cannot keep the slightest control over my mind', and had I not taken medicine 'my mind would have become firm'. When we read these carefully, an apparent paradox becomes evident: the weakened mind is that over which 'I' or the atman can keep no control, which will overcome the atman, and the firm mind would heed the 'I' or be mindful of the atman. The weakened mind is thus not the same mind become weaker: it is rather the emergence of another mind, which can set itself in opposition to and even overcome the atman, and which in its ability to sustain this oppositional relation to the atman is stronger than the firm mind.

This leads to two questions. First: what is the life that is produced by the failure of restraint by the atman over the mind, or by the emergence of this 'weakened mind' that is not heedful of the atman and can oppose the atman?

The point of the Gandhian critique of modern medicine is that this is an extremely productive failure (therefore, a failure only in Gandhian terms), that leads to the emergence of a new kind of life, one characterized by an inclusion that operates through the location of mind within body. The question of animality—who has a mind? and how much of a mind?—is the spectre that long conditioned the exclusions of western philosophy. In his Politics, Aristotle begins with the distinction between voice and speech. Animals have voice, man
has speech; the voice can express only pleasure and pain, while speech considers good and evil. It turns out as we go on with the Politics that the question of who has speech remains indeterminate. Maybe the demos has only voice?—this is the basis of its criticism of democracy. The spectre of the voice and the resultant contingency of speech produces a exclusionary transcendence where the mind transcends the body, which is excluded as irrelevant to politics.

In the emergence of life in the new sense of inclusionary transcendence that Gandhi identifies, modern medicine is a especially important site. With no restraint over it, the 'man' becomes part of the body of modern medicine, producing its true object—mind in the body, or more precisely, the body characterized by the location of the mind within it. In this sense, the primacy that Hind Swaraj accords to the body is not a primacy in relation to the 'man.' Where it is written 'only the body,' we read: 'only that body produced by the location within it of the mind.' Modern medicine could produce its isolates by separating mind and body, and its holism by uniting them. But isolates and whole—all three are, within the terms of the Gandhian critique understood thoughtfully, equally the objects of modern medicine.

For the Editor, a most dramatic symptom of the emergence of this new body is the constitutive (rather than merely episodic or separable) role of vivisection in medicine. As a practice, vivisection is revealing of the curious duality of modern medicine. It is concerned solely with animals because of their common biological life with humans—this was what made experiments on animals relevant for the human body. Yet, in making animals into objects that can be experimented on in order to develop medicines that treat the human body, it also makes clear the particular nature of that common biological life: a life transcended by the human as a category. At work here is a logic of inclusionary transcendence rather than exclusionary transcendence, where the body is not simply excluded but is both retained and transcended by the location of the mind within it.

The weakening of the mind, the loss of restraint over it, is what leads to life in the modern sense, where the mind is now in the body. As such, life in the new sense both transcends common biological life and affirms it by locating the mind within it rather than above it.

Such arguments make possible a concluding sentence that otherwise seems disconnected and excessive: "To study English or European medicine is only to tighten the bonds of our slavery [...]" How does modern medicine get connected with colonialism in so fundamental a manner? Gandhi does not elaborate on this. But it would perhaps be faithful to Gandhi's thought, especially given the contrast we encountered elsewhere in Hind Swaraj between two concepts of everyday life, to suggest that, from the perspective of this text, life in the new sense is inseparable from and perhaps productive of the everyday life of 'modern civilization.'

Not only does this life make possible every modern thinking of autobiography and history; with it, modern politics itself is transformed. The difference (which Schmitt notes, though without recognizing its connection with a new thinking of everyday life) between classical democracy's concern with discussion (a practice which affirms mind over body and refuses the possibility of ordinary life) and modern democracy's concern with negotiation (a practice where ordinary or everyday life can be played out as interest) is exemplary of this transformation.

And this life founded on inclusionary transcendence is, by the terms of the argument of Hind Swaraj, inescapably colonial, even more systematically than the life founded on exclusionary transcendence. Once the modern concept of animality—of the inclusionary transcendence involved in a shared biological life, where this life is both included and rendered subordinate—is allowed a legitimate domain, then it can no longer be limited to 'animals.' To accept 'modern civilization's' category of life was to accept the rightfulness of colonialism in principle; all that could then be debated was whether this or that colony could rightfully be a colony, whether it was still animal or had become human enough to not be a colony.

A similar critique of liberalism organizes, as Faisal Devji's fascinating essay on Iqbal in this volume powerfully suggests, several other postcolonial thinkers too. The category of interest was always marked by reason—it was rational interest which liberal thought privileged. In this association of reason and interest, the distinction between the animal and the human always insinuated itself. Gandhi and Iqbal, like many other postcolonial thinkers, could scarcely affirm the life constituted by such interest, for colonialism was always just by its criteria. Questioning this liberal life, Gandhi and Iqbal proceeded to conceptualize another life. While their conceptualizations diverged in significant ways, for both this other life was invisible to liberalism, and yet undid liberalism.
KINSHIP WITH THE STRANGE

The second question: what is the life that Gandhi affirms in opposition to this modern life? An approach to this question can be initiated through a more careful consideration of his formulation of the swabhavik and aswabhavik in chapter 17 of Hind Swaraj, which was pointed to earlier:

As it is for families, communities and associations, so it is for peoples. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families, and another for peoples. History [English word in original Gujarati] is a record of incidents which are against our ownmost orientation [aswabhavik]. Satyagraha is of our ownmost orientation [swabhavik], so it cannot even be noted. 27.

By insisting on continuity between peoples and families and communities and associations, what is initiated is a fundamental questioning of the social constituted by specificity and agency. The emergence of population as a category, we have learned from Foucault, involved a repositioning of the idea of the family. Population now had its own regularities, ones that could be revealed by statistics, ones that organized communities and families. And the family itself was now considered an element internal to the population; apart from this, the family could only be the realm of the particular.

To insist, in opposition to this repositioning, on continuity between family or community and peoples: what does this entail? If we quickly accept Gandhi's own translation of the term swabhavik as 'natural', it would easy to think of this insistence as privileging blood before sociality, the immediate over the mediate, or the private over the public sphere.

A careful consideration of the term suggests other possibilities. While there is no further discussion of swabhav or swabhavik in Hind Swaraj Gandhi did revisit these terms in two essays written over sixteen years later. One of these was in Gujarati titled 'Swabhavik etle kevut' (with the translated caption, 'What is natural'), published in Navjivan, originally started by Yagnik and taken over by Gandhi. When that essay was published in an English translation in Young India, it occasioned a response by a reader that led to a second essay, this time possibly first written in English.

The first essay begins with a questioning of the tendency to understand the 'natural' in terms that we might describe, following Kant, as anthropological:

Nowadays the word *swabhavik* is much misused. One [person] writes: 'just as drinking and eating is *swabhavik* to humans, so too is anger'. Another writes: '... just as ahimsa (non-violence) is a dharma [duty], would not himsa (violence) too be a dharma? ... If we place humans in the same row as animals [pranami], then many things which we consider *swabhavik* can be proven to be *aswabhavik*. But if we accept that there is a difference of type between these two animals [pranami], then what is *swabhavik* for the animal [pranami] cannot be said to be *swabhavik* for the human. The human is an animal oriented towards ascension [utdhargit pranami]. In him there is considerable discrimination. He has the ability to discriminate between good and bad. He worships God through reason, tries to know him, and considers this knowledge to be the object of life [purusharth]. Whereas if it said that an animal [pranami] worships God, then it does so without wishing to, not from its own wish. We cannot even imagine the wish to worship with regard to animals [pranami]. Man in contrast can of his own wish worship even Satan [shaitani]. The *swabhav* of the human has to be, and is, to know God. 28

In the second essay, responding to a letter in Young India from a doctor who had questioned Gandhi's concept of the 'natural' here, Gandhi returned to some of these issues. He reproduced a condensed version of the letter, remarking that while the 'confidence with which it is written takes one's breath away', its view nevertheless 'represents a large number of educated men'. The doctor defended the anthropological understanding of the natural by rooting it in evolution and science, and argued (going by Gandhi's condensed version):

Man is animal [pranami] first and human afterwards. Just think of the ancestor of the Australian savage [jangli] and his times when there was no art, no literature, no science ... Our ethical code is a thin veneer and the passions of the brute are still lurking within us. It is not natural [swabhavik] to man to find and know God, much less to worship him. In an individual naturally brought up, educated in an unbiased and non-theological atmosphere, the idea of worshipping God will be quite unnatural. ... God-worship is an acquired habit. The question of virtue and vice has nothing to do with God. Morality arises from the necessities of group life, and it has its sanctions in the social needs of man rather than in a capricious divine will. Man is not made in the image of God; it is God who is made in the image of man. Your moral code would not be debased if you regarded the ape as your remote cousin. ... Ahimsa is the creed of civilization, but is not man's nature. 29

Note the distinctive way in which the doctor's critique is formulated. There is no rejection of *ahimsa* itself; rather, as with the pervasive liberal tradition of thinking universal peace, *ahimsa* is affirmed. But it is situated not in swabhav or nature but in civilization as an
evolutionary category. In the doctor's formulation—which invokes the socius and draws on the very life that Gandhi criticized in *Hind Swaraj*—the category 'man' is constituted by that same process of transcendental inclusion that produces 'art', 'literature', and 'science' as categories. Here, man is natural in the sense that he shares a common base with the natural world, and even greater commonality with advanced sections of it such as apes. At the same time, another natural transcendence—where man has a history, and is characterized by the faculty of reason—also placed him above the natural world. It was this transcendence—produced by the interplay of the natural and the historical—that constituted the modern brotherhood of man, and authorized those 'rights of man' that we know now as human rights. Only this latter man, produced by the historicist process of civilization, is capable of ahimsa.

In his response, possibly written originally in English, Gandhi rejected the category 'man' and the logic of inclusionary transcendence that it rested on.

Hitherto one has been taught to believe that a species is recognized and differentiated from the rest by its special marks [khaas lakshan]. Therefore, it would be wrong, I presume, to say that a horse is animal [pashu] first and horse after. He shares something in common [saamanya ... lakshan] with the other animals, but he dare not shed his horseliness and yet remain an animal. Having lost his special virtue [khaas lakshan], he loses also his general [saamanya] status. Similarly, ... I would suggest to the medical friend that man can be classed as animal [pashu] only so long as he retains his humanity.30

The Gujarati translation of this letter makes more explicit the work done by this passage. First, both 'special characteristic' and 'special virtue' are rendered as khaas lakshan. Lakshan: mark. Khaas: a term that can be used to name both the specific, and the singularity of an entity. Second, saamanya: a term which designates both the general as shared substantivity, and being in common as that which is outside substantivity. In the Gujarati translation, the evolutionary theory loses its firm mooring in speciation. Perhaps because of this, Gandhi is able to produce an astonishingly productive misreading of evolutionary theory, focusing on precisely that which it sought to repress and render marginal.

Here, man is not an animal in the social-evolutionary sense, where the relationship is that of a shared common substance which man transcended. Rather, he is constituted by his 'special virtue' in relation to the category animal: what man as an animal has in common with other animals is that he is not the same animal as them. Man cannot transcend his animality to become that higher animal, man—if he did, Gandhi's argument suggests, he would cease to be man by the logic of speciation itself. By foregrounding the centrality of the khaas or singular to evolution, Gandhi refused any legitimate space to logic of transcendental inclusion. Unlike the latter, where animality was organized hierarchically, Gandhi proposed a scheme of animality that could never be brought to completion.

We are introduced to a distinctive thinking of a singularity. This is no longer (as it is with Yagnik, or Veyne's 'individual singularity') about the empiricist insistence on something irreducible and unique. Nor is it singularity in a performative sense—where there is recognition that the logic of speciation is only constative, and that a more apposite way to recognize diversity would acknowledge that the very performance of these constative hierarchies results in a proliferation of singular identities. Such a thinking of singularity, even when it questions the order of constative knowledge, remains within the order of representation.

Rather, Gandhi's own argument, as it unfolds, is marked not by a better or more adequate classification (as though the problem was one of classificatory categories) but by a intransigently political insistence on 'unilateral obligation' (ekpakshi farj) as constitutive of the swabhav of the human.

The correspondent apologizes for suggesting that I might regard myself as a 'remote cousin' (pitravati; paternity) of the ape. The truth is that my dharma not only permit me to claim but require me to own kinship [sagpan; kinsfolk] with not merely the ape but the horse and the sheep, the lion and the leopard, the snake and the scorpion. Not so need these kinsfolk regard themselves. The difficult dharma which rule my life, and I hold ought to rule that of every man and woman, impose this unilateral obligation [ekpakshi farj] on us. And it is so imposed because only the human is the silhouette of God (manushya; ishwarnu pratibimb che).31

This centrality of obligation had been stressed also in a crucial passage in chapter 13 of *Hind Swaraj* when he moved from his critique of aadhunik sudhaar or modern civilization to an exploration of kharu sudhaaro or true civilization.

True civilization is that conduct [vartan] through which man carries out his obligation [farj, duty]. To carry out obligation is to nourish ethics. To nourish ethics is hold in control the mind and the senses [indriyo]. By doing this, we know ourselves [apane olakhie chye]. This is su or good dharo [conduct]. It is opposed to kudharo [bad conduct].32
Two points are especially noteworthy. First, farj, which Gandhi translates as ‘duty’, works not within the realm of the identical (as in the duties required by ‘tradition’) but in the realm of the strange—the ape and even all animals, as he suggests to the doctor. In the chapter on modern medicine in Hind Swaraj, similarly: Te dhandama paropkar nathi e to hun batavi gayo. Tethi lokone nuksan chhe. To translate for ourselves: ‘I have already shown that there is no paropkar in that business [modern medicine]. Through it, people will suffer’.33 Paropkar: not simply beneficence, as the usual understanding of the word goes, but also etymologically: upkar: to do good to. Par: strange, alien, other, not one’s own. Again the figure of the strange, and an obligation to it. It is swabhavik or of one’s ownmost, in other words, to be constituted by an obligation to that which is not one’s ownmost.

Second, this insistence on obligation produces another thinking of responsibility. In a liberal thinking of responsibility, to respond is to insist that the other cannot remain a stranger, must have a face. The strange is what such responsibility must marginalize. Encountering the faceless, this thought of responsibility is compelled—since responsibility can only be to the face, since it is the face of the Other that produces the injunction ‘thou shalt not kill’—to either give it a face, or practice a responsible violence towards it.

But what has been said of the secret could be said of the strange too: it ‘never allows itself to be captured or covered over by the relation to the other, by being with or by any form of “social bond”. Even if it makes them possible, it does not answer to them, it is what does not answer. No responsiveness’.\footnote{Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, 240} The persistence of strangeness—and what is the strange if not ‘that radically other which cannot even have (or be) a face?’\footnote{Gandhi, ‘Gandhi, Hind Swaraj, 264}—marks the limits of liberal responsibility, marks the moment at which violence becomes legitimate for such responsibility.

Subjected to the responsible violence of colonialism (for it is to let liberalism off too easily to see colonial rule merely as an irresponsibility), Gandhi questions liberal responsibility by thinking a radical form of responsibility—responsibility as unilateral obligation. We might, following Spivak, formalize this other thinking of responsibility in the following way: it is that all action is undertaken in response to a call (or something that seems to us to resemble a call) that cannot be grasped as such.\footnote{Spivak, In Other Worlds, 70} Thought this way, all responsibility involves the strange. Gandhi thinks this responsibility by thinking what liberal thought cannot—the obligation to the strange and the other. The paraya, faceless, does not call, speak, or address. To the paraya, there can only be a unilateral obligation—a responsibility that is not in response to the speech of the other, but to the experience or call, \textit{which is always from within}, of being addressed by the other.

The paraya owes nothing, too, to an anthropological thinking of the stranger. Rather, Gandhi thinks this responsibility or obligation as \textit{kinship with the strange} (‘my dharma not only permits me to claim but require me to own kinship with...’). This insistence on kinship is quite in contrast to the liberal thinking of responsibility. For the latter, just as the strange comes after responsibility, and marks that to which one can be responsibly violent, so does kinship come before responsibility. For the latter, the kin are those whose faces come prior to the third party, who do not accept the order of the third party; kinship as a category thus refuses justice. In this sense, the kin are those to whom one is bound before responsibility, without limit, without the measure of justice. Hence the suspicion with which liberal discourses of responsibility have looked at the contamination of kinship—if this relation terrifies the discourse of responsibility, it is because it does not follow the latter’s measure.

\textit{Kinship with the strange:} in this binding of the before of liberal responsibility with its after, kinship is transformed. To venture a binding with the strange, the realm of that which can be known has to be abandoned. Nor can this kinship then inhabit the realm of the strange—as that which has no face, the strange resists inhabitation. Neither in the same nor in the strange, neither of the subject or of the object, neither a response to nor from: here then opens up the towardness that is the originary space of Gandhi’s politics. To be towards: this is not to be in the strange, but to be outside and yet bound to it—the combination that Gandhi describes through the term \textit{samp} or togetherness. To be towards: here is a with-ness that is not inert but an opening that nevertheless remains heterogeneous to that which it opens to. To be towards: this is what was at stake in the description of the human relationship with God through the term \textit{pratibimb} or reflection. \textit{Prati}-towards, but also against; \textit{bimb}—the disc of the sun. The pratibimb as reflection is that doubling which is constituted by a relation of toward-ness: set against the sun, ever outside it, it is also ever oriented towards it.

This kinship with the strange as toward-ness refigures the question of the human and the animal. The Editor thought of ‘life’ ‘modern civilization’, as operating without absolute distinctions. \textit{Inclusionary} transcendence reduces the distance between ‘man’ and ‘animals’ by
insisting on their common evolutionary ancestry. It also opens the space for another kind of distance—one produced by a logic of inclusionary transcendence that separates man from animal, and civilized man from savage man. Consequently, even though the distance it allows between human and animal is not absolute, it authorizes and naturalizes the human use of life for human ends alone, as in vivisection.

This relative, shifting distance necessarily infuses the thinking of the human: while there is a shared common base with primitive or backward humans, they were ancestral figures in the same sense as apes—which is to say that they had already been transcended (it is this thinking, of course, that the discourse of human rights has sought to fight, though in the very language of this ‘life’). Even contemporary humans can always slip back into the animality that they had transcended, or become base and evil—in a word, inhuman. The point, however, is not that the line between the animal and the human is always blurred but rather about how that blurring occurs—in the liberal thought of life, blurring occurs through inclusionary transcendence of the animal that humans always are.

Gandhi instead insists on an absolute distinction between humans and animals: the ‘Australian savage’ was fundamentally different from the brute, because the brute always will remain brute, whereas the savage has in him the capacity for developing to the fullest height attainable by man.... Even in our so-called civilized state, we are not far removed from savages. But the apparent anthropomorphism of this absolute and unbridgeable chasm is undone, simultaneously, by that which constitutes the human: the farj or kinship with the strange. As such, the absolute distinction between human and animal can be maintained only in the practice of obligation towards the animal or pashu; in fighting the use of the pashu’s life for a human end, or for ends. This obligation defines the human not as a substantivity, but as a opening, as a relation of being towards the pashu.

Necessarily, this claim of absolute affinity and distance extends to relations between humans—between savage and civilized, between good and evil. Given both the pervasiveness of the strange, and the kinship with the strange that constitutes the human, there can be no inclusionary transcendence at work between humans. These relations too now have to be sustained in the immeasurable toward-ness of unilateral obligation. The etymology of the term pashodi carries intimations of this immeasurable toward-ness, derived as it is from the Sanskrit prati, towards, and wasin, to reside, stay.

ANOTHER NAME FOR GOD

In insisting on kinship with the strange and the toward-ness that it involved, Gandhi had turned to God: the unilateral obligation was so imposed 'because only the human is the silhouette of God.' Gandhi turned over and again to God in his arguments. Of satyagraha itself: 'The dharmayudh is planned and conducted by God himself/itself. Of swabhav: 'The swabhav of the human has to be, and is, to know God: And the farj and satyagraha too were inseparable from God. Of the farj or obligation: 'And it is so imposed because man alone is made in the image of God.'

Who is this God? Or, more precisely, what is the work done by God in Gandhi's argument? Note that God is thought here not as an entity, not in its godliness (indeed, it is precisely because of this that Gandhi is never a spiritual thinker, despite his pervasive invocation of God), but as a way of thinking the human—the human is the figure whose swabhav it is to know God.

Furthermore, God is a shorthand for satya, a shorthand required because of our statist and substantivist predilections. As he wrote in the first of a series of letters from jail devoted to the vows that ashram inmates should take (later published as a book, Mangalprabhat, translated into English as From Yeravda Mandir):

The word 'satya' is from sat. Sat means to be [hovu]. Satya is Being [hovapan]. Save for satya, nothing exists [hasti]. The right name of God [Parmeshwar] is sat, that is satya. That is why it is more appropriate to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth. We cannot do without a ruler [rajyakarta], a leader. This is why the name God is more prevalent and will remain so. But on thinking, sat or satya is the true name, and only this conveys the full meaning.

'In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God rather than God is Truth' [Mangalprabhat]. Here satya, the thought that thinks sat or being, emerges as that which, in shorthand, is named God.

And the human?—the human is the figure whose swabhav it is to know sat or satya. But as the term pratibimb or silhouette implies, the human is the figure who is always in a relationship of intimate exteriority to sat—both constituted by sat and outside sat. As such, the relation to sat or satya cannot be a matter of knowing entities. In discussions of sat and satya, Gandhi returns repeatedly to the phrase neti neti (not this, not that). 'The seers have described God as “Neti, Neti” (Not this, not this). Truth will elude you.'
Neti neti: without attempting an account of that most difficult phrase from Indian debates on God and Being, let us note for now that with it Gandhi introduces a not-ness in Being. This not-ness has nothing in common with the liberal emphasis on the unknowability of truth. For the latter, unknowability is a consequence of the new criterion of knowledge, factuality, which brackets off questions of truth. Truth is now a weak substantive, a construct or regime best understood in terms of what is outside it and what produces it, the socius. But neti neti is not about the weakening of the substantive: it is a refusal of the substantive, an insistence that there can be no substantive, an attempt to think Being without Being, absent Being.

As neti neti, never a substantive, satya could only be in the striving for it, not in substantive ends. Gandhi argued of swaraj or independence as follows:

swaraj is nothing but the true effort to get it. The more we run after it the more distant it will seem. All ideals are thus. As a person becomes more true, so does satya run away from him, for he now understands that what he had hastily thought to be satya is actually untruth [asatya].

Satyagraha: satya, Being or Truth; agraha: desire for. Desire for Being or truth. The desire for satya involved in satyagraha could not ever lead to a relation of being in satya. As pratibimb, marked by neti neti, it was always to be towards and yet outside satya—this was the relationship of being towards satya. Could this be why part of the English title translation of the autobiography’s title—Experiments With Truth—foregrounds a relation of both being towards truth and outside it?

In thinking of satya through neti neti, the stakes of Gandhi’s politics emerge even more forcefully. From the perspective enabled by satyagraha, a problematic resolution marks the categorical imperative to treat every man as an end. When faced with conflicting ends, this latter tolerance can, because of its commitment to the thought of ends, at best defer judgment, resort to a disengagement. And deferral gives way, when necessary, to violence as the means to protect or promote the most just end. There can thus be ends substantive enough to justify violence.

By insisting on the impossibility of any substantive end, by insisting that truth could not be substantive, Gandhi makes a just violence impossible. Always outside sat and yet striving towards sat: this made means always more important than ends. In Hind Swaraj, in the chapter ‘Brute force’, Gandhi had privileged means over ends in opposing armed force to drive out the British:

You believe that there is no connection between means [sadhan] and ends [sadhya, murad]—this is a great mistake. ... The means is the seed; and the end—the object to be gained—is the tree. As much connection as is there between seed and tree is there between means and end.

The insistence on neti neti was a further radicalization of this argument, insisting not only that there could be no ends, only means; but insinuating a departure from the framework of means and ends. This departure, and the toward-ness which it required, imposed the unilateral obligation to ahimsa:

... without ahimsa it is impossible to search for satya. Ahimsa and Truth are as inseparable [sadhya] as two sides of a coin, or smooth disc. Which is the obverse and reverse in this? Nevertheless, ahimsa may be thought as the means [sadhan] and satya as the end [sadhya]. The means are within our reach, and so ahimsa becomes a supreme obligation [param dharm]. Truth becomes God [parameshwar].

In this formulation, while means are privileged as the point that is ‘within our reach’, means and end can no longer be separated out; they are held together even in the words for them—sadhana and sadhya. Perhaps (though that argument is not explicitly made here, and will have to be elicited on another occasion), their very separation is part of the problem?

THE VIOLENCE OF AHIMSA

But what is involved in ahimsa? In what sense is it ‘non-violence’ (to go by the commonsensical translation of the word which Gandhi too resorts to)? In order to consider these questions, it is helpful to counterpoint the thought of ahimsa to the apparently similar Levinasian argument about the Other. To the face of the Other, as Levinas points out, there can only be infinite submission. But inasmuch as I have to respond not only to the face of the other but alongside him to the approach of the third party, the justice of measure—and the state that it necessarily involves—become inevitable.

In the meeting with the face, it was not one’s place to judge; the other, being unique, does not undergo judgment; he takes precedence over me from the start; I am under allegiance to him. Judgment and justice are required from the moment the third party appears. In the very name of absolute obligations towards
Justice cannot be attentive only to the face—it must calculate, compare, and judge. While the insistence on its secondariness displaces justice from the centrality it is granted in ontological narratives, even the affirmation of the Other requires a return to just violence.

But justice never displaces the concern for the Other. Levinas argues for an aporetic relation between the Other and justice, or between ethics and politics. For Levinas, just as ethics needs justice in order to be responsible to the third, justice needs to be constantly interrogated by an ethics that is attentive to the face, and that points to what such a justice leaves out. Or, as he puts it in *Otherwise than Being*: "in no way is justice a degradation of obsession, a degeneration of the for-the-other, a diminution, a limitation of anarchic responsibility." This insistence on a justice that was responsive to ethics led to his insistence that the liberal state is more moral than the fascist state, and closer to the morally ideal state. As he remarks in an interview:

"I've told you that justice is always a justice which desires a better justice. This is the way that I will characterize the liberal state. The liberal state is a state which holds justice as the absolutely desirable end and hence as a perfection. Concretely, the liberal state has always admitted—alongside the written law—human rights as a parallel institution. It continues to preach that within its justice there are always improvements to be made in human rights. Human rights are the reminder that there is no justice yet." 47

From the postcolonial perspective that avows satyagraha, such an affirmation of liberalism, such an attempt to institute a clear divide between fascism and liberalism, remains within a deeply humanist understanding of both ethics and politics. To begin with, there is the curious innocence of ethics. Ethics practises only infinite submission to the other; it is never itself violent. But when faced with the third, ethics is not enough; ethics must itself give rise to justice. It is justice that practises what Levinas describes as the 'first violence'. This is why when the question of how to resist injustice arises, ethics cannot itself resist. Rather, it must enact a transitive move from submission to justice—where love now takes the form of justice, trucking explicitly in power, to resist the third.

The ability to suffer pain for the Other not only offers proof that the judge practises a just violence, but places the judge at a different and higher level than the Other to whose violence the judge responds. Implicitly, that Other (fascist for Levinas, terrorist now?) does not experience this anguish, which is why that Other's violence is never just, and must be put down by a just violence. Concomitantly, the anguish of the judge (what, for example, sets it apart from the violence of the Other who attacks the third, or of the third who attacks the Other) is precisely that the judge is the figure who is open to being interrogated by ethics, who has initially subordinated himself or herself to the Other, who is pained and anguished at the violence that s/he practises as a judge.

This innocence of ethics also presupposes a distinctive way of thinking non-violence. Ethics is non-violent because it abjures any attempt at domination. Paradoxically it does so through an infinite submission that continues to be conceptualized as a form of subordination so radical that it does not encounter domination. What is an ethical submission that is not a subordination, that can resist what it submits to?—this question cannot be raised in a sustained manner in this ethics. This is why when the question of how to resist injustice arises, ethics cannot itself resist. Rather, it must enact a transitive move from submission to justice—where love now takes the form of justice, trucking explicitly in power, to resist the third.

From the postcolonial perspective that avows satyagraha, this curious conjoining of the innocence of non-violent ethics with the violence of justice entails an ethnocentrism that thinks itself an anti-ethnocentrism. This is not only because the innocence claimed for ethics is reminiscent of the innocence that liberalism claims for itself, treating its colonial genocides and brutality as only tragic deviations from its norms rather than constitutive of it. More importantly, and on a more conceptual register, both ethics and justice are necessarily marked by a certain civilizational hierarchy. What justifies the violence of the judge (what, for example, sets it apart from the violence of the Other who attacks the third, or of the third who attacks the Other) is precisely that the judge is the figure who is open to being interrogated by ethics, who has initially subordinated himself or herself to the Other, who is pained and anguished at the violence that s/he practises as a judge.

Involved in satyagraha is quite another thinking of violence. Gandhi uses the word satyagraha in two related senses. In its restricted sense, satyagraha is the resistance that is offered to injustice. But there is also
a broader sense of the word, where Gandhi uses it interchangeably with ahimsa. Through this later emphasis on satyagraha, Gandhi transforms the tradition of thinking ahimsa. This transformation is not only a matter of introducing ahimsa—satyagraha as a political strategy to be used against the British or the state. It also forcefully reworks the stakes of ahimsa as a concept-word that he receives from Jain and Hindu traditions.

Most strikingly, in Gandhi's formulation, satyagraha or ahimsa are not at all innocent of violence. It turns out that a complete eschewal of 'brute force' is impossible. 'I cannot escape the himsa which is inevitably involved in the processes of eating and drinking.' At the time of Hind Swaraj, Gandhi focused primarily on this residual impossibility of ahimsa. But quite soon afterwards, he came to argue in even stronger terms for the violence involved in ahimsa. Exemplary of this is a letter that he writes in 1918, possibly originally in English. In that, he acknowledges that his decision to campaign for the recruitment of Indian soldiers for the British Indian army had upset many for both political and religious reasons. But he defends it as in keeping with his longstanding views:

It is my practice of ahimsa and [my] failure to get our people even to understand the first principles of ahimsa that have led to the discovery that all killing is not himsa, that, sometimes, practice of ahimsa may even necessitate killing and that we as a nation have lost the true power of killing. It is clear that he who has lost the power ['shakti'] to kill cannot practise non-killing. Ahimsa is a renunciation ['tyaag'] of the highest type. ... a mouse cannot be properly said to renounce ['tyaag'] the power of killing a cat. It may look terrible but it is true that we must, by a well-sustained, conscious effort, regain this power, and, then, if we can only do so, deliver the world from its travails of himsa by a continuous abdication ['tyaag'] of this power.51

What do we make of all this? It is clearly inadequate to think of what is going on as the statist argument that just violence, such as the state's, is not really violence because it is organized by what are ultimately non-violent ends.52 This after all is the argument that the doctor makes in the passage discussed earlier, and Gandhi repudiates it quite emphatically. Nor can we understand the argument here to be the easy alternative, sometimes described as anarchist, which rejects state violence but affirms individual violence. Indeed, the letter goes on to insist that such an opposition is untenable:

It is not possible to make a distinction between organized warfare ['vyavasthit yuddha] and individual fighting [vyaktigat ladaī]. There must be an organized

[...]

What then is going on? Perhaps we can start by returning to Hind Swaraj. One of the most important terms is bal—force. In chapter 2, both the Reader and the Editor agree that 'petitions must be backed by force.' The opposition in Hind Swaraj is between two kinds of force—darugodo (the title of chapter 16, translated into English as 'brute force') and elsewhere in the text sometimes as 'force of arms') or shareerbal ('physical force') on the one hand and satyagraha-atmabal (the title of chapter 17, translated into English as 'passive resistance', though elsewhere in the text atmabal is translated as 'soul force') and dayabal ('force of love'). Within the terms of Hind Swaraj, the opposition is best described not as one between non-violence and violence but two forces—the force of love and the force of arms.

In the conceptual order of satyagraha, as for the Levinasian thought of the Other, such love is heterogenous to the justice of measure, or to what the Editor calls the force of arms. But unlike Levinasian thought, the conceptual order of satyagraha presumes a certain ineradicable violence already in every relation, even before any third arrives on the scene. For it recognizes unilateral kinship as owed to the stranger, paraya, the figure who constitutionally lacks a face. With a figure who lacks a face, non-violence in the conventional sense—where the Other's sensibilities, desires, and requirements are respected and deferred to (and Levinas' argument about the encounter with the Other before the third arrives on the scene remains organized by such a concept of non-violence, despite its radical incongruence with his concept of the face)—is no longer possible since the Other constitutionally cannot be known.

This is the constitutive violence of satyagraha, a violence that it can never disavow: it can never address the other, for the other is always opaque. Nor can this violence be attenuated by insisting on the good intentions of the satyagrahi-self, for the self here as unknowable as the other. If the argument for satyagraha were to privilege intentions, it would return to the same affirmation of the sovereign subject-agent that it tries to break from: after all, both the Nehruvian state and colonial officials in India justified their violence by invoking either the larger good, or at least good intentions.54 This opacity of self and other and related unconcern with intentions is symptomatic of the constitutive violence of satyagraha. It is true enough that Gandhi stressed
Nevertheless, the self. Again, in a discussion ouly enshrines this agency. They (garibai): broadly, satyagraha that ouly brahmacharya. The relation of the gift that it sustains. The love or daya G. insisting that it is requires marked by the giver's Ahimsa means universal necessarily woman to one man, what remains 172.

If we look at it from the standpoint of ahimsa, we find that the fulfilment of ahimsa is impossible without perfect brahmacharya. Ahimsa means universal love. If a man gives his love to one woman, or a woman to one man, what remains for others? Gandhi interprets brahmacharya broadly, insisting that it is requires also vows such as those of asteya (control of palate) and aparigraha (non-possession).

While it would be quite accurate to understand much of Gandhi's emphasis on brahmacharya and related vows as the enactment of a repressive ascesis, the association of brahmacharya with ahimsa as universal love suggests that more is going on than just that. For here vows such as brahmacharya seek to create and sustain—in ways that exceed the specific content of the vows themselves—satyagraha as a distinctive form of personhood: the personhood of those who give nothing but themselves. In this, there emerges also a sharper indication of what is distinctive about satyagraha—ahimsa as universal love—here the self gives nothing but itself.

But what does it mean for a self to give nothing but itself? To revisit on another register what I have argued elsewhere, to give oneself is, first, to refuse to be an agent. An agent is marked by sovereignty over the self. A gift is necessarily marked by the giver's relinquishment of sovereignty over what is given—in this case oneself. This relinquishment of sovereignty is enacted over and again in the submission of the satyagrahi to the laws of the land, or to the other. To make oneself into a self capable of such relinquishing of sovereignty, into a self capable of separation from (not mastery of) the oneself who is sovereign—is this the stake that vows such as brahmacharya struggle to conceptualize?

Second, to give oneself in this manner is to refuse to accept the agency or sovereignty of the other to whom one gives oneself—whether that other be the oneself that the satyagrahi separates from, the one that the satyagrahi encounters face (less) to face (less), or the laws of the land. A gift, after all, remains marked by the giver—the receiver of a gift never owns it as an object, and a gift transports receivers and givers out of themselves. Thus, when satyagrahis submit themselves to the sovereignty of the other, they do so in order to point to the limits of the other's agency and of the law that enshrines this agency. They point, in other words, to what the other's sovereignty cannot subdue, and what is nevertheless not another sovereignty.

repeatedly his 'spirit of compromise'. The emphasis on compromise was one way of acknowledging the necessity of recognizing the desires of the stranger-other as a subject-agent. Nevertheless, satyagraha became necessary at the moment that compromise was no longer possible. This impossibility of compromise was not only empirical. It did not occur only when there was conflict. Rather, the opacity of the other was constitutive of every relation. Indeed, in some relations, there could only be opacity. With the animal, for example, there can be no 'compromise' based on the animal's desires.

Thus, Gandhi's non-violence can be constituted neither by reference to the justice of the end (an objective non-violence, such as would be legitimated by historicism, or by every statist claim to justice) nor by reference to the intentions of self or other (a subjective non-violence). By the conventional terms of subject and object, Gandhi's non-violence not only cannot know whether it is violent or non-violent; it is violent, period. Yet it is a strange violence, for even as it questions the sovereignty it encounters, even as it fails to recognize the intentions of the other, it seeks not to become another sovereign, or to impose its intentions. So not only is satyagraha violent, but it eschews just violence, or a justice conceptualized in terms of the state. (This eschewal should not be confused with the conceptualization of the state as an empty place that can be occupied by various contenders—in the latter, what is conceptualized is a circulation of sovereignty, not its eschewal.) It remains always an unjustifiable violence, even when and where the most scrupulous calculations have rendered it necessary. Perhaps indeed this is its greatest violence—that it can never claim to be a just violence. The indistinction of the line between himsa and ahimsa is something that Gandhi repeatedly returns to, as when he concurs with a questioner who asks him whether 'God alone knows what is himsa and what is ahimsa'.

So the question arises: in what sense is Gandhi's non-violence non-violent, or in what sense is satyagraha ahimsak? Its non-violence, I suggest, is only the relation of the gift that it sustains. The love or daya involved in satyagraha involves a giving of the self, and only the self. This insistence on the giving of the self is one way of understanding Gandhi's insistence on the vows of brahmacharya and non-possession. In chapter 17 of Hind Swaraj, for example, the Editor says that those who wish to become satyagrahis will have to 'observe perfect chastity (brahmacharya) [and] adopt poverty (garibai)'. Again, in a discussion of the vows that ashram inmates should take, Gandhi writes:
Third, to give oneself in this manner is to receive the other in a distinctive manner—as a gift. For that remainder which the other’s sovereignty cannot subdue is never only the satyagrahi’s. It is also the other’s—that is what makes satyagraha possible in the first place. Between these remainders, there can never be a relation organized by intimacy (the primordial relation before sovereignty, of which empiricism is exemplary), sovereignty (the unity of the third, of agents); rather, the relation between the self and the other is organized by an essential and inescapable resistance. This resistance is not one of two agents to each other (the Hobbesian moment before the state), but something quite different—the resistance involved in the other equality where each is given to the other.

This essential resistance involved in the giving of the self, this violence before justice involved in the non-agental relation between self and other—this is what Gandhi calls daya, satyagraha, ahimsa, atnavbal. If the word ahimsa occurs here, it should never be treated as a reference to non-violence in the metaphysical sense; rather, it names the seizure of those terms, their appropriation to another politics.

In sum, satyagraha, ahimsa, and daya sought to transform its interlocutor into the stranger, to introduce obligation where there was responsibility, to sustain a figure to whom response is impossible, and to whom submission in agental terms is impossible. Thus, its toward-ness was never a relation of subordination to or domination of the stranger. Rather, to be towards was to submit to the unilateral obligation of kinship and its originary equality. Unilateral obligation involved ceaseless political confrontation with the other, it involved the effort to make the interlocutor into the figure who was simultaneously neighbour and stranger. The unilateral obligation also involved a compulsion of the other: the latter had to be compelled to abandon their agency. Satyagraha: the compulsion that, through submission to the unilateral obligation of kinship, produced and sustained the neighbour-stranger. As such, in its confrontation with domination or subordination, it sought to marginalize the equality of measure—justice—with an other equality that did not allow for measure. It is this fidelity to another equality, an equality that Gandhi considers originary, that he refers to as ahimsa, satyagraha, or ‘non-violence’.

THE INVISIBILITY OF SATYAGRAHA

But why should the word non-violence, ahimsa, be used to describe satyagraha, to describe relations of essential resistance? What is the strange return that ahimsa stages here, where the conventional distinction between non-violence and violence is overturned. In order to attend to this question, perhaps we can return to the implications of the invisibility of satyagraha—to the remark that history cannot ‘take note’ of satyagraha. The meaning of the word itihaas is “thus it happened” [aam thai gayu]. If we work with that meaning, then if we give you copious knowledge [pramaan] of satyagraha. If we interpret itihaas by the meaning of the English word, ... then there can be no evidence of satyagraha.

By now, we have already parsed out a first argument in this passage: that ‘history’ cannot (not does not) even take note of happening. The happening or the event is possible only by rending the subject and producing the khaasiyat (the singularity that refigures the species, and in this sense claims a relation with the general)—singularity outside the specific, which is to say outside measure. This happening or event cannot belong to the realm of objective facts (which, as specificity, is already known even when new) or subjective experience (which, affirming the sovereignty of the subject, can know only itself). ‘History’, concerned with these two realms, turns away from the fundamental historicity of the happening; it resolves the happening into the homogeneous time of socius, context, and subject.

We still have to elicit the argument in the first sentence—about why satyagraha is necessary for itihaas. Leaving for another occasion the task of a sustained elicitation, I shall for now only indicate its protocols.

Iitihaas. Iti-so; ha: truly; aas: was—from as. to be. When Gandhi explains what the Gujarati word itihaas means, he writes, aam thai gayu—thus it happened. Thai: again, from the root asti, to be.

Thus it happened. But is the happening of thai gayu to be thought as we would think an uncontrollable natural disaster that happens unexpectedly to unsuspecting persons? Not at all—such events, to the extent that we think of them as natural, belong within an order of measure, however immense that measure be. Rather, the etymology of thai signals the concern with the question of being, sat. Sat is the happening—the event outside measure. If, looking for happening, we find satyagraha—in all its pervasiveness, practised by ‘thousands, even lakhs’—, this is because satyagraha is the desire for, and the effort to produce the happening.

But why and how does satyagraha attune itself to the question of sat, the happening of being? Though Gandhi does not explicitly address
or answer this question, his arguments are suggestive: the happening of sat is not possible without satyagraha, without the simultaneous farj and khaasiat involved in satyagraha. 62

Khaasiat: satyagraha, because it was unilateral and obligatory, defied measure by referring to measure. Indeed, satyagraha was required precisely when the normalcy of measure is found wanting. Petitions, etc., are a good remedy [ilaaq] for bearable suffering [sahya dukho]. For unbearable suffering, the only remedy is satyagraha. 63 This is why, as Gandhi remarks earlier in the same essay, 'whether or not satyagraha should be started is not dependent on any mathematical rule [ganitna niyam]. As such, satyagraha itself was outside measure, or more precisely its own measure:

Satyagraha is the way of ahimsa [ahimsadharma]. Therefore it is justified [dharmya] and right [isht] at all places and all times. ... Even the advocates of armed force impose bounds [hado baandhe che] on the use of arms. Satyagraha has no bounds [seema]. Or rather if it has then they are those of the satyagraha's tapascharya, strength to bear suffering. 64

In this defiance of measure emerges the khaas: the effort of satyagraha is to establish a singular relation towards those against whom satyagraha is practiced.

Farj: what is singular does not essay a relation beyond itself only subsequent to the assertion of its singularity or khaasiat. Because this singularity is produced in the acceptance of a unilateral obligation, the singularity of satyagraha is constituted as an opening beyond itself. As a command from elsewhere, as an insistence on toward-ness, the unilateral obligation is possible only by giving up on the register of the active which is exemplified in the liberal concept of agency. Thus, the chapter 'Satyagraha-Atmabal' (satyagraha or soul force) in the Gujarati Hind Swaraj carries, in his English translation, the title 'Passive resistance'.

What is this passivity that rejects agency? This passivity is not simply the inverse of the agential concept of activity:

When friends told me here that passive resistance was taken up by the people as a weapon of the weak, I laughed at the liebel, as I called it then. But they were right and I was wrong. With me alone and a few other co-workers it came out of our strength and was described as satyagraha, but with the majority it was purely and simply passive resistance what they resorted to, because they were too weak to undertake methods of violence. 65

What is rejected here is passive resistance as inertia, as springing from a lack of potentiality for the active. This, Gandhi insisted, was what ahimsa had degenerated into in Indian tradition. Rejecting such ahimsa, Gandhi insisted that only where there was a potentiality for being active could there be satyagraha, the term that had been coined during an early South African struggle to describe the form of ahimsa he argued for. 'You cannot teach ahimsa to the man who is not endowed with the strength to kill. You cannot teach a dumb man the beauty and benefits of silence'. 66

This inadequacy of the English term 'passive resistance' to describe satyagraha was a matter to which Gandhi reverted on several occasions. In the Gujarati Hind Swaraj, one of his earliest mentions of satyagraha goes: 'Call this force daya-bal [love-force], call it atmabal [soul force], or call it satyagraha'. Gandhi's English translation of this introduced the term passive resistance: 'The force implied in his may be described as love force, soul force, or, more popularly but less accurately, passive resistance'. 67 In trying to describe this passivity, he often fell back on the term 'active', as in his essay 'Not passive resistance, [but] satyagraha':

It is said that 'passive resistance' [English term in Gujarati/Hindi text] is a weapon of the weak, but the power [shakti] which is described here can be used [prayog] only by the strong. This power is not passive resistance; the use of this power requires intense engagement [bhaare pravruti]. The struggle in South Africa was not passive [nishkriya] but active [sakriya]. 68

Although the English term 'active' is used in the Gujarati/Hindi text, this activity is outside the agential problematic of the active and the passive. The activity involved in satyagraha is perhaps best described as a radical passivity, a passivity where the action is not autonomous but the enacting of the unilateral obligation. It was to describe this kind of radical passivity that Gandhi used the term prayog, the word he translated into English as experiment. Hence the title, and also: 'Using the excuse of an autobiography, I want to tell the story of my numerous experiments [prayogyo] with truth. As my life consists of nothing but these experiments...'. 69 Here, the Atmakatha is no longer an account of life but an account of prayogyo.

Gandhi insisted that in order to carry out these 'scientific experiments [shastriya prayogyo]' it was necessary to be bound by vrat or vows—primary amongst them those of satya as neti neti and, therefore, ahimsa. It was such a bound figure—a figure as such profoundly distinct from the autonomous subject pursuing ends through the modern experiment—who pursued, through prayogyo, not falsifiable
hypotheses or new knowledge, but practices that would better sustain
the vows.

Note Gandhi's formulation: *e aarth kariye*: if we work with that
meaning, or give that meaning to itihaas, then I can give pramaan or
'evidence'. Here itihaas is not an inert field in which evidence can be
found; a working or a giving has to produce its meaning. Which raises
the question: how is this meaning given? Could the unarticulated
argument here be that this giving is the work of satyagraha? That
satyagraha, in this opening-giving of the farj, sustains and gives
itihaas—happening? Is this the sense in which satyagraha involves
ahimsa, non-violence?

If so, another question emerges: clearly, itihaas cannot erase or
transcend what we conventionally think of as historical happening.
If it did, then it would itself be modelled on a historical happening,
become a historical happening. It has to establish another relation
with the historical happening. What can this relationship be, and
how would it convert the historical happening? Satyagraha enacts, one
might venture to say, the conversion of the historical happening into
the happening of satyagraha. How this conversion happens, where it
leaves the historical happening—these are concerns that a thinking of
satyagraha must address.

NOTES
In these footnotes, I will cite Gandhi's writings first in the language in which they
were originally written. Gandhi insisted on writing in Gujarati as far as possible.
In some cases (as with *Hind Swaraj*) he translated these writings himself into
English; on other occasions, he supervised the translation by associates. Suffice
for now to say it would be misplaced to treat either his Gujarati or English writings
as more true or accurate in representing his politics; rather, I have proceeded by
being attentive to the gap between them.
1. 'Discussion with Roman Rolland', Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi
(henceforth CWMG), 6 December 1931, vol. 54, p. 260; see also Mahadev Desai's
diary for an extended Gujarati transcript of these remarks, including Roman
Rolland's remarks to Gandhi: Mahadevbhaini Dayari, 1976, vol. 15, Gandhi
2. Gandhi began writing *Dakshin Afrikana Satyagrahano Itihaas* in 1923. It
was initially published in two parts in Gujarati by Navjivan Press, Ahmedabad
in 1924 and 1925. An English translation by Valji Govindji Desai with Gandhi's
advice and input, was published by S. Ganesan, Madras, in 1928. In this essay I
draw on the editions of these books reprinted in CWMG.
3. Mahatma Gandhi, *Dakshin Afrikana Satyagrahano Itihaas*, in Gandhijnio
Akshar deha (Gandhi's collected works in Gujarati, hereafter Akshardeha), vol. 29,
p. 25. This passage has been translated in 'Satyagraha in South Africa', CWMG,
vol. 34, p. 5, as follows:

That is the beauty of satyagraha. It comes up to oneself; one has not to go
out in search of it. This is a virtue inherent in the principle itself. A dharmayuddha ...
comes unsought; and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle. In
a righteous struggle God Himself plans campaigns and conducts battles. A
dharma-yuddha can be waged only in the name of God, and it is only when
the satyagrahi feels quite helpless, is apparently on his last legs and finds
utter darkness all around him, that God comes to the rescue.
4. *Satyanaprayogo, Athava Atmakatha*, in Akshardeha, vol. 39, p. 2; An
Autobiography or the Story of My Experiments with Truth, translated by Mahadev
Desai, in CWMG, vol. 44, p. 89.
5. Ibid. The friend was obviously not referring to an empirical East: there
were by the early twentieth century already several major autobiographies even
by Gujarati writers and thinkers. The English translation goes:

What has set you on this adventure? he asked. 'Writing an autobiography
is a practice peculiar to the West. I know of nobody in the East having
written one, except amongst those who have come under Western
influence... Don't you think it would be better not to write anything like
an autobiography, at any rate just yet?'

...But it is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply
want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth, and as my
life consists of nothing but those experiments, it is true that the story will
take the shape of an autobiography. But I shall not mind, if every page of it
speaks only of my experiments.
7. Gandhi's English translation goes:

You ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what
history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: 'It so happened'. If that
is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But if it
means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul
force or passive resistance in such history. You cannot expect silver ore in a
tin mine. History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world.
English translation goes:

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a
very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in
their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of
nations live in peace. History does not and cannot take note of this fact.
History is really a record of very interruption of the even working of the
force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them repents and
re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to
live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But if the two brothers, through
the intervention of solicitors or some other reason take up arms or go to
law—which is another form of the exhibition of brute force,—their doings would be immediately noticed in the Press, they would be the talk of their neighbours, and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and other for nations. History, then, is a record of an interruption of the course of nature. Soul force, being natural is not noted in history.

Two modifications I have made in my translation may require further remark. First, I have translated sadoshi-paadoshi not as neighbours, which would perhaps be more literal, but as 'all and sundry'—I would argue the sadoshi transforms the paadoshi from a singular entity to a general quantity. Second, samp and samp-thi have been translated not as 'in peace' but as 'in togetherness'. The translation of samp as just 'peace' does not emphasize the modality of this peace enough. The usual rendering of samp in dictionaries as unity is equally misleading. Etymologically, samp refers to a togetherness. In the emphasis on samp as peace, it will later become clear, what may be involved is a reading of samp not as unity, but as a togetherness that is nevertheless marked by a constitutive separation.

11. Ibid.
12. Mari Hakikat, though written in 1866, was published posthumously in 1933, well after Gandhi's autobiography. The reference is thus unlikely to have been to Mari Hakikat. Nevertheless, there is the intriguing possibility that, both here and elsewhere, Gandhi cast his politics in opposition to Narmad's, especially the early Narmad. While Narmad emphasized hakikat, or truth as verifiable fact, Gandhi's Atmakatha was concerned with satya as Being, as outside the realm of verification or falsification. Narmad also campaigned in his early years for a sudhaar that would adopt crucial values from the British. And in Hind Swaraj, Gandhi implicitly distanced himself from such a project by drawing a distinction between adhunik sudhaar (modern civilization) and khari sudhaar (true civilization).

17. The discussion here of the relationship between Indulal and Kumud draws on that chapter. See Indulal Yagnik, 1970 [1955], Atmakatha, vol. 2, Gujaratma Navjivan, Surat: Kavi Narmad Yugavart Trust, chapter 13. All references in this and the next three paragraphs are to passages from this chapter.
19. Gandhi's use of the term sudhaar was a critical reworking of the term 'modern civilization' of post-Enlightenment European thought. By the time Gandhi wrote, there was already a tradition of using the term sudhaar in this European sense. For instance, Narmad argued in his Narmagadhya that reform—sudhaar or sudhaaro—was needed to produce swadeshi-abhimaan (respect and pride in one's country). Gandhi broke from this tradition by redesignating this sudhaar as kudhaar—treating the term dhaar as path, which could then be prefixed with either the good (su) or bad (ku)—or describing it as aadhunik (modern), paschimini (western), and ajakdaal (of these days). In opposition to aadhunik sudhaar, Gandhi affirmed khari (true) sudhaar. Khar sudhaar was not a return to tradition or a revival of it; Gandhi affirmed khar sudhaar through a notion of the new—thus the title of his journal, Navjivan (literally new life).

Second, while he sometimes used the phrase 'western civilization' as a substitute for 'modern civilization', he was quite insistent on the difference between the two. For him, it was not western civilization that was ruling India but modern civilization. England too, he insisted, was ruled by modern civilization just like India. As such, though this is not an argument explicitly made by Gandhi, it too was colonized by modern civilization.
20. Hind Swaraj in Akshardeha, vol. 10, p. 26; CWMG, vol. 10, p. 259. Such a purushartha could only produce a people who 'completely forget the really important matters', who 'stay neither with the way of religion nor with the way of the world'. Elsewhere, Gandhi questioned the common rendering of this term as 'the meaning of man', and drew on its etymological root—puru—as body—to insist that it referred to both men and women. Perhaps because of this, he translated it into English as the 'object of life'. See letter to Narandas Gandhi, 12 August 1930, Akshardeha, vol. 44, p. 80; CWMG, vol. 49, p. 437. This letter is part of a series of weekly letters to Narandas that Gandhi wrote, when he was imprisoned in Yeravda jail in the wake of the Dandi March. In each letter, always dated as on a Tuesday, Gandhi included an exposition of one of the vows of the ashram. These expositions were collected and published in 1930 by Navjivan Press under the title Mangalprabhat. It was translated into English, perhaps in 1932, and published by Navjivan Press with the title, From Yeravada Mandir. The letter above was devoted to the vow of asawad, 'control of the palate'.
21. Hind Swaraj, in Akshardeha, vol. 10, pp. 26 and 39; CWMG, vol. 10, p. 277. The English version has 'the medical profession' for daakta vidya, which I have translated as 'medical knowledge'.
The business of a doctor is to take care of the body, or, properly speaking, not even that. Their business is really to rid the body of diseases that may afflict it. How do these diseases arise? Surely by our negligence or indulgence. I overstated, I have indigestion, I go to a doctor, he gives me medicine. I am cured. I overeat again, I take his pills again. Had I not taken the pills in the first instance, I would have suffered the punishment deserved by me and I would not have overeaten again. The doctor intervened and helped me to indulge myself. My body thereby certainly felt more at ease, but my mind became weakened. A continuance of a course of medicine must, therefore, result in loss of control over the mind. Had the doctor not intervened, nature would have done its work, and I would have acquired mastery over myself, would have been freed from vice and would have become happy.

23. I thank Gayatri Spivak for a very suggestive and helpful discussion of the atman.

28. Swabhavik Eteke Keval, Akshardeha, vol. 30, p. 552, 13 June 1926; CWMG, vol. 35, p. 355. The terms praan and pashu, both of which I have translated into English as animal, carry quite different connotations. Pashu as a term usually excludes humans, and usually refers to the larger domestic animals. As such, pashu does not carry the connotations of derogation that its English translation 'brute' does. Praani includes all living beings—all those with praan, life. In another essay, I hope to turn to these terms, and also to a third term which is translated as animal—jaanvar.
30. Ibid., p. 4; ibid., p. 96.
31. Ibid., p. 5; ibid., p. 97.

Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves. The Gujarati equivalent for civilization means 'good conduct.'

33. Hind Swaraj, in Akshardeha, vol. 10, p. 40; CWMG, vol. 10, p. 278. Gandhi's English translation goes: 'I have endeavored to show that there is no real service of humanity in the profession of medicine, and that it is injurious to mankind.'
34. Jacques Derrida, 1992, Passions: "An Oblique Offering", in David Wood (ed.), Derrida: A Critical Reader, Oxford: Blackwell, p. 29. This convergence of the secret and the strange is not accidental. The non-agential secret, to the extent that it can never be known and is thus constitutively secret, is inseparable from the strange.
37. 'More Animal than Human', CWMG, 8 July 1926, vol. 36, p. 3ff.
38. Gandhi's thinking of swabhav here is open to questions similar to those raised by Derrida of Heidegger's thinking of Dasein. As Derrida points out in Of Spirit (1991, Chicago: University of Chicago Press), Dasein is thought as the entity which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its being. To think Dasein in this manner, however, is to treat the animal and the vegetal as impoverished in that spirit of Dasein. A similar consequence follows from the insistence that only manushya is the pratibima or silhouette of God, that the animal cannot of its own wish or desire worship God.

But there is also another moment in Gandhi: that of the figure who is a satyagrahi without measure and will not be afraid of, nor be feared by animals. The fascination with this argument led Gandhi to return repeatedly to the figure of St Francis of Assisi; Gandhi's secretary, Mahadev Desai, also wrote an essay on St Francis for Navijivan.
40. Ibid.
41. Discussion with D. Ramaswami on or around 3 August 1944, CWMG, vol. 84, p. 266.

Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. ... The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same invariable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.
44. Letter to Narandas Gandhi, Akshardeha, vol. 44, p. 60, 29–31 July 1930; CWMG, vol. 49, p. 409ff. The letter cited was part of the Mangalprabhat series, and was devoted to the first vow, that of ahimsa.
47. Emmanuel Levinas, Tamara Wright, Peter Hughes and Alison Ainsley, 1988, 'The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas', Andrew Benjamin and Tamara Wright (trans.), in Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (eds), The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other, New York: Routledge, p. 178.
Rather, satyagraha is practised before, during, and after the fight between the two brothers. As such, the argument in that passage, is that history cannot take note of this Being because the togetherness of this Being is produced by satyagraha, by the practice of unilateral obligation.

62. Similarly with the term atmakatha. Its appropriateness emerges most forcefully, given Gandhi’s explicit rejection of the commonsensical meaning, in the potentialities sustained by its etymology. Atmakatha: the Katha or Story of the Atman. The atman was central to life in Gandhi’s sense, and thus to satyagraha: it is surely not accidental that the chapter which discusses satyagraha is titled ‘Satyagraha-Atmanbali’. Satyagraha could only be possible through the strength of the atman.

64. Ibid.