

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA GRADUATE COLLEGE

EDUCATION AS *SATYAGRAHA*: AN INTERCULTURAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION
TOWARD PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

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EDUCATION AS *SATYAGRAHA*: AN INTERCULTURAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION
TOWARD PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

Our holistic well-being is threatened by our interconnected planetary crises including the normalization of disproportionate rates of poverty and hunger, regional lack of access to clean water and sanitation, structural social inequalities and systemic injustices, violent armed conflict and inadequate initiatives for peace and security, environmental degradation, destruction of entire species and habitats, loss of biodiversity, and increasing climate change (see the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals). The United Nations (UN) has identified "quality education" as having a crucial role in addressing these global problems by empowering the individual with the values and skills to increasingly accomplish the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the "promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence" (UN, Target 4.7, 2015).

This critical ethnographic research explores how an alternative philosophy of education interwoven with the philosophy of satyagraha can expand the role of education to align with this definition of quality education. This project provides a case study for how educators at two local schools in Gujarat, India are innovating ways to integrate and contextualize the philosophy of satyagraha into a philosophy of education to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence by empowering and equipping individuals with the values and skills to positively transform their daily lives and local communities.

This study was guided by two research questions: (1) How are educators in post-colonial contexts, specifically India, interweaving an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge? (2) How does this alternative, intercultural philosophy of education empower individuals to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence? Educators who participated in this case study in the local schools in Gujarat provided valuable insights into how this

alternative philosophy of education is being envisioned, understood, and implemented today. Through ethnographic data collection and analysis, this study highlights how universal kinship serves as the fundamental principle of satyagraha and describes how the obligations of universal kinship inherent within the philosophy are being interpreted by educators in Gujarat and formed into a philosophy of education that promotes nonviolent cultural transformation at the individual, community, and societal levels.

The findings of this study have several implications and can provide policy makers, community development agencies, and local educators with a philosophy of education that can be contextualized to help them address their concerns that align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, especially including the goal of quality education for the "promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence" (UN, Target 4.7, 2015). The findings can also provide future researchers fundamental guidance for investigating how such an alternative philosophy of education can be contextualized in various additional locations globally.

DEDICATION

To my mother, my Naniji, and her mother,
for sharing their love of learning
and for teaching me the necessity and the strategy of earning an education.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The vestiges of colonial violence are evidenced in our interconnected planetary crises that prevent our holistic well-being and have become threats to our collective existence. These crises include the normalization of disproportionate rates of poverty and hunger, regional lack of access to clean water and sanitation, structural social inequalities and systemic injustices, violent armed conflict and inadequate initiatives for peace and security, environmental degradation, destruction of entire species and habitats, loss of biodiversity, and increasing climate change (see the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals). These are the legacies of colonial systems of social, political, and economic inequalities designed to exploit the majority of the world's landmass and beings for the highest financial gain (Goodale, 2022; Loomba, 2005; Means & Ida, 2022; Sumner, 2005; Wessels, 2022). However, these legacies extend beneath structural systems into our culture, harmfully infiltrating our daily relationships and our imaginations. Dominant philosophies of education were engineered to impose colonial ideals and interpretations of reality necessary for mutating our cultural values to create a dominant global culture that maintains the colonial project in the present (Abdi, 2012; Carnoy, 1974; Daniels & Enslin, 2023; Hutchinson et al., 2023; Roberts et al., 2016; Shiva, 2002; Kuokkanen, 2008).

The cultural adaptations enforced by the colonial project result in cultural imperialism in which individuals embody hegemonic assumptions (Brookfield, 2012; Gramsci, 1971; Malott, 2021; Panikkar, 1959; Said, 1978, 1993) and the "colonial mentality" (David & Derthick, 2013; Hook, 2005; Okazaki et al., 2008; Rebadulla et al., 2024). Abdi (2012) describes this as "mental domination" as, "the experiences of colonialism, in their psycho-cultural, educational, philosophic-epistemological and social development dimensions have been extensive, and... severely limiting in their onto-existential locations and outcomes" (p.1-2). This profoundly shapes how individuals view themselves, interpret their reality, and act accordingly, thereby

upholding ideals of the colonial project, consciously and unconsciously, in all realms of existence leading to our global problems (Cohn, 2021a; Fanon, 1961/2004; Freire, 1970/2002; Gandhi; 1953/2015; Kenyatta, 1965; Said, 1978; Tagore, 1917a). Abdi (2012) explains,

colonialism in its psychological, educational, cultural, technological, economic and political dimensions has not been cleansed...the way of the colonial is not only still intact, it actually assumes the point of prominence in almost all transactions that affect the lives of people...long ago damaged self esteem and self efficacy platforms are not still healed, and as Taylor (1995) so cogently noted, the potential for self and social development among the misrecognized and the mislabeled are difficult and not attainable without massive reconstructions of what was lost (p. 2)

Large-scale cultural transformation is necessary for eradicating colonial violences of inequality and injustice in our dominant global culture. We must critique our deepest cultural values that allow our global problems to persist. Chomsky (2013) explains, “the kind of creatures we become depends crucially on the social, cultural, and institutional circumstances of our lives. We are therefore led to inquire into the social arrangements that are conducive to the rights and welfare of people, to fulfilling their just aspirations—in brief, the common good” (p. 685). Only in a critique of our dominant cultural values can we transform our ways of being and strive toward the common good, and this can only be done through an alternative philosophy of education to reimagine and reconstruct all that was lost in the colonial project. Since education is such a powerful means of guiding our social, cultural, and institutional ways of life, we must innovate a philosophy of education to use as an intervention at the cultural level (Abdi, 2012), transforming our dominant global culture of violence into one of nonviolence.

1.1 Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I will examine how our interconnected global problems are results of colonial ideologies still prevalent in our dominant global culture, imposed through education. I will identify ontological separation as a primary ideology of our dominant global culture which I

will suggest is rooted in Eurocentric epistemologies and ontologies to the rejection and erasure of indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. I will evidence how this colonial rejection of alternative philosophies inflicts violence in our relationships and in our imaginations. In tracing the vestiges of colonialism in our philosophies of education, I will elucidate the manifestations of the colonial ideology of ontological separation in our dominant philosophies of education.

The purpose of the study is to discover an alternative philosophy of education that can transform our dominant global culture into a culture of peace and nonviolence by addressing underlying colonial cultural values, serving as an intervention for our interconnected global problems. I will suggest drawing on alternative, indigenous and intercultural epistemologies and ontologies to replace ontological separation as our dominant cultural value. I will highlight the need to innovate an intercultural philosophy of education for our globalized world and suggest a practical integration of our philosophies of education with Gandhi's (1961/2001) philosophy of *satyagraha* as a potential solution for cultural transformation.

Satyagraha is an indigenous philosophy in the Indian context, which can serve as a decolonial philosophy because of the way satyagraha empowers individuals to reimagine the fundamental principles of their lives and to nonviolently recreate society as they desire it to be. Interweaving this into a philosophy of education can serve as a grassroots movement to create an alternative culture of nonviolence for sustainable development, and it may contribute to these results when applied in two schools where Satyagraha has been their educational philosophy and foundation.

1.2 Background of the Problem

1.2.1 The Violence of Colonial Ideologies in Dominant Global Culture

The dominant ideologies of colonialism are all intertwined into our dominant global culture through which these constructed ideologies can be systematically employed for continued

colonization of all beings, however shrouded or disguised. To justify the inherent violence of capitalism, the colonial project imposed an intellectual apparatus invented to enforce dominant cultural values globally (Abdi, 2012; Malott, 2021). Goodale (2022) explains,

The capitalist system...depended on access to raw materials at the lowest possible costs. This created incentives for powerful colonial countries to use whatever means were necessary, *including ideological means* [emphasis added], to compete within this global network of extraction and economic violence. In this way, racism, which justified the transformation of human beings into raw materials, played an essential role in the history of colonialism, which means, by extension, that racism was—and, in many ways, still is—a key, ideological pillar of global capitalism (p. 31-32).

The violences of colonial extraction and economic dominance are worthy of lament, but these are inevitable outcomes of deeper, more insidious violences of the creation and dissemination of colonial ideologies (Goodale, 2022) used to uphold the colonial project. Saito et al., (2023) write, “the foundations of modern science, religion, and the global capitalist economy functioned to displace other ways of knowing, being, and acting rooted in alternative collective, place-based, cosmological, and spiritual ontologies and epistemologies” (p. 731; see also Dussel, 2000; Quijano, 2000; Maldonado-Torres, 2007; de Sousa Santos, 2018), creating a dominant global culture that assumes the validity and necessity of colonial ideologies (Saito et al., 2023).

1.2.2 The Dominant Ideologies of Western Idealism and Modern Western Rationalism

These colonial ideologies are rooted in Western idealism ontologically and modern Western rationalism epistemologically. Western idealism assumes that the ontology of existence is based primarily on human consciousness and can only be truly understood through the capacity to think and interpret reality with rational thought. Therefore, in Western idealism, reality as experienced in the material world is less important or even less true than the reality that is experienced through the conscious mind of a rational being. Western idealism relies heavily on dualism and therefore makes a strong separation between the physical world and the

metaphysical world. Because of this dualistic perspective, Western idealism considers the physical world we inhabit here on earth as less real and true compared to the metaphysical world that exists beyond this tangible environment. This dichotomous perspective separates the body from the mind and places the mind in a hierarchical value above the body.

Epistemologically, modern Western rationalism asserts that ultimate truth can be discovered primarily by cultivating a capacity to think rationally and through using that capacity to understand ultimate reality through our own conscious thought. These Western ideological traditions have served as the philosophical framework within colonialism. Within these ideological traditions is the belief that there is an ontological hierarchy of different humans based on the false assumption of race. In the colonial project, the use of race as a significant identifier and determinant of varying degrees of inferiority and superiority became commonplace.

This flies in direct contrast to the indigenous epistemologies which tend to rely on cultivating deeper relationships based on interconnectedness and interdependence with the material world in order to discover ultimate truths of reality and existence. Ontological separation dominates the assumptions of the Western approaches to ontology and epistemology while ontological entanglement guides the assumptions of many indigenous approaches to ontology and epistemology.

With roots in Western idealism and modern Western rationalism, ontological separation became the normative relational concept that causes myriad problems (Trownsell, 2022) as it asserts that the fundamental principle of our existence is based on essential and natural disunity and estrangement between all forms of life (Barad, 2007; Lange, 2023; Trownsell, 2022; Wessels, 2022). The assumption of natural divisions creates perceptions of circumscribed categories that rely on cultural values of exclusion and separation, inflicting violence as it divides us from ourselves, our fellow beings, and our world (Allen, 2007; Wessels, 2022;

Zanotti, 2017). Ontological separation defines our dominant global culture today as it breeds myths of ontological inequality and hierarchy which allow for speciesism, racism, sexism, heteronormativity, classism, and other forms of rigid inequalities and injustices to define our lives today in interpersonal and intrapersonal ways (Howitt & Jolly, 2023; Loomba, 2005).

1.2.3 Colonial Rejection of Indigenous and Alternative Philosophies

The fundamental acceptance and normalization of ontological separation contributes not only to the violence of our dominant global cultural values but also to the erasure and rejection of indigenous epistemologies (Abdi, 2012; Howitt & Jolly, 2023; Kanu, 2006). This epistemic violence inflicts harm as it separates and divides. Many share the Ntseane's (2012) reflection,

As a researcher and an adult educator who belongs to the Bantu people of Africa, living a communal life based on connectedness that stretches from birth to death and continues beyond death and extends to the living and nonliving, I have always been disturbed by the way the Euro-Western research processes and teaching and learning methods disconnect me from multiple relations and connections that define my reality (p. 275).

Epistemic violence causes more damage than mere disrespect or exclusion of certain ways of knowing and being because it seeks to sever our natural connections and interrelationships with our world at the individual, societal, and even global scale (Dei & Doyle-Wood, 2006; Maldonado-Torres, 2016). It is the loss of essential, indigenous epistemologies that begin with ontologies of entanglement and interrelationship that lead to our interconnected global problems of structural inequalities, social injustices, and environmental degradation (Saito et al., 2023).

1.2.4 The Violent Impact on Our Relationships

The assumption of ontological separation empowers “the spirit of capitalism...to enter into and distort our everyday relationships” (Brookfield, 2012, p. 135). Take for example, how Marx described how “individual liberty...form[s] the basis of civil society. It leads every man to see in other men, not the realization, but rather the limitation of his own liberty” (as cited in

Goodale, 2022, p. 33). The violence of capitalism is evidenced in the ensuing greed, distrust, and competition that result from our overreliance on ontological separation in hyper-individualism, humanism, modern rationalism, and Western idealism (Malott, 2021). When these values are systematically used to replace indigenous cultural values of collectivism, generosity, trust, and collaboration, values which are ironically necessary for our survival, our daily relationships are radically distorted and even sometimes destroyed (Trowsell, 2022). We assume all living beings are threats to our existence instead of the realization of the interrelationship needed for our existence (Edwards, 2005; Lange, 2023; Shiva, 2008). The distortion of our relationships turns capitalism into “fundamentally a moral project” (Goodale 2022, p. 32), exploiting individuals through direct alteration of the human psyche to benefit the colonial project’s bottom line.

1.2.5 Violent Impact on Individual and Collective Imagination

The depth of this colonial cultural adaptation has so relentlessly assaulted our imaginations that we become automatically inclined to believe and behave according to the ideological pillars of our own oppression. Freire (1970/2002) explains it saying that we have so fully “adapted to the structure of domination in which [we] are immersed” (p. 47) that we have assimilated to a “mythified version of reality” (p. 60). These ideologies accepted as inarguable truths of our mythified reality are the colonial violence with which we must contend today within our dominant global culture (Brookfield, 2012).

Our participation in the dominant global culture poisons our intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships, and simultaneously shapes our individual behaviors into collective norms that forge societal structures of inequality and injustice (Davis, 2016; Goodale, 2022; Said, 1978). These colonial ideologies that overvalue the accumulation of money and power lead inevitably to overwhelming bio-environmental crises and painful forms of ecological destruction ravaging our world (Chomsky, 2003). By shaping the imagination of the individual through

cultural adaptations (Kanu, 2006), the violence of colonialism can quietly seep into every aspect of existence as we uphold the cultural values necessary to maintain the neocolonial structures by which we are oppressed (Loomba, 2005).

1.2.6 The Violence of the Normalization of Dominant Global Culture

A complete cultural acceptance of these ontological divisions as natural is the prerequisite for the continued functioning of the colonial project in our daily lives. Through these presumed ontological divisions, the violence of colonialism is inflicted upon us in how we *think* about ourselves and other living beings and in how we *act* according to those ways of thinking. We become inclined to operate almost solely within the divisive frameworks (Freire, 1970/2002). Our dominant global culture has so holistically defined our image of reality that even those oppressed by or critical of colonial structures of injustice and inequality fail to challenge the values by which the structures are upheld. In our unquestioning participation in the dominant global culture, we perpetuate the myth that defines our reality. Butler (2020) calls this myth “a powerful fiction” (p. 30), as we substitute what we are *taught* is normal for what we *know* is natural:

Some...would have us believe that we emerge into this social and political world from a state of nature. And in that state of nature, we are already, for some reason, individuals, and we are in conflict with one another. We are not given to understand how we became individuated, nor are we told precisely why conflict is the first of our passionate relations, rather than dependency or attachment...Of course, the state of nature was always a fiction, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau openly conceded, but it has been a powerful fiction, a mode of imagining that becomes possible under conditions of what Karl Marx called “political economy.” It functions in many ways: for instance, it gives us a counterfactual condition by which to assess our contemporary situation; and it offers a point of view, in the way that science fiction does, from which to see the specificity and contingency of the political organization of space and time, of passions and interests, in the present (p. 30).

As we mistake what is normalized for what is natural, we learn to live contrary to our own nature which inevitably leads to our experience of violence individually and collectively (Khanna,

2020). Some of these violences we face are easy to recognize and eradicate through policy change, financial gain for marginalized communities, or demanding a proverbial seat at the table, but some violences are more insidious, hiding behind the obvious violences that catch the eye of the masses. Even as we create more space for those who have been historically disenfranchised, these quiet violences seep into the cultural fabric of societal norms to maintain division, subjugation, and exploitation as a natural way of life. As long as the dominant global culture remains normalized, the violence of the colonial project will continue to survive in our beings, despite our perceived achievement of empowerment, justice, and freedom. Any effort toward structural and systemic justice for those who experience systemic injustice will be ineffective if we do not challenge, resist, and ultimately reject the colonial cultural values of our dominant global culture.

1.3 The Role of Education in Shaping Dominant Global Culture

Education has been and continues to be used as a primary means to instill values that inevitably shape the dominant global culture (Daniels & Enslin, 2023; Malott, 2021; McKenney, 2001; Means & Ida, 2022; Rebadulla et al., 2024) to the point that Carnoy (1974) defined education under the colonial project as cultural imperialism. Abdi (2012) asserts that “colonialism was first and foremost, psycho-cultural and educational” (p. 3), used to “subjugate people, willfully rob their resources, de-ontologize the main fabrics of their being, and eventually achieve the...naturalness of the project which convinces the oppressed to voluntarily partake in the de-centering of their world” (p. 3). In this way, the colonial project enforced ideologies of violence into the minds of individuals (Baggini, 2018; Dugassa, 2011), engineering and instilling colonial ideologies in such a far-reaching manner that it has effectively defined our current dominant global culture (Daniels & Enslin, 2023; Goodale, 2022; Lange, 2023; Malott, 2021; Means & Ida, 2022). By educating the masses to accept and participate in dominant ideologies

such as Western idealism and modern rationalism to the rejection and erasure of indigenous ideologies (Baggini, 2018; Dugassa, 2011; Gordon, 2019; Mignolo, 2009), the colonial project was able to inflict a dominant culture of violence on a global scale, ensuring the culture itself would support the infrastructure necessary for maintaining the colonial project (Abdi, 2012; David & Derthick, 2013; Goodale, 2022). It is this dominant global culture, or “global capitalist monoculture” (Lange, 2012, p. 208) that expands the colonial project into our global context. The philosophy of education in the subcontinent of India is a perfect example (Singh, 2017; Tagore, 1922), as it was historically rooted in the spiritual ideals of their culture beginning with the assumption of ontological entanglement. Learning was seen as a transformative process in which individuals engaged relationally with the natural world to discover the truth about reality and their existence through dynamic, scientific inquiry and experimentation. Guided by their teachers, human and more-than-human, the learner sought to develop both knowledge and skills in academic subjects as well as in moral, ethical, and political ideals. Engaging in close contact with the natural environment, their fellow learners of various ages, and the members of their local community, education served as a delicate ecosystem of learning (Singh, 2017), always leading to the mutual benefit of the individual, the community, and the greater environment and society (Dharampal, 2000; Gandhi, 1953/2015; Mehrotra, 2007; Tagore, 1922).

With the advent of British colonization, education was used for opposing goals and became the primary tool to enforce division throughout the subcontinent of India, replacing the indigenous educational systems with a system that could benefit the colonial project (Dharampal, 2000; Gandhi, 1953/2015; Mehrotra, 2007; Singh, 2017). Tagore (1922) explains,

our [Indian] education was overlooked by our modern educational dispensation. We are provided with buildings and books and other magnificent burdens calculated to suppress our mind...The Western education...was not to unite the minds of the East and West in

mutual understanding. It represented an artificial method of training specially calculated to produce the carriers of the White man's burden" (p. 77)

Colonial education is the direct means by which individuals could be made into servants and slaves, carrying violent ideologies within our minds to uphold the colonial project. The suppression of our minds is the burden that we still carry today. Macaulay (1835) infamously describes this as the purpose of the British educational system, saying,

We must at present do our best to form a class that interprets between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (para. 30).

British colonizers used formal education to exploit and exacerbate caste structures (see Tharoor, 2019, pp. 101-105; Dirks, 2011) to divide individuals from their culture and their communities, replacing indigenous opinions and morals with Eurocentric ones. The educated class was then used by the British to enforce Western knowledge and ways of knowing on the rest of the population. Gandhi (1953/2015) wrote, "The foundation that Macaulay laid of education has enslaved us" as it has "rendered us helpless and godless...filled us with discontent, and providing no remedy for the discontent, have made us despondent" (p. 3-9). Education became a tool of individual and cultural oppression used to subjugate the masses through various degrees of forced assimilation, slavery, and servitude. Gandhi (1953/2015) writes, "the English rulers honestly believed the indigenous system [of education] to be worse than useless" and goes so far as to say of all the British government's work in India, "the system of education is its most defective part...for the tendency has been to dwarf the Indian body, mind, and soul" (p. 9).

The colonial use of education as a tool of cultural oppression is evidenced in many other parts of the world (Dugassa, 2011; Freire, 1970/2002; Fanon, 1961/2004; Kenyatta, 1965;

Spring, 2001; Tagore, 1917a). Kenyatta (1965) speaks frequently of the way European colonialism in Africa was used to “civilise” through “teaching,” not only ideas, but an entire “way of life” to maintain their colonial exploits (p. 305). He explains, “In doing this he gives one blow which cuts away the foundations from the whole of Gikuyu life, social, moral, and economic...they rob him of his government, condemn his religious ideas, and ignore his fundamental conceptions of justice and morals” (Kenyatta, 1965). The colonial project is ultimately a cultural project that uses education to destroy indigenous morals, ideologies, and ways of life, imparting Western ideals in their place.

Imposing Western cultural values became the necessary means to ensure the majority of individuals could uphold the colonial project themselves through the culture to which they were forced to assimilate. For example, Adams (2020) explains how education was used to “facilitate individualization” among students in indigenous communities in North America by enforcing “values and beliefs of possessive individualism” (p. 26). Schooling became the means to insist on colonially imposed cultural practices such as the accumulation of personal wealth, private property, and self-reliance as “moral obligations” (Adams, 2020, p. 26). Additionally, segregation was used within schools to impose myths of ontological division based on perceived racial and ethnic identities (Anderson, 1988; García, 2018; Pak, 2002). These examples evidence how education is used to shape and reshape culture to enforce values of independence over interdependence, competition over collaboration, western idealism over practical idealism, and modern epistemologies and ontologies over indigenous epistemologies and ontologies.

1.4 Problem Statement

1.4.1 The Violence of Ontological Separation in Dominant Philosophies of Education

The myth of ontological separation informs and guides our current philosophies of education, preventing us from creating a culture of peace and nonviolence. When our starting

assumption is ontological separation, engaging interrelationally is difficult or impossible (Howitt & Jolly, 2023), evidencing the need to integrate an alternative starting point of ontological entanglement into our philosophies of education (Allen, 2007). Townsell (2022) explains,

The reigning embrace of separation as the primordial condition of existence indelibly marks any approach...by necessarily curtailing the possible degree of relational understanding and action. Relational approaches that emerge through a register defined by separation are thus unequipped to grasp fully the implications of lifeways that start with interconnection as the primordial condition of existence (p. 802).

Without a serious confrontation of the dominant assumption of ontological separation, it is difficult to challenge our “core assumptions regarding the way the world is organized” (Brookfield, 2012, p. 134). Educators living in a neocolonial context should use critical theory to understand how philosophies of education are infiltrated by these assumptions (Abdi, 2012; Brookfield, 2012; Malott, 2021), to inflict a violent shift in our imaginations (Freire, 1970/1988; Richardson, 2006; Tagore, 1922). As these are infused into the collective consciousness through our dominant philosophies of education, the ideologies of dominant global culture become internalized as absolute truths instead of interpreted accurately as cultural adaptations.

1.4.2 Manifestation of Ontological Separation: Social Categories

One manifestation of these ontological divisions is socially experienced through the imposition of ideological inventions of mythical categories based on prescribed race or ethnicity, as well as through misconceptions of other identifiers such as gender, sexual orientation, caste, class, religion, and even culture (See Fanon, 1961/2004; Kenyatta, 1965; Said, 1978/2003; Tagore, 1917a). These social categories (Johnson-Bailey, 2012) are enforced by ascribing colonial myths of natural superiority and inferiority to various groups, impressing additional interconnected ideas of inherent inequality and hierarchy. In our acceptance of these myths,

social injustices such as racism, sexism, ableism, and classism can run rampant, dehumanizing and subsequently commodifying the bodies, minds, and souls of living beings for exploitation.

In local communities, social categories are based on individual identifiers, often based on physical attributes; in our global community, these categories are maintained through a recent identifier of national origin or nationalism (Triplett, 2017). Using national origin as a personal identifier, our imaginations are molded to maintain the colonial myth of circumscribed, exclusionary definitions of community (Anderson, 2006; Appadurai, 1996; Chatterjee, 1993), reinforcing mythical divisions between human beings and making wide-scale violence normalized and acceptable. Goodale (2022) says, “Among the many categories of difference that are the basis for conflict, dehumanization, and the structural incapacity to act collectively in ways that are equal to the scope of our regional and global problems, *national* differences have proven to be the most catastrophic” (p. 45). Nationalism defined as an overreliance on national differences provides the psychological apparatus that prevents us from acting in opposition to international forms of competition, fear, greed, and distrust leading to violent conflicts of war, economic and political disruption, and environmental destruction (Appadurai, 1996; Chatterjee, 2010; Tagore, 1917a; Uzoigwe, 2019).

1.4.3 Manifestation of Ontological Separation: Speciesism

These imaginary ontological divisions expand beyond our interpersonal relationships and are holistically applied to all species, mythically setting the human species apart from nonhuman species. According to Ryder (2004), speciesism is a form of prejudice that ascribes more inherent value to the members of one’s own species than to those of another species. This anthropocentric form of ontological separation prescribes more value to the needs and desires of human beings and prescribes less value to the needs and desires of beings that are more-than-human (Singer, 1990). Just as our hegemonic assumptions of social categories based on perceived race, gender,

or sexual orientation cause disproportionate pain, suffering, and loss to humans who are categorized in certain ways, so does our acceptance of speciesism against other species.

Our cultural reliance on anthropocentric morals and ethics (Lange, 2012) encourages the use of arbitrary measures of consciousness or intelligence to explain the innate inequality of different species and to subsequently justify the systemic oppression, suffering, and pain we inflict upon our fellow beings. However, just as research has shown the irrational and unscientific bases for our social categorizations (Post, 2002; Sussman, 2014), compelling us to recognize the unity and equality of the human race, so too we have ample evidence that many animals, insects, and even plants share various kinds of consciousness, emotions, relationships, and intelligent ways of being (Hauser, 2000; Lindgren & Öhman, 2019; Preston & de Waal, 2002; de Waal, 2016). This scientific evidence should oblige us to reject all forms of animal and environmental exploitation, but our subconscious allegiance to ontological separation is even more deeply ingrained than our reliance on the scientific method (Adams & Mulligan, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2012; Plumwood, 1993). Speciesism is so embedded in our cultural values that it continues to shape the imaginations of those who experience the injustices of social categorization. Even those who are critical of the violence of social categories remain unaware or unconcerned with this form of systemic violence, participating in it, however indirectly, because of our unquestioning participation in the dominant global culture (Spivak & Young, 1991).

1.4.4 Manifestation of Ontological Separation: Division of Individual's Mind, Body, Soul

These violent divisions are inflicted at the individual level, constructing separation between our minds, bodies, and souls (Johnson-Bailey, 2012, 265; Dirkx, 2006). Through our acceptance of the concept of ontological separation, our entire beings—bodies, minds, and souls—are separated into parts to be violently exploited, destroyed, and consumed for profitable gain

and fleeting individual pleasure. Tagore (1917a) describes this exploitation of our imaginations as a “process of dehumanizing,” saying,

When we are fully human, we cannot fly at one another’s throats; our instincts of social life, our traditions of moral ideals stand in the way. If you want me to take to the butchering of human beings, you must break up that wholeness of my humanity through some discipline which makes my will dead, my thoughts numb, my movements automatic...Take away man from his natural surroundings, from the fullness of his communal life, with all its living associations of beauty and love and social obligations, and you will be able to turn him into so many fragments of a machine for the production of wealth on a gigantic scale. Turn a tree into a log and it will burn for you, but it will never bear living flowers and fruit (p. 58-59).

Ontological separation tears us away from our indigenous cultural roots through various degrees of forced assimilation, turning not just our bodies, but our very “souls into commodities” (Tagore 1917a, p. 65). Through such corruption of our imaginations, we fall into the “quicksand of social slavery” (Tagore 1917a, p. 85) as our capacities for unity, connection, and interrelationship become so stunted that we are easily commodified. Normalizing physical separation from our natural environment heaps dehumanizing violence upon us as it is difficult to live in embodied connection with our natural habitats by which we are mentally grounded, spiritually inspired, and physically sustained. Such dehumanization inflicts violence on both the oppressor and the oppressed as neither is allowed to be fully human (Abdi, 2012; Bhabha, 2004; Freire, 1970/1988), and we all struggle to engage in empathy, compassion, and solidarity with sincerity.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how the philosophy of satyagraha, as originally articulated by Mohandas K. Gandhi, is being contextualized and integrated with a philosophy of education at two local schools in Gujarat, India to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence for sustainable development. By examining universal kinship as the fundamental principle of satyagraha and the obligations of universal kinship inherent within the philosophy, this study

aims to identify how these are being interpreted by educators in India and formed into a philosophy of education that promotes nonviolent cultural transformation at the individual, community, and societal levels.

1.5.1 An Alternative Assumption: The Nonviolence of Ontological Entanglement

To strategically resist and ultimately reject these forms of violence, we must participate in transformative actions that challenge our dominant cultural values of violence and integrate alternative cultural values of nonviolence. The alternative assumption of ontological entanglement provides this opportunity as it empowers us to live nonviolently, in unity and interrelationship with all (Barad, 2007; Lange, 2023) because of the inherent “intimate connections between socio-cultural, political-economic and biophysical-environmental domains” (Howitt & Jolly, 2023, p. 612). Lange (2023) explains that “when one perceives all things are related, then the responsibility—the ability to respond—is in ethical acts of reciprocal caring, part of a moral order that we find already exists in traditional Indigenous culture” (p. 286). The ethical and moral nature of this concept elevates our natural interrelationships to the primary aspect of our existence and defines those interrelationships as requiring responsibility and reciprocity (Howitt & Jolly, 2023). Barad (2007) explains how this concept is transformative in multiple aspects of existence including “our beings, our psyches, our imaginations, our institutions, and our societies” (p. 383). As we engage in such transformative actions, we will discover how to live as fully human beings in interrelationship with ourselves, our communities, and our world.

Ontological entanglement therefore provides an alternative starting point that empowers us to participate in decolonial logics of nonviolence as a direct, collective act of resistance to the violence of our current dominant global culture. Goodale (2022) describes such action as a

movement of repossession...[to] demand the return of all that has been, and is being, dispossessed, taken away, denied: the ‘environmental commons’; ‘cultural forms, histories, and intellectual creativity’; public goods of all kinds; labor power; social wealth; our identities; and our bodies...If the political economic logic of our G20 world—one whose consequences are at the root of most of our contemporary crises, from climate change to systemic socioeconomic inequality—is a logic of dispossession, then our responses to this condition must seek to recover what has been lost and to undermine the forces of dispossession going forward (p. 163).

As we reject the cultural project of colonialism, the “social realities that may have *appeared* [emphasis added] inalterable, impenetrable [may come] to be viewed as malleable and transformable” (Davis, 2016, p. 67). We may foster our diverse cultural ways of life rooted in nonviolence to cultivate a new culture of interculturalism, interconnection, and interrelationship.

1.5.2 Creating Alternative Philosophies of Education for Nonviolent Cultural Transformation

Educators should ask how we can implement this alternative assumption of ontological entanglement into our philosophies of education today, as well as how our current philosophies render our efforts to cultivate values and skills for peace and nonviolence ineffective. The philosophy of our education must be rooted in cultural values of ontological entanglement for deeper ways of living in interdependent, reciprocal interrelationships.

Daniels and Enslin (2023) describe two common approaches to resolving the problems of our dominant philosophies of education. One approach draws on the innovative ideals of Freire (1970/1988) that utilize education to develop skills of critical consciousness in the individual, empowering them to reimagine reality and cultivate their own agency for transforming culture and society. Another approach is to recover indigenous epistemologies and ontologies to challenge and resist colonial ideologies and dominant cultural values (e.g. Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003). Both of these approaches “emphasise the fundamentally political character of

education—colonial and postcolonial—as either a form of domination or as liberation from oppression” (Daniels & Enslin, 2023, p. 224). Both highlight the need for an alternative philosophy of education that can reverse the violent legacies of colonialism.

However, in our attempts to decolonize our philosophies of education, we must not reject opportunities to participate in our globalized world even if that requires the development of skills which have been used to colonize (Chakrabarty, 2008; Mbembe, 2016). For example, the practical usefulness of learning to speak English can provide an individual with opportunities they may not have otherwise. Because of the widespread use of English as a common language globally, this skill can empower individuals to engage in intercultural communities in which they can build relationships for mutual benefit. Education must be practical in this time of globalization, even as we challenge epistemologies and ontologies that require assimilation (Mignolo, 2009). Abdi (2012) explains that the only solution is through an intercultural interweaving of educational philosophies and practices of “philosophico-epistemologically colonized” with the more “dominant Western learning systems,” to innovate an education capable of achieving “actual and tangible well-being for all” (p. 12).

1.5.3 Indigenous Epistemologies and Their Intercultural Adaptations

Although it is important to avoid homogenizing indigeneity and indigenous thought while also recognizing the diversity of colonialism in various contexts, it is also essential to recognize that indigenous communities globally are uniquely positioned to show a practical and strategic way forward to cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence because of the ways they have been forced to adapt their indigenous cultural values under colonial rule (Fanon, 1961/2004; Kenyatta, 1965; Said, 1978; Gandhi, 1941/2014; Tagore, 1922). The contributions of indigenous epistemologies are imperative for a reimagination of our philosophies of education (Pratt et al., 2018; Pratt & Bodnaresko, 2023) because of their beginning assumption of our ontological

entanglement and interconnectedness with all beings (Dugassa, 2011; Saito et al., 2023) and the way they have strategically interwoven their epistemologies and ontologies with those of the dominant global culture for their own survival amid colonization. Tagore (1922) summarizes,

The relationship of the West with the East...has given rise to a universal spirit of conflict...The political and commercial adventures carried on by Western races—very often by force and against the interest and wishes of the countries they have dealt with—have created a moral alienation, which is deeply injurious to both parties...The demoralising influence of the constant estrangement between the two hemispheres, which affects the baser passions of man—pride, greed and hypocrisy on the one hand; fear, suspiciousness and flattery on the other—has been developing, and threatens us with a world-wide spiritual disaster...Mankind must realise a unity, wider in range, deeper in sentiment, stronger in power than ever before...The first step towards this realisation is to create opportunities for revealing the different peoples to one another. This can never be done in those fields where the exploiting utilitarian spirit is supreme. We must find some meeting-ground...one of such places is the university [and all educational contexts], where we can work together in a common pursuit of truth, share together our common heritage...it teaches us to respect all the differences in man that are real, yet remain conscious of our oneness; and to know that perfection of unity is not in uniformity, but in harmony. (p. 75).

Though colonizers tried to eradicate indigenous epistemologies, indigenous people engineered new ideologies and cultivated alternative pathways to contextualize their indigenous epistemologies within dominant global culture as strategies of resistance (Smith, 2021). Through a practice of resiliency and adaptability, indigenous leaders ingeniously innovated intercultural epistemologies that weave together the roots of indigenous cultural values with the roots of dominant cultural values to transform dominant cultural values (Esteva & Prakash, 1998).

Those who were subjugated under colonization empowered themselves “to turn an oppressive feature into a source of critical insight appropriate for epistemological developments” (Ntseane, 2012, p. 274). This intercultural interweaving has been called “Two-Eyed Seeing” (Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009) which is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of

mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, *for the benefit of all* [emphasis added]” (Reid et al., 2021, p. 244). The practical need for indigenous communities to understand and utilize dominant cultural values to survive under colonial oppression became an opportunity to strategize and incorporate indigenous ways of being with the ways of their oppressors to accomplish “the common good” (Chomsky, 2013, p. 685).

Because of this unique interweaving of cultural epistemologies, educators in so-called post-colonial contexts are creating effective philosophies of education to transform dominant global culture. As these educators draw on indigenous epistemologies and simultaneously integrate them with the dominant global culture, they are adept at finding strategic ways to innovate intercultural approaches to philosophies of education that are no longer guided solely by dominant cultural values. In this, educators realistically provide students with opportunities to challenge dominant global cultural values and replace those with indigenous and intercultural values that allow them to balance these values with the practical skills of succeeding in our dominant global culture. In developing a philosophy of education that guides individuals to become active agents of creating cultures of peace and nonviolence at the grassroots level, these educators are at the forefront of using education as the primary means to create positive change.

1.5.4 An Alternative Philosophy of Education as Satyagraha: A Case Study

Satyagraha is a context-dependent indigenous thought tradition and is unique to the indigenous context of the educational heritage of India. Following the example of the ways indigenous communities practiced an intercultural interweaving of epistemologies under colonial rule, I will examine alternative philosophies of education utilized by educators in India to transform their communities by cultivating cultural values for a culture of peace and nonviolence. I will engage in a qualitative case study using critical ethnography with my colleagues and research partners practicing such a philosophy of education at two local schools

(K-12 and K-5) in Gujarat, India. I will explore how these educators weave together cultural values from multiple origins while leaning heavily on Indian epistemologies and ontologies. To do this, I will explore the tenets of Gandhi's (1961/2001) philosophy of satyagraha, defined and practiced in colonially occupied South Africa and India to successfully accomplish varying degrees of decolonization. I will investigate how the philosophy of satyagraha is being interwoven into the philosophy of education at the local schools in Gujarat to discover what positive transformation this interweaving can create.

1.6 Research Gap and Questions

Research on the connections between satyagraha and educational practices is scarce. Adjei's (2007) look at satyagraha's decolonizing power in knowledge production in schooling in Ghana is helpful for a cross-cultural analysis, but there is a need for additional ethnographic research on these topics. In ethnographies of education in India, the use of the values of satyagraha in educational practices is evident, but without the explicit use of the term. Therefore, the following research questions have been developed in hopes of discovering a meaningful approach to the preceding problems in our dominant global culture based on innovating and utilizing an alternative philosophy of education.

1. How are educators in post-colonial contexts, specifically India, interweaving an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge?
2. How does this alternative, intercultural philosophy of education empower individuals to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will serve to address this research gap by examining the fundamental principle and inherent obligations of the philosophy of satyagraha in order to

identify possible means of applying the philosophy of satyagraha to an alternative philosophy of education. The findings of this study will provide a foundation for future researchers to investigate how such an alternative philosophy of education could be contextualized in various locations globally and may provide policy makers, community development agencies, and local educators with a possible philosophy of education that can help them address their concerns that align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, especially including the goal of quality education for the "promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence" (UN, Target 4.7, 2015). Educators in the field may have insights into how this alternative philosophy of education may be envisioned, understood, and implemented.

1.7.1 The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations (UN) has recognized the pervasive violence of our dominant global culture evidenced in the interconnected nature of our current planetary crises. As a result, the UN has identified seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that target each of these major problems. Our ability to live well as human beings cannot be attained without ensuring that our communities and our environments in which we live are also equally valued, protected, and preserved.

Recognizing the need for an integrated approach to accomplishing the interconnected goals for our collective existence, the UN has identified "quality education" as the primary means of accomplishing the other SDGs. According to the targets of this SDG and the corresponding indicators of accomplishing each target, quality education should:

ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, *promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence* [emphasis added], global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (UN, Target 4.7, 2015).

To systematically resist the multiple forms of violence in our interconnected global problems, we must expand the role of education to equip individuals with values and skills to cultivate a way of life that promotes these SDGs through an alternative culture of peace and nonviolence.

1.7.2 An Alternative Philosophy of Education: Education as Satyagraha

By intentionally embracing the philosophy of satyagraha as a philosophy of education, we may design a powerful intervention to promote sustainable, large-scale cultural adaptations, through which individuals and communities are empowered to accomplish the UN SDGs in creative yet realistic ways (Kool & Agrawal, 2020). The philosophy of satyagraha directly combines the two solutions highlighted by Daniels and Enslin (2023), interweaving Freire's focus on critical consciousness while also prioritizing indigenous epistemologies in our philosophies of education. Because of the interwoven nature of satyagraha, being at once steeped in indigenous knowledge of Indian culture while recognizing the strategic usefulness of learning how to survive within dominant global culture to successfully critique and transform it, satyagraha can be interwoven into an intercultural, nonviolent, and practical philosophy of education for our globalized world.

Therefore, this study develops an alternative philosophy of education to promote decolonial transformation at the cultural level, empowering individuals to develop cultures of restorative unity, reciprocal relationship, and loving collaboration. Through this education, the individual's agency is utilized, and they are provided with opportunities to participate in their capacity development. As the learner cultivates the capacity to engage in peace and nonviolence, they are empowered to reimagine themselves in interrelationships with all living beings, human and non-human, locally in their communities and globally across international boundary lines. The case study will lend insights into how to contextualize the educational practices in

classrooms to promote decolonialism, community development, positive social change, environmental sustainability, and any effort to increase justice globally. In the next chapter, I will delve deeper into the tenets of the alternative indigenous philosophy, satyagraha, and review the literature on how this idea can intersect with education and what outcomes it may yield.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

As discussed in chapter one, dominant global culture begins with the assumption of our ontological separation which essentializes and divides into social and speciesist categories, even dividing our self into pieces: mind, body, and soul. This is a form of colonial violence that continues to pervade our global culture through the normalization of our hegemonic assumptions (Gramsci, 1971), creating what Freire (1970/2002) defines as our “mythified version of reality,” (p. 60). Mohandas K. Gandhi defined this harmful cultural adaptation as a “superstition” which perpetuates slavery of the mind and soul despite other degrees of decolonization and perceived freedoms (as cited in Shiva, 2021). Shiva (2021) describes the violent ramifications saying,

As long as superstition exists, the fictions and illusions of the one percent must be believed in and must be allowed to destroy real knowledge, real wealth and real freedom. So long as our slavery to the one percent exists then as slaves to the edifice of illusions that create the mechanical mind and the money machine, we become complicit in the processes that are destroying the earth and humanity and our very being. We owe it to ourselves and others not to trap ourselves in those illusions and have the courage to disobey the coercive systems put in place to keep us enslaved (p. 81).

Shiva (2021) identifies our subconscious acceptance of these superstitions as the cause of our myriad global problems which are experienced on personal, social, and planetary scales (See the UN SDGs). As we remain unaware of and unwilling to critique and reject these superstitions, we remain enslaved to these colonial systems and even “become complicit in processes that are destroying the earth and humanity and our very being” (Shiva, 2021, p. 81).

The philosophy of satyagraha serves as a direct response through which people can actively confront and disrupt these violences on a cultural level. Shiva (2021) continues,

Satyagraha, the force of truth, is Gandhi’s word for non-cooperation with and non-participation in systems, structures, laws, paradigms, policies that destroy the earth and rob us of our humanity and our freedoms that crush our potential for compassion and sharing, that atrophy our hearts, our minds and our hands. Satyagraha, the force and power of truth in its creative, non-violent form is central to freedom through this ‘post-

truth' period during which illusions and constructions displace reality, colonise the earth and our minds and manipulate us to think that our enslavement and our disposability is 'progress' and liberation (p. 80-81).

Gandhi's practice of satyagraha provides an active critique of and practical solution to the holistic nature of the colonial project today. Often misunderstood as a solely spiritual practice or strictly political endeavor (Mohanty, 2021), satyagraha combines these into a robust intercultural system of personal ethics and collective social action to transform our societies at the cultural level to strategically address our interconnected global problems (Butler, 2020; Bhagwat, 2014).

As an inherently anticolonial philosophy, satyagraha empowers individuals to be active participants in their own liberation through a rekindled value of their cultural ways of living and collective action for societal transformation (Patkar, 2021). Nakhre (1981) writes that satyagraha means "the elimination of the consequences of colonialism and exploitation, eradication of direct as well as structural violence, and restoration of cultural identity and individual dignity disrupted by existing exploitative institutional structures" (p. 205). For this reason, satyagraha is deeply rooted in interculturalism as it simultaneously recognizes the practical importance of modernism while drawing on indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in ingeniously innovative ways (Nagler, 2013, p. x), making it a philosophy for Two-Eyed Seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009). Gandhi used satyagraha to reject the colonially enforced epistemological assumption of ontological separation and instead begin with an intercultural and indigenous epistemology of ontological entanglement expressed as universal kinship (Gandhi, 1961/2001). By practicing this interweaving, those who have experienced colonization are uniquely equipped to critique the violences of dominant cultural ideologies and reimagine cultural values of nonviolence. Therefore, satyagraha is also fundamentally educational, as Nakhre (1981) explains, "satyagraha was much more than a nonviolent technique; it was an educational process that would...create an

acute awareness of injustice and exploitation, but also restore their dignity and self-respect and spur them to action” (p. 212). The assumption of universal kinship with all beings and realms of existence, along with its concomitant obligations, infused within satyagraha empowers individuals to participate in an alternative culture of nonviolence in their intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships (Naidu, 2006).

By infusing this philosophy into a philosophy of education, the individual imagination can be fundamentally transformed in multi-dimensional ways, empowering the individual to create and live within an alternative culture of peace and nonviolence in their own relationships and daily lives in every aspect of existence. This then empowers individuals and communities to collaborate to transform the structure and function of political entities and economies, the formation of law and policy, the conception and practice of socio-cultural values and norms, and the collective, global imagination of justice, equity, peace, freedom, and rights.

2.1 Overview of the Chapter

In this chapter, I will elucidate the tenets of the philosophy of satyagraha to discover how it could be infused into a philosophy of education to transform our culture into one of peace and nonviolence. To do this I will first explore interdisciplinary literature on similar educational frameworks that rely on some aspects of satyagraha to accomplish some of these goals. Then I will identify the historical roots of the philosophy of satyagraha and explain how their indigenous and intercultural nature encourages the intercultural embodiment of satyagraha. In tracing these roots, I will explain the ideals entwined and the vast ethical implications. The importance of the interchangeability of the terms ‘truth,’ ‘love,’ being,’ and ‘existence’ in defining the root words ‘*sat*’ and ‘*satya*’ in satyagraha will be discussed to explicate how this interchangeability implies the interrelational nature of our existence expressed as universal kinship with all beings, human and more-than-human. The obligations of our universal kinship

will be defined as interrelationships guided by familial love, nonviolence, self-rule, and active justice. The nonviolent nature of satyagraha will be evidenced to be the primary means of rejecting the violence of colonization, especially of the hegemonic value systems of the dominant global culture which cause and perpetuate our interconnected personal and global problems.

Understanding this concept of satyagraha as the philosophical framework guiding and deepening my ethnographic analyses of two local schools in Gujarat, India, which I will present in chapter four, allows us to create an educational model that is rooted in this powerful, practical ideal of satyagraha. Any serious effort toward accomplishing the SDGs in any context has been and is likely already participating in satyagraha, to at least some degree, though most often without conscious awareness of or the explicit use of this Sanskrit term (Bhagwat, 2014).

2.2 Interdisciplinary Literature on Similar Educational Frameworks

The scholarship of transformative education, peace education, education for sustainable development, and global citizenship education aligns with the consensus of international organizations for community development, human rights, and environmental sustainability, identifying the need for cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence as the ultimate goal for resolving our current global problems. Diop (2020) identifies Gandhian nonviolence as a necessary addition because of how it confronts our personal and societal problems on all levels,

Globally youth must be empowered to be resilient to violence...Human rights violations, conflicts between countries and escalating intolerance has to be combated. In a globally connected and interdependent world, education needs to focus on not merely cognitive knowledge, but encompass communication skills and create belongingness with humanity as a whole...Though the centrality of education, like nonviolence, is almost conclusive, the type of education that is necessary for peace is what has never been addressed in any serious manner. There is a need for education not as the usual intellectual exercise of regurgitation but a journey through self-of building peace first with the self, before the society (Diop, 2020)

Though some of our current philosophies of education focus on creating cultures of peace and nonviolence to eradicate our global problems (e.g. Cavanagh, 2009; Bajaj & Chiu, 2009; Bentz & O'Brien, 2019; Kaur, 2023; Nicoson et al., 2023), the majority have yet to reimagine the philosophical framework of our common educational models for the purpose of empowering individuals to engage in self-transformation leading to the transformation of society.

Despite awareness of the need to integrate Freire's ideal of critical consciousness with indigenous knowledge and values into our philosophies of education (Daniels & Enslin, 2023), the majority of educational frameworks still prioritize one or the other. Some examples are the fields of peace education (e.g. Kaur, 2023; Kester, 2023; Koopman & Seliga, 2021; McGregor, 2022; Vandering, 2014), education for human rights (e.g. Bajaj, 2011, 2012; Bajaj & Chiu, 2009; Bentz & O'Brien, 2019, 3; Nicoson et al., 2023), transformative education (Brookfield, 2012; Charaniya, 2012; Mejiuni, 2012), and education for sustainable development (e.g. O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018; Wessels, 2002). Though these fields focus on some aspects of dominant global culture in need of transformation, none focus simultaneously on all aspects, nor do they identify the individual as the most powerful agent to accomplish the goals. Lange's (2023) description of global education comes close to articulating a philosophy of education that is interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional enough to address our myriad global problems because of "the interweaving of peace, development, environmental, multicultural/antiracist, human rights, and women/gender/sexual diverse equity educations" (p. 187). However, global education still does not rely on an equal embrace of developing critical consciousness in the individual with indigenous ways of knowing for the purpose of cultural transformation toward nonviolence.

Even though the philosophy of satyagraha has been used as informal education for collective consciousness-raising by many in diverse global contexts to successfully accomplish various aspects of decolonization and cultural transformation, there is little use of the philosophy

within fields of formal education. Aside from Adjei's (2007) look at satyagraha's decolonizing power in knowledge production in schooling in Ghana, and Nakhre (1981) identifying the practice of satyagraha as a form of peace action that can be educational, there is no other research that explicitly connects the entire philosophy of satyagraha with an alternative, intercultural philosophy of education. Both of these are helpful for highlighting the importance of infusing the tenets of satyagraha in the field of education, but there remains a need for additional research in other contexts for large-scale intervention.

There is implicit evidence of interweaving the tenets of satyagraha in recent developments of education in India (Singh, 2016), evidenced in several ethnographies, but these do not explicitly use the term satyagraha, nor do they refer to the philosophy in any holistic way. Rather, there are aspects of the philosophy that can be discerned if one is looking closely. For example, Lavi (2022) highlights how an indigenous community informally educates their children through familial relationships, cultivating skills of empathy for communal life with all life forms, and encouraging personal agency to try new tasks and learn experientially, even through mistakes. Maithreyi (2019) describes the importance of Life Skills Education (LSE) in empowering students to achieve their professional and personal goals as they strive to lift their families out of intergenerational poverty and transform society. Niesz and Krishnamurthy (2014) describe the influence of Activity-Based Learning (ABL) on students' skills to engage relationally with equality, cooperation, and confidence while developing skills of critique, inquiry, and reimagination. These provide a starting point for a synthesis understanding of a philosophy of education infused with values of satyagraha but only implicitly and partially.

Additionally, there is some research on the "practical idealism" in satyagraha (Mantena, 2012; Naidu, 2006) which indicates the realistic, transformative nature of satyagraha at the individual and community level. Gandhi's practical idealism is a direct rejection of Western

idealism in that for Gandhi, the truth of ultimate reality is defined not by the conscious mind's rational thought processes but instead by the metaphysical realities of ontological entanglement. However, Gandhi's distinct definition of ultimate reality and "truth" as interrelational then compels rational beings to operate within reality based on this fundamental truth. Therefore, practical idealism for Gandhi is a recognition that our ontological existence is based on our ontological entanglement regardless of our rational capacity to recognize this, and our practical actions must therefore primarily rely on interrelationships with all things.

This aligns the philosophy of satyagraha with the fields of transformative education and critical pedagogy, as it places priority on empowering the individual through developing human agency for the intent purpose of transforming society, it does not focus on using the philosophy in formal schooling contexts. Still, this aspect of satyagraha is evidence of its educational power to cultivate the individual's imaginative capabilities to reimagine their communities and societies through a justice-centered lens in similar ways as Freire (1970/2002), Dewey, (1916), Montessori (1992), and Tagore, (1922).

After discovering in chapter one how education has been and can be used as a primary tool for varying degrees of colonization and decolonization, leading respectively to the demise of the development of individuals and communities, I will argue that a complete decolonization requires an educational model imbued with the tenets of satyagraha. With the lack of research explicitly connecting satyagraha with philosophies of education, it is necessary to understand the philosophy of satyagraha to design a philosophy of education infused with satyagraha.

2.3 The Philosophy of Satyagraha

2.3.1 The Origins: Interrelational and Intercultural Roots of Satyagraha

The philosophy of satyagraha is inherently interrelational and intercultural; it was cultivated over time through interrelationships and a deliberate weaving together of intercultural

roots of multiple religions, ideals, practices, and traditions. Some of these interrelationships were formed between human beings, shaped interpersonally through shared experiences of oppression in diverse ways and locations, and some of these interrelationships were formed intrapersonally through Gandhi's experiences with the earth and all beings within it. For example, some were formed more directly with people in slavery and servitude in South Africa and India, and some were formed less directly through Gandhi's engagement with the words and works of those including Tolstoy, Thoreau, Ruskin, Raychandbhai, and Jesus Christ (Bhagwat, 2014; Bondurant, 1988; Naidu, 2006; Shiva, 2021; Snow, 2013; Murthy, 1987). In collaborative efforts to resist colonial violence in South Africa, Gandhi combined the two Sanskrit terms, *satya* meaning truth, and *graha* meaning effort, force, or strength (Gandhi, 2016, p. 309), and defined, "[Satyagraha's] root meaning is holding on to truth, hence truth-force. I have also called it Love-force or Soul-force" (p. 6). Tolstoy's (1894/1984) *The Kingdom of God is Within You* significantly impacted Gandhi's conception of satyagraha (Gandhi, 2016), as both reject Western idealism and promote practical idealism asserting our responsibility to transform ourselves and our societies into the ideals we wish to see presently (Naidu, 2006; Mantena, 2012).

Gandhi's intrapersonal interrelationships with the earth and all beings were interpreted through epistemologies and ontologies of "the people of India" (Shiva, 2021, p. 80) and his "ancestral religion," Hinduism (Bondurant, 1988, p. 106). Skaria (2016) quotes Gandhi,

'I kept on picking up things here and there from my surroundings.' And 'one thing took deep root in me—the conviction that the world is founded on ethics...and that satya ["truth"] is the substance of all ethics. Satya became my sole objective.' Given the association of satya with God (an association quite common in South Asian traditions), this remark implies that...this ethics...runs through various religions" (p. 42).

As Hindu epistemologies galvanized Gandhi to seek out truth through interrelationship with the earth as a teacher, he discovered the interweaving of truth with ethics and an inherent

interrelationship between the sacred and the secular. This led him to value interfaith relationships as all religions were equally able to guide our ethical response to the truth of our existence.

Arguably the most influential interrelationship for Gandhi was with his wife, Kasturba. Gandhi recalls Kasturba as the first person to evidence the transformative power of satyagraha in the early years of their marriage, as she embodied the ethics of satyagraha with calm consistency in their interrelationship (Gandhi, 1929/2016). Gandhi recollected, “[Kasturba] was a woman always of very strong will which, in our early days, I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become quite unwittingly my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-cooperation...It is because of her that I am what I am” (as cited in Gandhi, 2008, p. 491). Though Gandhi, the man, is famously known for his unique innovation and development of satyagraha, it was in reality Kasturba, a young girl, who related to him the very first glimpse of the transformative force of truth and love when embodied as a way of life.

2.3.2 The Origins: Roots of South Asian Culture & Spirituality of Satyagraha

Though Gandhi first articulated the philosophy of satyagraha in the early twentieth century, the philosophy finds its earliest historical roots in ancient teachings of Hinduism and its many branches including Jainism and Buddhism (Bondurant, 1988; Snow, 2013), all of which deeply influence the epistemologies and ontologies of the cultures of India. Chatterji’s (1931) overview of the Vedas evidences important features of satyagraha that are present in the sacred texts and still central to the imaginary ethos and worldview practiced by people in India for millennia. Chatterji (1931) writes, “the name *Veda* (or, as in the plural, Vedas) literally means Wisdom or Science, but is given, technically, to the oldest literature of the Indian people” (p. 11). The Vedas begin with relational epistemologies that rely on scientific observations of and interrelational engagement with the natural world to develop scientific knowledge and spiritual wisdom, which are not mutually exclusive. Frawley (1992) explains that the Vedas, written well

before 2000 BCE in India, is “the oldest continuous religious and philosophical tradition in the world, contemporary with the pyramids of Egypt” (p. 3), and continues,

The Vedas are the original scripture or source teaching of the Hindu tradition, from which its many branches...have emerged through time, and to which they all look back with reverence...the Vedas are the oldest known Indo-European religious and philosophical tradition, antedating that of the Greeks by some centuries. A study of the Vedas is therefore relevant for discovering the original spiritual impulses behind all Indo-European traditions...and remains central for anyone interested in the deeper spiritual inquiries of the human race...[they] represent the perennial philosophy (p. 1-3).

The perennial philosophy of the Vedas highlights the intercultural and interfaith nature of the ideals within, illuminating again both the indigenous and intercultural roots of satyagraha.

Skaria (2016) elucidates these influences in his deep examination of the philosophy of satyagraha in *Unconditional Equality: Gandhi’s Religion of Resistance*, saying, “Gandhi repeatedly describes satyagraha as an ‘ancient truth.’ There is of course something new about satyagraha, but ‘like the name itself,’ it is only ‘a new presentation of an old doctrine’” (p. xv-xvi). Gandhi draws extensively from broader “concepts basic to Hindu social and religious thought [of] traditional India” (Bondurant, 1988, p. 106). After all, satyagraha is a compound of “Sanskrit words carrying ethical meanings from the body of Indian philosophy” (Bondurant, 1988, p. 106), which Gandhi understood due to his training in Sanskrit (Skaria, 2016, p. 126).

However, even without such classical training, the essential ideals of satyagraha were quickly understood by the majority of individuals in India (Mallick, 2021, p. 28-33) because, as Nehru (1946/2004) explains, “The business of philosophy in India was not confined to a few philosophers or highbrows. Philosophy was an essential part of the religion of the masses” (p. 80-81). As the ethical innovations of satyagraha stem from the deep philosophical roots imbued in the “cultural ethos” of India (Bondurant, 1988, p. 107), satyagraha draws deeply on religious teachings, philosophical thought, and cultural traditions of India (Skaria, 2016; Snow, 2013).

The importance of realizing the ancient Vedic roots of satyagraha is in an accurate apprehension of the philosophy. This is perhaps best evidenced in the use of the root word *sat* in satya of satyagraha. *Sat* is the same word used in the Sanskrit term *sachidānanda*, which Tagore (1922) explains is the summation of India's view of reality and our place within it:

The meaning [of sachidānanda] is that Reality, which is essentially one, has three phases. The first is Sat; it is the simple fact that things are, the fact which relates us to all things through the relationship of common existence. The second is Chit; it is the fact that we know, which relates us to all things through the relationship of knowledge. The third is Ananda; it is the fact that we enjoy, which unites us with all things through the relationship of love (p. 32-33)

This expression of the root *sat* provides clarity for why Gandhi defines the root meaning of satyagraha as “holding on to truth,” (Gandhi, 1961/2001), for the truth (*sat*) is defined in sachidānanda as the reality of existence which is fundamentally interrelational.

2.3.3 Universal Kinship as the Fundamental Principle of Satyagraha

As sachidānanda identifies interrelationship as the fundamental principle or truth (*sat*) of existence, we discover that the nature of reality is composed of interrelationships that are interconnected and interdependent in universal kinship. Chatterji (1931) explains that the truth (*sat*) or ‘fact’ of our own nature, or Being (*sat*), and that of the entire universe is realized only in the interrelationship between our inner Self or Being (*sat*) with the ultimate Reality (*sat*). *Sat* is used for both our self and Reality, and therefore it is in this ontological unity we share with all things *and* in the engagement in that unity interrelationally that we exist as ‘truth’ (*sat*).

This interrelational idea of reality has been experienced through our ancestors' collective experiences in the natural world as described in the Vedas, but there is also now ample research that highlights the accuracy of this idea through the scientific method (see Barad, 2007; Selby & Kagawa, 2018). Nagler (2013) writes,

On every level from quantum theory (in whose vision the world becomes a deep unity in which consciousness, not matter, and events, not things, become the primary constituents of reality) through neuroscience to the social and behavioral sciences, the values and processes of unity, cooperation, and empathy have been discovered as fundamental principles of nature (p. x).

With this, we can more accurately interpret Kumarappa's (1950/2001) words, "satyagraha means literally 'clinging to truth'" and "the greatest truth is the unity of all life" (p. iii). The insistence on 'truth' within the philosophy of satyagraha relies on the assumption that the fundamental principle of existence implies ontological unity and interrelationship on a familial level. Frawley (1992) writes the 'truth' of our own nature and our universe is a "reality to be communed with" (p. 4). Universal kinship moves us beyond our ontological unity with ultimate reality or 'truth' (*sat*) into an active communing with ultimate reality (*sat*) (Allen, 2007; Mallick, 2021).

To recognize universal kinship as the ultimate 'truth' (*sat*) is to recognize our ontological entanglement *and* to respond accordingly to the inherent obligations of that depth of relation (Lange, 2023; Pratt & Bodnaresko, 2023; Skaria, 2016; Tagore, 1922). The truth (*sat*) according to Gandhi "comprises and signifies the ethical, spiritual, and political" (Chimni, 2012, p. 1162), requires us to live in universal kinship (see Skaria, 2016, p. 9). In our participation in the concomitant obligations, satyagraha becomes the realistic accomplishment of an idealistic concept. Mantena (2012) writes, "Gandhi famously claimed that he was 'not a visionary' but rather a 'practical idealist'" (p. 457). Cooperating with our universal kinship is the realistic means by which we can refuse to participate in the violence of ontological separation, empowering us to reject perceived social categories, myths of speciesism, and imposed divisions within our own selves. As our interrelationships are defined by universal kinship, we are guided by obligations we accept based on our familial bonds with all life, making our interrelationships marked by a depth of familial love, nonviolence, individual agency and self-rule, and active justice.

2.3.4 The Obligations of Universal Kinship: Familial Love

Gandhi's use of the terms 'truth' and 'love' as interchangeable translations for '*satya*' (Skaria, 2016, p. xii) illustrates why the reality of universal kinship implies our ontological equality and unity with all and therefore empowers us to engage in familial love with all (Cone, 2001; Desai, 2010). Love is the practical outcome of Gandhi's insistence "on the divinity of all being" (Skaria, 2016, p. 210) and his expectation that our relations be "marked by absolute equality and oneness" (Skaria, 2016, p. 208). Because of the ontology of our beings (*sat/satya*), we must strive not to "dominate or eradicate the various other *satya* we encounter" (Skaria, 2016, p. 178), as that would be to commit violence against our own self (*sat/satya*) (Chatterji, 1931).

Familial love becomes an act of nonviolence, as Nagler (2013) defines love as the cultivation of the "human capacity for identification with the other—for genuine compassion and empathy—that is a key to nonviolent transformation" (p. xi). In cultivating a willing identification with other beings, reciprocal empathy and compassion become possible, leading to a practical realization of nonviolent transformation. This can be evidenced in the expansion of the Beloved Community, the concept of love and loyalty defined by American practical idealist, Josiah Royce, and used by Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King in their work for societal transformation (Jensen, 2016), both of whom were guided by their relationship with Gandhi and satyagraha (Chakrabarty, 2013; Clarke & Pickard, 2022). The Beloved Community, like satyagraha, is a socioethical concept that prioritizes transforming individual imaginations by cultivating values of love and collaboration over hyper-individualism (Jensen, 2016). This increases "mutual trust," and dialogue for understanding and empathy (Freire, 1970/1988, p. 78) to "free us from overt violence in the outer world, but more broadly work to bring healing energy to human relationships and thus create lasting change" (Nagler, 2013, p. xi).

2.3.5 The Obligations of Universal Kinship: Nonviolence (*Ahimsa*)

Gandhi (1961/2001) explicitly connects love and nonviolence, “Ahimsa means Universal Love” (p. 43). In rejecting ontological separation to embrace universal kinship, we can recognize that others are ourselves in different forms, and we are empowered to participate in ahimsa (Chatterji, 1931). Gandhi (1961/2001) explains,

thieves are *not different from ourselves* [emphasis added], they are our brethren, our friends...so we realize a further duty. Since we regard the thieves as kith and kin, they must be made to *realize the kinship...This is the path of ahimsa* [emphasis added]...Thus step by step we learn how to make friends with all the world...(p. 40-42).

In satyagraha, the path of ahimsa is to cooperate with the obligation of our own kinship with all and to encourage friends and enemies alike to realize their own kinship for increased unity.

Therefore, Gandhi defines these ideals as practical duties or obligations. If we hope to realize or experience reality, truth, love, and even our own Being (*sat*), we must reimagine what it means to exist in this world and revolutionize the way we practically cooperate with our own existence in the universe (Rajmohan, 1996). Gandhi (1961/2001) explains,

Ahimsa and Truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them...ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later (p. 42).

The effort required to ‘cling to truth’ is not a strictly cerebral endeavor or disembodied spirituality but rather a dedication to active ahimsa in all our relationships. Skaria (2016) writes,

the violence of sovereign power is intensified in two ways. First, it grants equality only to those beings presumed to possess the power to reason, and in this way systematizes domination over all other beings (such as animals or the colonized). Second, autonomous beings inflict a massive violence on themselves, for they *lose the power to love* [emphasis added], which in Gandhi’s writings requires the surrender of autonomy (p. 8).

The violence of colonialism is inflicted on the colonized and the colonizer by the degree to which it “systematizes domination” and destroys the individual’s “power to love” (Skaria, 2016, p. 8). In our loss of ability to love, we are dehumanized, colonizer and colonized alike (Freire, 1970/2002). According to Gandhi’s use of Vedic principles in satyagraha, the ontology of our self (*sat*) is love (*sat*), therefore the loss of our power to love is actually the loss of our very self.

In this way, the practice of ahimsa as a way of life becomes a strategy for liberation which is a major goal of decolonization and education (Freire, 1970/2002; hooks, 1994). Gandhi (1961/2001) emphasizes, “we shall achieve our real freedom only by effort from within, i.e., by self purification and self-help, and therefore by the strictest adherence to truth and nonviolence” (p. 68). Utilizing ahimsa as a practice of liberation requires and increases individual agency as it is an immediate cultivation of freedom within. Even while under structural and systematic oppression of colonization and dominant global culture, individuals can choose to participate in nonviolence as freedom from causing harm (Snow, 2013) and freedom from cooperating with epistemologies and ontologies that inflict violence upon their bodies, minds, and souls.

Because of the inherent potential for immediate personal empowerment of the oppressed in satyagraha, Martin Luther King saw the “strategic value of nonviolence...as a way of life” (Cone, 2001, p. 178). King (1966) wrote, “I am convinced that for practical as well as moral reasons, nonviolence offers the only road to freedom for my people” (p. 28). As individuals cultivate their agency, they experience the innate power of their own will and are empowered to nonviolently refuse to cooperate with the colonial violence of the dominant global culture.

In the practical use of ahimsa, there is a “restoration of...individual dignity disrupted by existing exploitative institutional structures (Nakhre, 1981, p. 205). Cone (2001) explains that “Nonviolence bestows courage and self-respect to oppressed people who were once consumed by fear and low self-esteem” (p. 175). For this reason, Nagler (2013) defined Gandhian

nonviolence as the “nexus between love and revolution...a philosophy grounded in universal love, and a set of practices with revolutionary potential” (p. ix). Through ahimsa, love becomes “a political instrument of social change...to transform society” (Cone, 2001, p. 175), as individuals cultivate the power of their will to cooperate nonviolently.

2.3.6 The Obligations of Universal Kinship: Individual Agency & Self-Rule (*Swaraj*)

In developing our agency through ahimsa, we learn to engage in self-reliance and self-rule (*swaraj*) and are empowered to participate in our own humanization (Srivastava, 2010). Kool and Agrawal (2020) explain that the Vedas identify self-reliance as “the goal of education” (p. 57) which explains why *swaraj* was used by anti-colonial leaders across India as an alternative to colonial rule, as it empowers individuals to take responsibility for their own existence and cultivate their will and discipline to live in cooperation with the reality of universal kinship (Chimni, 2012), even while living under colonial rule. *Swaraj* is a self-empowered participation in familial love and ahimsa to experience varying degrees of independence and freedom in intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships in the present even amid colonial barriers that remain. *Swaraj*, therefore, requires a willingness to replace the individual ego with a desire for “the common good” (Gandhi, 1961/2001, p. 218), defined by Chomsky (2013) as “the social arrangements which are conducive to the rights and welfare of people, to their just aspirations” (p. 685).

Linking justice with the common good binds *swaraj* to an active effort toward the ideal self (Chimni, 2012) capable of rejecting “cultural myths” through what Freire (1970/1988) calls “conscientization” (p. 51). *Swaraj* combines conscientization with practical skill development of discernment, empowering the individual to discern the best course of action for true liberation and humanization. This empowers individuals to become aware of the “mythified version of reality” (Freire, 1970/2002, p. 60) and to reimagine our reality as interrelational leading to

cultural transformation (Freire, 1970/1988). Skaria (2016) explains, “Through their surrender without subordination, satyagrahis enact a distinctive swaraj—they relinquish the everyday exercise of sovereignty, and that relinquishment itself opens onto another freedom” (p. 10) to participate in our own ontology of love and ahimsa (Skaria, 2016). In this way, the freedom of the individual and the goals for achieving the common good can work together, balanced and in tandem, making it the responsibility and the right of the individual to cultivate the skill of discernment for the purpose of contextualizing decisions made in every specific context and circumstance. Swaraj teaches individuals to hold the tension between their own freedom and personal rights alongside the goals of the common good for the collective community.

Swaraj requires that we develop our agency and independence even while participating in interdependence. Our ontological entanglement and unity do not mean we are uniformly the same; our diversity and distinctness in personhood are valuable and, in fact, must be celebrated and cultivated to participate in interrelationships that are equal and non-hierarchical. Tagore (1924) urges to “unite, not in spite of our differences, but through them...Let all human races keep their own personalities, and yet come together, not in a uniformity that is dead, but in a unity that is living” (p. 65). In our expression of interrelational unity and equality, we are compelled to cooperate through our differences.

Prasad (2017) describes this obligation of interrelationship as “co-being,” drawing on Gandhi’s ashram practices of satyagraha to describe “co-being” as a reimagining of how we engage in familial interrelationship in the public sphere even with those we regard as enemies. We must cultivate our skills of swaraj to participate in interrelationships of unity, equality, and distinguishability as we strengthen our independent wills to align them with one another for truly equal collaboration toward collective justice.

2.3.5 The Obligations of Universal Kinship: Active Justice

Participating within our natural reality of universal kinship is to participate in an act of justice. Skaria (2016) explains, “Gandhi insists on the absolute equality of all beings; indeed, this absolute equality *is* satya or the realization of being. *That insistence makes satya synonymous with justice* [emphasis added]—now the seizure by the demand for equality and against inequality is own most to being. To this seizure, Gandhi gives the name satyagraha (p. xv). In holding to the truth of our ontological equality, we are empowered to demand justice based on that equality, thereby rejecting our own dehumanization and that of others (Freire, 1970/2002). Such a rejection of social categories inflicted violently through racism, sexism, classism, and other categories including speciesism, empowers us to strive collectively for justice for all.

For this reason, Cone (2001) explains that it was Gandhi and the Indian people who, formally and informally, taught King and others about the “philosophical and political insight of nonviolent direct action” (p. 175). Jha (2016) explains that satyagraha is a “process of resistance” because of the inherent element of “*hatha*—the antithetic behavior that makes one obstinate...for a cause, a conviction” (p. 221). Cultivating *hatha* is a form of actively asserting swaraj by confidently demanding your freedom to participate in your ethical commitment to nonviolence. This “disruptive noncooperation” (Mattaini, 2013, p. 202) empowers individual and collective justice-seeking through actively refusing to participate in violent assumptions or actions. Meyer & Ndura (2013) write, “Our job as revolutionaries working to transform society to a more just place hinges on understanding the truths of one’s adversaries, and creating new truths that will liberate both the oppressed (in particular) and the oppressor” (p. 2). As we learn how dominant global culture perpetuates violence on all beings, we are empowered through swaraj to refuse participation and instead promote alternative cultural values that demand mutual liberation in as many aspects of existence as possible. This transformation of values is the attainment of justice.

2.4 Using the Philosophy of Satyagraha as a Philosophy of Education

Satyagraha's starting assumption of universal kinship is the guiding force that empowers us to reimagine ourselves as interconnected and interrelated with all and to subsequently reject the dominant cultural values of ontological separation. Dewey's (1916) dedication to "transformative student-centered educational theory" (Malott, 2021, p. 138) explains why he would write the foreword to Chatterji's (1931) *India's Outlook on Life* in which he recognized the "importance that we of the Western world should have authentic information regarding the culture of India (Dewey, 1930, p. xi). This emphasizes the value of including the philosophy of satyagraha in our philosophies of education while illuminating the need for these philosophies to transform the dominant global culture into a culture of peace and nonviolence.

By consciously engaging in a philosophy of education rooted in and animated by the tenets of satyagraha, we can cultivate a unique and innovative intervention that empowers students to participate in a way of life in which they become active agents engaging in the work of cultural transformation to accomplish the goals for our sustainable development and collective future. These intercultural origins are what move mainstream philosophies of education that rely solely on Western idealism and modern rationalism toward alternative philosophies that embody non-dualistic ontologies and relational epistemologies. It is not a dead entanglement but a living interrelationship that compels us to engage in unity, equality, and distinguishability, communing with the ultimate 'fact' (*sat*) of our existence. In this, we are empowered to exist in the world in ways that deliberately oppose the ontological separation that divides us from our true selves, our fellow beings, human and more-than-human, and our natural environment.

2.4.1 Education as Satyagraha: Unity of Ends and Means

In combining the philosophy of satyagraha with an alternative philosophy of education that draws on these indigenous and intercultural roots, we can design an intervention that unifies

the ends and the means of cultural transformation. Education as satyagraha focuses on all aspects of human wellbeing, beyond academic achievement, to cultivate practical life skills and values to ultimately accomplish the SDGs. As evidenced by the tenets of satyagraha above, this alternative philosophy of education is a holistic, relational, critical pedagogy that serves as the primary, practical philosophy through which leaders across various sectors can collaborate to comprehensively and sustainably achieve our goals of increasing our capacity for adaptability, resilience, empathy, cooperation, and collective action for social and environmental justice.

Education as satyagraha is an alternative philosophy of education that uses the tenets of satyagraha to shape and inform our educational pedagogy and practices for the purpose of practically accomplishing large-scale goals of positive social and cultural change such as those listed in the SDGs. Instead of relying on organizing social change movements outside of the classroom, this kind of education can be used as a long-term strategy for accomplishing the goals of social change sustainably. Gandhi (1961/2001) describes the interweaving of the ends and means of this education saying, “They must receive education in nonviolence...through an unbroken series of corporate acts, each evoking the spirit of nonviolence” (p. 218). Education as satyagraha utilizes participation in interrelationships according to the tenets of satyagraha as the end goal while sustainably expanding the effects into society. The educational pedagogy and practices of education as satyagraha create consistent opportunities for all involved in the learning process to participate in interconnected interrelationships, the skills to be used in daily life.

2.4.2 The “Beautiful Tree” of India’s Indigenous Educational System

Utilizing education as the primary means to accomplish these goals is the soil in which the educational system in India is rooted, extending from ancient practices into the current era (Mehrotra, 2007). Gandhi describes Indian education as “a beautiful tree” with deep roots

extending into the ancient soil of Indian culture, but in British colonization, “the beautiful tree perished” (as cited in Mehrotra, 2007, p. 27). For millennia before British colonization, people in India practiced values-based education, balancing academic development with skills of discernment, ethics, and social justice (Dharampal, 2000; Singh, 2017). “‘One village—one school’ was the norm...up to the early nineteenth century” (Mehrotra, 2007, 27). These *gurukuls* were modeled after *ashrams* to encourage the interrelationship between the sacred and the secular, the ideal and the practical, and the natural world and society (Kool & Agrawal, 2020; Tagore, 1922). This “community-based system of schooling...played an important social role” (Mehrotra, 2007, p. 27) in which the familial interrelationship between teacher and learner shaped the moral and social structures to adhere to the indigenous epistemologies and ontologies of universal kinship.

2.4.3 Intercultural Innovations of Indian Philosopher-Educators

A close look at the most revered and imitated educators of India’s history provides a synthesis example of education as satyagraha. Such educational ideals have been practiced by many leaders in India, some of the most influential being Gandhi, Tagore, Savitribai Phule, Sarojini Naidu, Sri Aurobindo, and Swami Vivekananda, among others (Mehrotra, 2007). These philosopher-educators knew their indigenous and colonial history and used education as the primary means of individual and societal transformation, “emphasizing ethical commitments and reciprocal links between school and society” (Mehrotra, 2007, p. 29). Education was the root from which the whole society could spring up and flourish into healthy branches of existence.

Gandhi’s *Nai Taleem* and *Constructive Programme* are his most practical and clear description of the connection between education and satyagraha, in which he articulates the role of education as accomplishing communal unity, removal of untouchability and other social and economic inequalities, the creation of village industries for sustainable livelihood, overall health

and hygiene, gender equality, and swaraj. By intervening in the lives of individuals through this education with consistency and care, an all-encompassing reform of cultural values and norms became feasible. In reshaping negative aspects of culture that worked against the goals of collective thriving, human beings could strategically live into the cultural norms necessary for attaining and sustaining those goals in increasing ways, even living under British occupation.

This kind of education was so important to Gandhi's work of satyagraha that he repeatedly set up schools infused with the tenets of satyagraha, first at Tolstoy Farm, the *ashram* Gandhi designed in South Africa, and then in many locations across India (Mehrotra, 2007). To directly oppose "the foundation that Macaulay laid of education [that] has enslaved us" (Gandhi, 1953/2015, p. 3), students at these schools engaged in holistic character and skill development, "devoting a few hours daily to academic pursuits, and the rest of the day to the performance of 'bread labor'—craft work, agriculture, cooking, cleaning and related tasks" including "stagecraft, arts, sports, and celebration of festivals from all religions" (Mehrotra, 2007, p. 30). Though British education "filled us with discontent, and providing no remedy for the discontent, have made us despondent" (Gandhi, 1953/2015, p. 9), education as satyagraha was the remedy.

Tagore (1917b) described his philosophy saying, "The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence" (p. 142). The connection between the aim of education and the creation of harmony with all things is indicative of Tagore's use of satyagraha in his educational vision. For Tagore, education must provide learners with the skills to understand the deeper meaning of life while also developing their skills to engage responsibly and with the goal of intercultural interrelationship (Datta, 2018). These goals were extremely practical for Tagore, as developing these skills in individuals created the opportunity to shape just and equitable societies, environments, and even international relationships.

Mukherjee (2013) describes Tagore's vision of unity as a "sense of kinship" which crosses ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries because "Tagore's conception of human fellow-feeling was never meant to be confined to one's own narrow community or even to one's own country (p. 262). Interculturalism was the only way out of the colonial project that solidified national boundaries and subsequent national identities. This transcending above human constructs of separation was not only vital for creating and maintaining strong connections between human beings of all backgrounds but also for remembering our ontological connection with our ecosystems and all living and non-living beings. "Learning to feel oneself at one with the animate and vegetable existences of the world is a fundamental fact in the outlook of Ancient India...Learning to see fire, air, water, land, and the whole universe pervaded by a universal consciousness, is true learning" (as cited in Mukherjee, 2013, p. 262). Satyagraha finds its fullness in an educational model that encourages and develops unity within the individual, throughout the community, including across ethnic, racial, gendered, and national boundary lines, and amongst the beings and environments of our entire planet, atmosphere, and universe.

Sarojini Naidu held similar views on education and the opportunities to create major societal reform through such a means during the height of India's independence movement. Naidu was the one who took over the leadership position of the famous Salt March originally led by Gandhi to protest the British monopoly on salt and the exploitation and violence used against Indian laborers to procure it. Spanning 240 miles from March to April 1930, this Salt Satyagraha was not a short-lived protest in which a small group of people walked the streets for a mere few hours or even days; this was a major form of collective action that continued for nearly a month in which 60,000 Indians were jailed by the British in a violent attempt to quell the masses. When Gandhi himself was arrested, Naidu took the lead and continued the Satyagraha. With fire and

severity, Naidu connected educational ideals from ancient India with the political and societal ideals present throughout her life and work.

Naidu was a prolific speaker, and she intentionally utilized her public speeches to educate the audience in alignment with the goals of education as satyagraha. There is a thread of unity, interconnection, cooperation, and mutuality woven throughout her speeches. She speaks of the imperative values and practices of interfaith alliances and collaboration, gender equality, cooperation between communities of diverse ethnic, caste, religious, and racial identities, the ideals of civic life, swaraj, and the importance of practicing ancient Indian ideals, while deliberately linking all of these with the ultimate freedom of the Indian people, not only from the political and economic bonds of the British, but also from the colonization of the mind intentionally imparted by the British.

She speaks of the necessity of unity among all people, exclaiming “the higher patriotism...says the world is my country, and all men are my brothers” (Naidu, 1906/2020, p. 10). Naidu (1906/2020) reminds her listeners of the Indian cultural value of feminism evidenced since ancient times, “at the beginning of the first century, [India] was already ripe with civilization and had contributed to the world’s progress radiant examples of women of the highest genius and the widest culture” (p. 11). Finally, Naidu (1918/2020) connects this ancient past with our present and binds together the means and end as she describes the ontological unity of all things, “we believe instinctively and it is a part of our spiritual inheritance to understand and to realize the continuity of life, the unbroken continuity between the moment of sowing and the moment of reaping” (p. 191-192).

2.5 Conclusion

These educator-philosophers intentionally utilized the fundamental principles of satyagraha to design and implement their educational strategies for positive cultural

transformation and social change. The evidence in their educational theory and practice is a direct connection between an educational model steeped in satyagraha and an increase in sustainable community development practices that lead to the holistic development of the individual learner, the entire community of human and more-than-human beings, and the shared environment. In beginning with an alternative assumption of universal kinship, we can reject the colonially enforced normalization of ontological separation which inflicts violent divisions upon us. We can challenge mythical perceptions of social categories based on prescribed race, gender, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, national origin, and other identifying markers. We can reject false notions of speciesism and instead recognize and honor our fellow beings that are more-than-human including insects, animals, plants, land, and water, celebrating our interconnection and interdependence with all species and learning to commune with them through ecological reciprocity. We can reimagine our true selves as unified in mind, body, and soul, and rediscover the fullness of our humanity as we relate with our self, our Being (*sat*).

Through utilizing education as satyagraha, students are empowered to hone life skills through relational engagement with peers of varying ages, their community members and teachers, and their natural environment to increase social-emotional capacities for intercultural relationships, toleration, empathy, understanding, and collaboration. The practice of these skills leads to overall health and wellbeing of the individual as well as more interconnected, diverse communities and ecosystems. By empowering children, emphasizing their agency as intentional, active participants in their relationships, they can create more adaptable, resilient communities that collectively create and sustain a culture of nonviolence. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodology of my critical ethnographic research with my colleagues and fellow educators in Gujarat, India which serves as a case study for the practical implementation of education as satyagraha.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As discussed in chapters one and two, this research study uniquely draws on intercultural and indigenous epistemologies to discover a philosophy of education as satyagraha, which utilizes intercultural ethics of nonviolence as the life-giving root system to inform educational practices for positive cultural transformation. The following research questions have been developed in hopes of discovering a meaningful approach to the preceding problems in our dominant global culture based on the alternative philosophies of education.

1. How are educators in post-colonial contexts, specifically India, interweaving an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge?
2. How does this alternative, intercultural philosophy of education empower individuals to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence?

To answer my research questions, I utilized a critical ethnographic research methodology to develop a qualitative case study based on my relationship with the leadership of two local K-12 schools in Gujarat, India.

3.1 Research Methodology as a Form of Education as Satyagraha

For this project, I engaged in a research methodology that aligns with the goals of the entire project which empowered me to align my qualitative research methodology with the philosophy of satyagraha. Since all research is an act of learning, I engaged in this research project under the same principles of education as satyagraha, operating with a primary focus on universal kinship as the guiding epistemology. My interrelationships with my community partners and colleagues, both inside the field and outside the field, served as the primary means by which the research was conducted. These interrelationships were consciously recognized as equally interconnected and interdependent, so that everyone involved in the research process

could mutually benefit. These interrelationships were guided by the primary tenets of satyagraha as described in chapter two: familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice. In every interaction throughout the research process, these were the primary means through which intercultural communication, understanding, learning, and mutual transformation occurred.

My primary interrelationships with those inside the field at the local schools in Gujarat were with Principal Seema, the teachers, and the students. My primary interrelationships with those outside the field were with those who assisted in various aspects of the research project including past teachers, colleagues, and members of my committee who have asked me questions and guided my learning on these topics thus far, colleagues who assisted in triangulation and auditing of my field notes and interviews, and my family members and ancestors, especially my *Naniji* (Hindi word for maternal Grandmother), who is uniquely able to notice important nuances present in the field notes and interviews that are influenced by Indian culture, the British colonization of India, and the philosophy of satyagraha as expressed by Gandhi and others. Since my Naniji grew up in India while still under British colonial rule, she personally experienced British schooling, the violence of Partition and the first days of Indian independence, and the satyagraha preached by Gandhi himself at the prayer meetings he held which she had the opportunity to attend with her parents.

Naniji's personal teachings are of special importance and influence on me and my research methodology. Her memory of Gandhi's message at one of his prayer meetings and the transformative influence that had on her parents and subsequently herself has profoundly influenced me personally and has significantly guided this research project. Naniji shared that Gandhi's message that evening was about the practical importance of wearing traditional Indian clothing specifically because it was a means of practicing swaraj.

The entire process of making the traditional, simple *khadi* (hand-spun natural cloth) is a sustainable, cultural, and independent practice that can be performed by anyone of any class or caste. It is made from natural fibers and can be woven together on a simple wooden spinning wheel operated by hand and foot. In fact, because of this history, the spinning wheel has become so strongly associated with Indian independence that it became the symbol used in the middle of their national flag, with each spoke representing a moral obligation.

Khadi is a white or off-white fabric made with the spinning wheel and sewn into a very simple *kurta* (shirt) or *dhoti* (loincloth) without much, if any, additional decoration. Because of its simple creation and design, khadi can be worn by all classes to communicate a unity and equality among them while rejecting ideas of hierarchy within the community. Additionally, since it can be made without importing material or expensive machinery, there is no need for any British intervention. Wearing khadi therefore becomes an act of *swaraj* and self-sufficiency through boycotting British goods and refusing to replace Indian cultural values and practices with those of the British (see Cohn, 2021b).

This was of serious importance to Naniji and her family because they were part of the educated class who received British education, they had become part of the class of interpreters between the British and their own community members, as Macaulay (1835) explained, “a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (para. 30). Naniji remembers the way her parents responded immediately to Gandhi’s message. She shared, “When we went home my parents made a fire outside, and I watched them as they threw their British clothes into the flames.” From then on, they wore the traditional *kurta* and *dhoti* made from khadi, and Naniji said, “I never saw them wear their British clothes again.”

Satyagraha and its concomitant actions are transformative and the inherent learning through this philosophy can be a form of individual and collective empowerment for

decolonization in multiple aspects of existence. This research project is a development of these historical and familial experiences. This project is a continuation of inquiry, discovery, and experimentation through interrelationships guided by the philosophy of satyagraha. For this reason, I have woven together my intercultural skills as a methodology of Two-Eyed Seeing (Quinn, 2022; see Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009) which again is “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing, and to use both these eyes together, *for the benefit of all* [emphasis added]” (Reid et al., 2021, p. 244). Through utilizing critical ethnography, I was empowered to engage in research that aligned with these goals.

3.2 Methodology of Critical Ethnography

Tuhiwai Smith (2021) explains that even “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” in which “the West can desire, extract, and claim ownership of our ways of knowing, our imagery, the things we create and produce, and then simultaneously reject the people who created and developed those ideas...” (p. 1). For this reason, I must reject research methodologies mired in colonialism and instead utilize alternative research methodologies that provide necessary opportunities to ask complex cultural questions through equitable and reciprocal relationships with research participants for mutual transformation. Therefore, I will be utilizing a methodology of critical ethnography because of the unique opportunity this provides me to draw simultaneously on critical theory and anthropological ethnography.

Fitzpatrick and May (2022) define critical ethnography as “a methodology that looks outward and engages with issues of importance to people, environments, and communities, and at the same time critiques and troubles understandings, practices, and processes of knowledge

production” (p.15). Since my project is based on an ethical responsibility and desire to challenge and transform injustices on multiple levels of existence from a specific cultural perspective (Madison, 2019), critical ethnography empowers me to engage in research that attends to these goals. The value of using ethnography as a methodology is explained well by Narayan (2020),

For the discipline of paying attention; for learning from others; for becoming more responsibly aware of inequalities; for better understanding the social forces causing suffering and how people might somehow find hope; and most generally, for being perpetually pulled beyond the horizons of one’s own taken-for-granted world (Narayan as cited in McGranahan, 2020, p. 12).

My goals for this project are not confined solely to discovering more accurate answers to my research questions; my goals include discovering possibilities for engaging with and implementing the findings for the benefit and increased well-being of all. Therefore, I must engage in ways that benefit everyone involved at each stage of the research. Moreover, such an emphasis on these ethical values deepens my research and writing practice that can become transformative for both the author and the reader as it practically requires our constant attention to the cultivation of skills for mutual collaboration, transparency, trust, honor, and respect.

Engaging in a critical qualitative ethnographic methodology makes it possible to ascertain what Geertz describes as a “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) of the research context for the purpose of developing practical interventions that can be implemented on a larger scale for increased positive change. I added the critical approach to the ethnographic methodology because of my commitment to goals of social justice and to increasing justice and equality more broadly in all aspects of our existence (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022). To do this, I consistently worked to be aware of the conjunctions of colonization and decolonization which are present in our research methods (Visweswaran, 1994; Quinn, 2022) and which are always in motion beneath the surface, requiring constant and responsible navigation.

3.2.1 The Role of the Researcher in the Research Design and Methodology

Throughout this project, I have begun to realize the value that my mixed identity brings to my project and to the work of ethnography more broadly. This helps me recognize myself as my own research instrument (McGranahan, 2020), valuing my lived experiences as learning experiences that have developed unique and diverse skills to engage interculturally. The intercultural relationships in which I have been honored to participate have deepened my intellectual understanding as well as my spiritual, social, and emotional capacities to engage with genuine reciprocity. Through my engagement with my colleagues in the field, I realized how my own unique blending of identities as an Indian American at once provides a depth of understanding of the broader, shared Indian culture, while simultaneously distances me from understanding some of the nuances of the culture.

3.2.2 My Personhood and Positionality

I am both an insider and an outsider approaching this project, and this recognition of my unique location in the field, both literally and figuratively, is helpful in recognizing my vulnerability as a researcher (Behar, 1996). This vulnerability is necessary with this project because it ensures accuracy and honesty while also building a depth of reciprocal trust. For example, my colleagues' collaboration with me also requires their vulnerability as they trust me with information about their work. I recognized the value of cultivating our shared vulnerability in this project, as intercultural relationships require some degree of vulnerability by each participant. Participating in embodied and vulnerable connections with individuals, communities, contexts, and beings, the research becomes mutually transformative.

3.2.3 Intercultural Skills

With a hybrid identity composed of different familial geographic origins, racialized and ethnic backgrounds, cultures, religions, and histories, I have developed skills of operating and

cooperating interculturally in relationship with my partners in the field. This is an important skill set to cultivate to take seriously our current historical context in which we all are living within the current realities and legacies of colonization. Because of this, I was keenly aware of the diverse inequalities of power that exist between people in all places, making it impossible to engage in research that is not at least somewhat bound up in various forms of hierarchy, oppression, and violence.

Lal (1996) explains that an attempt to engage in some form of nonhierarchical research can “only be met by an *escape* from reality...a position that is politically irresponsible, empirically impossible, and epistemologically indefensible” (p. 197). Our positioning to the project must therefore be under constant scrutiny and then reimagined in response to the relationship between the Self and the Other, sometimes requiring us to remain in the tension therein that may never be resolved (Lal, 1996, 201).

3.2.4 Rejecting False Dualities and Embracing Hybridity

Especially because of the nature of my project which deals with issues of colonization, decolonization, violence, and nonviolence, I must reject the false dualities created by envisioning myself as the Subject conducting research and my partners in the field as the Objects being researched. To operate within these static binaries is not only dangerous as it perpetuates systems of colonialism and violence, but it also rejects the reality “that *all* of us live in contradictory locations, and not just those of us who are perhaps involuntarily placed within those contradictions” (Lal, 1996, p. 199).

In examining my own personal histories, cultures, and intersections of identities, this living within the contradiction is something I have been doing since I was a child, even before I was aware of it. I have learned how to become comfortable existing within what Lal describes as “the dis/locations of these mixed, or multiple, identities” (Lal, 1996, p. 199) in part because of

my intercultural and interethnic hybrid of identities involuntarily assumed through my parents' different cultural and ethnic identities, and because of my conscious development of intercultural awareness and engagement.

Instead of being solely a challenge for me to overcome, as has often been the oppressive reality I have faced growing up in the United States, I feel a sense of relief that my unique hybrid of identities empowers me to transcend the false binaries of Self and Other as extreme poles more easily, leaning into an anticolonial methodology that assumes the inferiority of maintaining strictly "identity-based ontological categories" (Lal, 1996, p. 199) to define community. My position to the project is not inscribed by essential identifiers imposed upon me by myself or others; my position is defined by the constant redefining I choose to practice as I actively reject false dichotomies of identity and static definitions of position, leaning instead on the dynamic realities of my hybrid, fluid, and intermingling mix of identities.

3.2.5 Remaining Conscious of Privilege

However, I must never rely on my "hybridity as the new site of epistemic privilege" (Lal, 1996, p. 199), for I am not the only person capable of identifying my position. My partners in the field, my mentors in the writing, my intended and unintended audiences, and everyone in between can all inform my position to the project. I may choose to self-identify in certain ways, but my identity and degree of belonging to a certain community is also defined by those with whom we build relationships in the field (Williams, 1996, p. 73). The color of my skin along with certain physical features and familial geographical origin may allow me easier entrance into the communities in India that I hope to participate, but I must still intentionally engage in a consciously reflexive way, recognizing that regardless of my perceived ontological connection to the field, my positioning is constantly changing and being transformed by the very nature of the project and by the relationships in which I participate.

Williams (1996) describes this as having an identity as the participant-observer that is always operating “betwixt-and-between” different perceptions of identity and belonging (p. 76-77). I am not the only one who can define my position to the project or to my community in the field, because every individual in the field has their own unique intersections of identities and their own agency to interpret and define my position, granting me authority and access to understanding in their communities.

3.2.6 Navigating Entanglement of Personal Identity

Williams (1996) also makes an important distinction between skinkfolk and kinfolk, delineating between our presumed access and authority within communities with whom we may share physical or cultural features (such as skin color) and our actual barriers we still face unless we are invited into the community to varying degrees at the discretion of the community. Access is not always automatically granted and should not ever be assumed simply because of these shared outward identifiers.

I therefore engage with the community in ways that respect the fact that not only is my position constantly in flux, but my authority, access, and barriers are also consistently being negotiated and redefined by those in the community to whom I defer as those having more authority, cultural knowledge, and depth of access in the field. Just as I am striving to resist the colonial discourses that seek to impose separation between my multiple identities within myself, so too must I reject the colonial discourses that assume “borderlines between Us and Them, Self and Other, Subject and Object” (Lal, 1996, p. 198) recognizing that “we all occupy multiple and fluid locations” (Lal, 1996, p. 186), and we are all always navigating these nuances of difference within and between ourselves. This is how I can honor the reality of living between multiple identities within myself and within the communities with whom I am engaged, always collaborating to define and make sense of my ever-changing positioning in the field.

3.2.7 Importance of Collaboration

For these reasons I chose to engage collaboratively with my research participants as my colleagues, friends, and community partners, gleaning from their insight and experience in embodied ways (Bourdieu, 1997; Markowitz, 2006). I relied on the specialized expertise of my colleagues in the field to provide an accurate understanding of their unique context and the positive outcomes of their work to effectively contextualize those in the future. I was aware that I have a certain degree of power being entrusted with the task of interpreting cultural knowledge and experience, crafting arguments based on that knowledge, and then sharing that knowledge with a wider audience through our writing. The nature of my presence in the field was consistently and carefully considered, ensuring I created balance between observation and participation with my colleagues (Wolcott, 2005, p. 89). This built trust and communicated respect for the work in which my colleagues participate daily with their students.

3.2.8 Personal Transformation for Mutually Beneficial Research

These questions of positioning are extremely necessary to wrestle with as I engage in projects that take the work of decolonization and nonviolence seriously. My methodology, methods, writing, and overarching goals must align with continuity of intentions, efforts, and practical outcomes. Tedlock (2009) offers transcultural ethnography as an opportunity to actively participate in various practices that promote such a congruence of positioning efforts and outcomes of our anthropological work. She explains the value of viewing the entire ethnographic endeavor as a journey, implying continuous action leading to our increasingly layered discovering and understanding in the field.

To have a truly anticolonial methodology and practice, I must seek out opportunities to engage in “‘nomadic thought,’ which does not separate differences into oppositional dualities, [but] creates a dialogue based on becoming” (Tedlock, 2009, p. 23). Here the importance of the

journeying metaphor is even more obvious as the practice of nomadic thought requires us to lean into “becoming” as “a process of ongoing transformation of a person caused by multiple dynamic interactions of the type one experiences during travel or an extended sojourn abroad” (Tedlock, 2009, p. 23). Instead of seeking to understand the world by consciously objectifying it, which is itself a “form of social violence” (Tedlock, 2009, p. 23), we must engage as nomads or travelers, always willing to be transformed by our experiences and learning along the path which has no real finish line.

This allows us to practice “nonlinear and nonrestrictive thinking” as expressed in the rhizomatic theory by Deleuze and Guattari (1987), which takes the “rhizome, or root-like plant stem forming an entwined spherical mass” as “a metaphor for an epistemology that spreads in all directions at once” (Tedlock, 2009, p. 23). In this epistemology I am able to reject colonial modes of discovery that rely on the violence of inequalities, hierarchies, subjugation, and oppression, and I am empowered to learn and discover through constant change, growth, and development, the common threads, or roots, evidenced in these practices of nomadic thought and becoming.

3.2.9 Becoming Increasingly Transcultural

To fully embrace these practices, I must also include “becoming transcultural” and continue to practice transculturation, the act of creating a unique blend of cultures that traverses between the myriad forms of violence experienced in acculturation, forced assimilation, and deculturation (Tedlock, 2009, p. 27). The hybridity of identity out of which I already consciously and subconsciously tend to exist increases my capacity to operate transculturally in the field, a practice that for me values and promotes satyagraha both as a way of life and as an ethnographic methodology. For me and my Naniji, as for Tedlock and her grandmother, ““there is a beauty and

strength in loving and practicing both ways of being in the world” (Tedlock, 2009, p. 34), and of course, not only in both ways but in all ways of being.

3.3 Research Method

It is through this critical ethnographic methodology as described by Fitzpatrick & May (2022) and explained in detail throughout the preceding pages on my methodology that I crafted this qualitative case study at the two schools in Gujarat, India. My research method therefore blends this critical ethnographic methodology with the ethnographic method described by Spradley (1979/2016) who argued that ethnography was unique in its method and approach when compared to other forms of social science research methods because of the way ethnography interweaves the traditional steps of social science research. I chose this interwoven method because of how, as Spradley (1979/2016) suggested, it is especially useful for empowering the researcher to engage in the traditional steps of social science research simultaneously rather than in a presumed rigid order, thereby making the research process more credible, dependable, and confirmable.

My ethnographic method is similar to that conducted by Jayaseelan Raj (2022) who explained the unique challenges and benefits of utilizing ethnographic methods as someone who, like me, is both an insider and an outsider of the community being studied. Raj (2022) writes, “My critical approach combines the intimate experience of the insider with the more distance reflexive orientation of the outsider” (p. xiv) and explains that “while I carried out systematic ethnographic fieldwork...[I] also draw on my experience” (p. xii). Raj (2022) details how his life experience provided him with a depth of understanding that a researcher from another culture may not gain, which is the one of the reasons why long-term field immersion is necessary for ethnographers from cultures that make them solely outsiders.

Additionally, my method blends these practices with those used by Carol Stack (1974) who also conducted her ethnographic research primarily through the deep, reciprocal, long-term relationships she built with a few individuals over the course of several years. Similarly, my method draws on my relationships I have cultivated with Seema and some of the teachers since I met them in 2015 during my first visit to the two local schools where Seema serves as principal and primary visionary educational leader. Seema has been dedicated to a vision of education that draws on the philosophy of satyagraha since the early 1990s, and I have experienced the impact of her implementation of this educational methodology during my three visits to the two local schools in Gujarat State in northern India.

I was introduced to Principal Seema through some colleagues we both knew mutually because of our similar efforts to utilize education as a means for positive social change in our distinct contexts. In my first conversation with Seema, we built a base of mutual respect and trust, and she immediately began teaching me about her unique vision for education. Seema took on a motherly role with me due to our difference in age, which is a common Indian cultural custom in which I was happy to participate. Because of her taking on this unique role, I was able to personally and directly experience her philosophy of education and pedagogy through our relationship which was not only personally transformative but also provided a depth of insight and understanding that I could not have gained otherwise.

Therefore, I also modeled my ethnographic method described and modeled by Kirin Narayan (2012), who uses an ethnographic method to focus on the holistic picture of an individual's character to help illuminate the deeper nuances that the specific individual brings to answering the research questions. This is recognized as a necessary and beneficial qualitative research method by Carole McGranahan (2020) in her interview with Narayan which provided

further insight into how I incorporated this method in this project, especially with my focus on Seema and her educational leadership.

It should be noted that because of this blending of methods, it may at times appear that when describing the findings of the data my tone is overly admiring or praising of Seema or the teachers, so I want to be clear that I do not intend to applaud or commend without critique. My ethnographic methodology and methods when conducted with integrity do not provide that opportunity. I resonate with Raj's (2022) explanation of his own ethnographic project when he explained that he did not presume to speak on behalf of the individuals with whom he engaged in the field, but it must also be recognized that as with any well designed and ethically guided approach, the researcher is still a human being experiencing the transformative act of learning throughout the research process. Therefore, I share Raj's (2022) experience that "the ethnographic fieldwork has radically transformed my own cosmological and ontological understanding of human life..." (p. xv) which of course has obvious impacts on my own life, impacts which may influence the tone of my writing. Though I remained consistent in my dedication to my ethnographic integrity as a researcher throughout the entire process, it still may appear that sometimes I lean on the critical approach of my ethnographic methodology (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022) and highlight the potential positive aspects of the life and work of Seema and others.

My observations and interviews have been continued since I first met Seema through additional visits to the schools and through use of internet communication tools including Zoom, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. The evolving nature of my relationships with Principal Seema and my other field partners at the schools in combination with the accessibility and consistent use of technology provided ample opportunities to engage in ethnographic field work

during my time spent at the schools as well as through continued communication while separated by distance.

In this case study I used semi-structured interview methods to conduct one-on-one interviews with Seema to understand her vision of education and the specific ways she utilizes Gandhi's philosophy of satyagraha in her educational philosophy, leadership, and practices to create a unique intercultural philosophy of education for sustainable development. This project also draws on the information provided by teachers and students at the schools as well as graduates from the schools. I used primarily semi-structured interview methods to conduct one-on-one interviews and group interviews with these field partners.

I developed my interview questions based on my research questions and used specific terms and concepts to guide the participants to provide information that was directly related to my research questions. Therefore, the theory of satyagraha as described in chapter two informed the development of the interview questions as did the framework of two-eyed seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009). I wrote open-ended interview questions to develop trust between me and the participants while also fostering a depth of nuanced conversation that allowed the participants to provide as many details or ideas as they desired. I also used this form of interview questions because of the Indian cultural norms of often sharing information through relationship and less formal conversation rather than rigid and formal interviews.

3.3.1 Research Context

As a direct effort to engage in sustainable and holistic community development in their region of northwest India, Seema and her husband, Linus, started a school for children from low-income families who were often relegated to remain in intergenerational poverty due to lack of access to holistic and consistent education. Seema took the lead in creating the school with just 13 children, developing curriculum, teaching students, and eventually hiring more teachers who

shared her educational vision. Now with two school buildings and 1,700 students combined, Principal Seema has a wealth of experience and knowledge that can assist in answering my specific research questions with the necessary depth, accuracy, and reliability.

Both local schools are located in Gujarat State in Northern India and are located within walking or driving distance to the Bay of Bengal on the West. One school is a K-12 school in a small city with a population of between 223,000-236,000 and is located about 7.5 miles from the coast. The other school is K-5 and is located on the coast in a rural fishing village with a population of 1,000-2,000. Due to the ancient and modern historical context of the region of Northern India, the culture of Gujarat State is known to be a very diverse blend of traditions, norms, customs, and religions including Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Christianity. Though there has been significant conflict at times in the region due to these sometimes extreme differences, there has developed a more common cultural norm of toleration, hospitality, and community values, despite what may be more consistently depicted in recent media portrayals.

One of the most important pieces of contextual information about these schools is their historical, cultural, and geographical proximity to the Salt Satyagraha or Salt March of 1930. Both schools are situated within 40 miles of the city of Dandi which is located on the shores of the Bay of Bengal and is the historical site where Gandhi famously, alongside the over 60 thousand fellow satyagrahis, committed the first act of satyagraha in India in 1930. There is now a sprawling monument over 15 acres called the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial. Completed and dedicated in 2019, the Memorial honors the activists and participants from nearly every religion, caste, culture, and sect in India at that time. There are 24 narrative murals with descriptions of the timeline, purpose, and philosophy for the collaborative efforts of the satyagrahis along with life size sculptures of each of the original 80 individuals of diverse

backgrounds who joined Gandhi at the start of the 240-mile-long march over only 24 days. This historical, cultural, and geographical context directly and indirectly influences the general culture of the region, and especially influences the culture of these local schools.

3.3.2 Sampling Methods

I used a mixture of purposive sampling, based on my research questions which deal specifically with these two local schools, and theoretical sampling, based on the emerging themes throughout the research. I conducted interviews, engaged in conversations, and observed the educational practices in the classrooms and in less formal contexts between classes. Through semi-formal interviews and informal conversations, I asked questions and fostered conversations that helped me answer my research questions. I wanted to understand the connections between the ideals and practices of education as satyagraha and the subsequent outcomes of this philosophy of education on the individuals directly involved. My goal was to understand the ways this educational model impacts the individuals, their local communities and the surrounding environments and ecologies according to Seema, the teachers, and the students at the schools.

3.3.3 Types of Data Collected

In addition to the data I collected through my relationship with Principal Seema as described in the section on Research Methods, I collected several types of data throughout the research including observation, field notes, focused group interviews with teachers and students, and individual interviews with the school principal, teachers, currently enrolled students, and students who had graduated from the schools.

The individual interviews with the school principal, teachers, currently enrolled students, and students who had graduated from the schools were semi-structured or unstructured because of my sensitivity to Indian cultural norms and for the purpose of building deeper trust and

rapport leading to more accurate and reliable data. This form of natural dialogue also allowed me to glean deeper understandings of the topics in my research questions. However, I was still careful throughout these interviews to take careful field notes and to consistently and purposefully direct the conversation to help answer the research questions. These individual interviews lasted between short, passing conversations, up to an hour or more, such as when Seema and I were talking during the long car ride to visit the National Salt Satyagraha Memorial.

I also conducted group interviews because of the common use of group communication in Indian culture and because of the possibility group interviews provides to gather more nuanced and diverse responses to the questions. Group interviews also allowed the participants to develop their own ideas in real time and to elaborate on each other's responses. I was also able to use the group interviews to observe the relationship dynamics between the participants which helped me to discover some answers to my research questions through the participants' behaviors and actions rather than solely their answers. This allowed me to understand with more accuracy the reliability of their responses.

I conducted four semi-structured large group interviews with a total of 34 teachers who participated from both school locations in which we engaged in workshop style conversations. These interviews lasted from 50-90 minutes to ensure equal participant engagement while also to prevent participant fatigue. These teachers ranged in ages between 20 years old and 56 years old, with most of them being younger than 40 years old. Most of the teachers identified as female, though four identified as males.

I also conducted two semi-structured small group interviews with six teachers who voluntarily joined because of their individual desire to share more detail about the answers they shared in the large group interview. These interviews lasted from 20-45 minutes. One male and

five females were present at both semi-structured small group interviews and these teachers ranged in age from 24-37 years old.

I gave all the teachers an opportunity to take notes during all our conversations and interviews, and I collected those notes from 22 teachers who volunteered to share them. I also collected these voluntary notes from all six teachers who participated in the small group interviews.

There are around a total of 1,700 students who currently attend these schools. During my observations, dozens of students voluntarily shared examples of their recent projects in art, engineering, computer programming, public speaking, and music to exemplify the skills and values they have developed through their learning at their school. There were 14 current students who volunteered to be interviewed, so I conducted semi-structured small group interviews with them to understand from their unique perspectives how they perceive they are being empowered and transformed by their education. These students ranged in age from middle school to high school. I also interviewed four recent graduates of the schools to understand their perception of the long-term outcomes of this education on their lives and the lives of their family and community members even after graduation.

I conducted direct observations of students and teachers in their classrooms during typical school days and conducted observations in between class sessions, as well as before and after school. I took field notes during all these observations. I observed 12 classes including five elementary classrooms, three middle school classrooms, and four high school classrooms. The classroom observations were 10-20 minutes in length because I was not trying to see an entire lesson plan but rather was focused on observing as many classrooms as possible to gather a more holistic understanding of the teaching philosophy and practice being implemented and a holistic understanding of student and teacher relationship and engagement during class.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

I first analyzed the multiple interviews through the audio recordings and the written transcripts of the interviews. I used my field notes to connect to any necessary information provided in the interviews and to provide context or additional necessary background information that was not explicitly provided in the recorded interviews. I manually organized the data using thematic analysis. I completed five rounds of open coding before categorizing the codes into themes based on the philosophy of education rooted in satyagraha as described in chapter two. I categorized the thematic concepts that dealt with the concomitant obligations of universal kinship: familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice. I sorted thematic concepts that value Two-Eyed Seeing (see Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009) by deciphering between the presence of indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing and the presence of mainstream knowledges and ways of knowing. I also sorted thematic concepts into the outcomes that align with specific UN Sustainable Development Goals. I noticed another theme that focused on the educational vision and leadership that Principal Seema personally brings to the schools. Through all of this, I noticed a consistent interweaving of the themes which indicated a strong interconnection between the ends and means of this philosophy of education.

3.4 Ensuring Validity and Accuracy of Data Analysis

To ensure the research methods, data, and analysis are accurate and less biased, I practiced a blending of methods. I used a critical ethnographic method that recognizes the necessary role of research should be conducted with the intent purpose of improving society and increasing justice for those within and outside the community being researched (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022). I joined with this an integrated approach to the traditional social sciences research steps, interweaving each step in a dynamic fashion to ensure accuracy at each stage of the research process (Spradley, 1979/2016). Additionally, I blended with this a conscious drawing

on my own life experience and knowledge as an insider of the culture and community with whom I was researching for this project because of the depth of insight it provides (Jayaseelan Raj, 2022). Simultaneously, because of the unique opportunity my positionality and cultural background provided, I cultivated a consistency and depth of relationship with my community partners to understand additional nuance and complexities a series of interview questions may not discover (Narayan, 2012; Stack, 1974). This blending of ethnographic methods is employed with skill by others referenced throughout this chapter, and each of those influenced my own method and approach to this qualitative case study.

In addition to practicing these consistent strategies alongside those described in detail in my methodological approach at the beginning of this chapter, I used several complementary methods to ensure the validity of my data analysis. One consistent method I used was collaborative member checks which is an essential method in ethnographic research in which the participants in the field have primary authority to determine the data analysis' "adequacy and accuracy from their perspectives" (Sangasubana, 2011, p. 571). Therefore, I used collaborative member checks throughout the process of gathering data and data analysis to both maintain the integrity of my findings and to ensure the credibility of the entire study. To reduce bias and to further increase validity and reliability, I also completed triangulation and auditing. To increase the dependability and trustworthiness of my findings, I also ensured several ethical practices were followed throughout the entire process including by participating in reciprocal kinship relationships, practicing reflexivity,

3.4.1 Collaborative Member Checks

As Sangasubana (2011) suggests, I used collaborative member checks throughout the entire process of gathering and analyzing the data, discussing insights and themes with Seema, the teachers, the students, and the recent graduates to ensure my interpretation aligned with their

perceptions of the data and helped to communicate their message. Collaborative member checks are of primary importance for ensuring the validity and trustworthiness of the data analysis (Fitzpatrick & May, 2022, pp. 112-116). I began these collaborative member checks with asking clarifying questions during the interviews and culminating in sharing my interpretations of my analysis. As the principal and major visionary leader of the school, Seema is a highly qualified person who could verify whether what I analyzed was appropriate from her perspective. Therefore, Principal Seema gave special attention to ensuring the information and interpretation were accurate.

In this way I was empowered to “honor the people whose stories are being shared” (McGranahan, 2020, p. 4). This value of honor is important, because to honor someone is more than simply giving recognition or acknowledgement as it implies an action of giving respect to those that we work with in the field. In this way, the values necessary for ethnographic writing become embodied and we are more readily equipped to navigate those tumultuous waters of decolonization (Visweswaran, 1994).

3.4.2 Triangulation and Auditing

In addition to collaborative member checks, I completed triangulation and auditing. I asked a colleague in the college of education and my Naniji, Dr. Archana Shankar, to serve as auditors of the research process. To allow for triangulation and to enhance confirmability, I provided multiple sources of data including field notes and transcripts of interviews. Additionally, I chose these individuals because of the different skills and perspectives they each bring to the auditing process. My colleague is familiar with traditional Western research methods in the field of Education and is aware of the necessary requirements to conduct valid qualitative research in the field of social sciences. My Naniji is also familiar with traditional Western research methods in the fields of Intercultural Communication and Anthropology as she earned

her PhD in Intercultural Communication, while she is also familiar with alternative research methods which she honed and utilized in her childhood in India and in earning her first master's degree in Indian philosophy in Meerut, India.

3.5 Additional Ethical Considerations to Maintain Integrity, Accuracy, & Reliability

3.5.1 Participating in Kinship Relationships

There is a depth of ethnographic understanding that can only come through true relationship, collaboration, and reciprocal empathy, vulnerability, and solidarity leading to real friendship and even familial friendship as in kinship between myself and those in the field (Williams, 1996). Ong (1995) demonstrates how valuing these relational conditions allows the possibility to redefine “power as a decentralized, shifting, and productive force, animated in networks of relations rather than possessed by individuals” (p. 353). Ong’s (1995) willingness to lean into the complexities of power is extremely helpful in recognizing that power is not always a static form that can be held completely by an individual simply by their intersections of identities. Instead, power can be dynamic and in constant creation and change depending on how the individual participates in their power and whether and how they willingly abdicate or alter their power within their relationships. For example, in our world in which the legacies of colonialism automatically affords a certain type and degree of power to those who carry an American passport with an Overseas Citizen of India card, I can choose to engage interculturally with Principal Seema and the other teachers to ensure the ethnographic process is mutually beneficial.

I purposefully engaged in such a way that I was not only gaining information for my research through our interviews but was also intentionally building rapport, developing trust, and engaging with reciprocal empathy through our conversations to foster genuine relationships in which we could all collaborate to accomplish our shared goals. It is always my responsibility to

communicate my overall goals of increased positive social change and sustainable community development through this ethnographic project. It is equally my responsibility to ask them their goals in participating in the research and to create opportunities for them to share honestly how they want to see those come to fruition. In doing this, I used my position of power to develop more equal intercultural relationships that are mutually beneficial.

3.5.2 Practicing Reflexivity and Recognizing the Role and Nature of Power

The intention of valuing and participating in reciprocal relationships is therefore both to redefine power and to identify and analyze our shared relatedness to the ethnographic project. To ensure dependability and trustworthiness, I practiced reflexivity by engaging in critical reflection about my own intersection of identities and my location to the project, deepening my awareness of my own possible biases, and engaging in conversations and personal practices that increased transparency.

One of the main ways I practiced reflexivity is by recognizing the role of power. To truly address the inherent inequalities that are present in my ethnographic fieldwork and writing with, for, and about the schools in Gujarat, I worked to redefine power in more nuanced ways that take seriously the differences in the nature and degree of power held by me as the ethnographer and by my colleagues as the informants. This empowered me to challenge hegemonic forms of authority in authorship and representation (Clifford, 1988).

Such a redefining of power relies heavily on the existence of participatory and reciprocal relationships between me and my colleagues who have agreed to be my research participants. Therefore, in addition to the interview questions I asked Seema about her philosophy of education, I also asked her to share why she is dedicated to this research project and what outcomes she hopes to see because of her participation. It is vital to remember, as Ong (1995) explains “writing can be both a betrayal of their interests and a strategy of power” (p. 356), so I

asked Seema to speak directly to how she intends to use this project as an opportunity for her to enact her own unique power through the sharing of her work with a larger audience. For example, I asked how she sees this project impacting the mission of the schools. I asked what she hopes is the response of the audience that reads about the community development work being accomplished there. I spoke with her about the specific ethics and ethical dilemmas we both see as the leaders of this project with different vantage points, so that we can address those collaboratively as partners in the field and so that she can utilize this ethnographic project for herself and her community as a “strategy of power” (Ong, 1995, p. 356).

In assessing my own relatedness to this project, I have identified how I too want to use my power as a researcher to promote the validity and success of these educational models being practiced by educators in India as an intervention for sustainable development. This is one way for me to take seriously the responsibilities we have for each other, something Wolf (1992) describes as imperative in addressing issues of power in creating authority in ethnographic writing (p. 132). Another good example of taking these mutual responsibilities seriously is in Stack’s (1996) work as described by her in her feminist writing process in which she had to recognize her power as a White woman in a Black community. The way Stack dealt with the obvious inequalities was to use her position of power to write about the resiliency, adaptability, and creativity of Black women in their forming of kin relationships (Stack, 1996).

I share similarities with Stack because I am able to operate within some level of assumed authority because of my location within the academy in the United States and more broadly as an American, while at the same time I experience moments of subjugation and domination as a woman of mixed ethnic identity in a country that often still expects me to participate as an “interpreter” and a person “Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect” (Macaulay, 1835, para. 30). In this way, I can more strongly relate to the

way Ong (1995) approaches her work as I similarly operate out of my unique identity of “multiple positioning” (p. 352). As a person of Indian culture who values India’s unique history and heritage, as an educator, and as a person who cares deeply about community development and the importance of using spirituality and religion to accomplish development goals, I can relate deeply with Seema and the other educators at the schools. These shared identities allow us to build trust and interrelationships out of which the research can then develop and be written. As I engage in learning from and with the educators and students of the schools in Gujarat, I want to redefine power through creating and engaging in relationships that are truly intercultural. In redefining power however, I must never ignore the existence of the power I have and exactly what is meant by the existence of my power as an ethnographer and writer.

3.6 Conclusion

Practicing critical ethnography in these ways allows for a wider scope of sharing the information and findings discovered through the research. It allows me to think creatively and critically about how I want to share the discoveries made, leading to increased opportunities to share the information with more diverse audiences who can then utilize these discoveries to create extensive positive change in a variety of fields. Gupta (1997) describes the development of such interventions as a necessary part of the ethnographic process both as an effort of decolonization and to imbue our work with deeper meaning and purpose (p. 38). I am profoundly aware of the need for my work to have a larger purpose of positively affecting the lives of those with whom I collaborate. These overarching development goals remained always at the forefront of my mind, and I engaged in this research not simply out of interest or curiosity but because of the need for positive development at the individual, community, and societal levels for all living beings.

In conducting critical ethnographic research in these ways, I hope to embody the idea articulated by Gandhi and shared by Goodall, “ends are means in the making” (Gandhi as cited in Goodall, 2000, p. 158). Only in participating in research in ways that align with the philosophy of satyagraha, as described in this chapter, can I hope to discover and articulate a philosophy of education that aligns with the philosophy of satyagraha. This is the practical way this project can align the means with the end goal, and by doing so I am empowered to truly collaborate more equitably with my colleagues and community partners, recognizing the unique worth of the stories, practices, and ways of living and learning that only they can communicate.

Chapter 4: Findings from A Case Study of Education as Satyagraha in Gujarat, India

4.1 Summary of Key Findings

In this chapter, I will present the findings of my fieldwork and the qualitative case study from the schools in Gujarat, India. As I described in chapter three, I utilized a critical ethnographic research methodology to develop a qualitative case study based on my relationship with the leadership of two local K-12 schools in Gujarat, India. Through my analysis of the data, I noticed a consistent interweaving of the four obligations of satyagraha which are based on the fundamental principle of universal kinship as described in chapter two: familial love, nonviolence (*ahimsa*), individual agency and self-rule (*swaraj*), and active justice. This interweaving indicates a strong interconnection between the ends and means of this philosophy of education as satyagraha.

There are several themes that emerged from the systematic analysis of the data that I will describe through providing direct quotes and experiences shared by the educators and students at the schools. I will also focus on the important role of Principal Seema and the qualities of her character and her educational leadership through her vision of education as satyagraha. I will include some of her direct quotes to give attention to the way Seema interpreted how the philosophy and practice of satyagraha is and must be imbued within the educational pedagogy and practice at the schools. Through this chapter, I will answer my research questions and present how these schools in India serve as a case study of using this philosophy of education as satyagraha to lead to cultural transformation toward peace and nonviolence.

4.2 Significant Themes of the Case Study

There are many significant findings of this case study that can be divided into four themes. The first theme of significant results is the explicit and embodied use of the philosophy

of satyagraha within the educators' personal philosophies of education and practices in their classrooms. The second theme is the way the educators utilized two-eyed seeing in their philosophies of education through blending useful aspects of the dominant global culture with their own Indian cultural norms and values. The third theme is the use of universal kinship and intercultural relationships as the means to empower individuals to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence. The fourth theme is educational leadership as the embodiment of satyagraha.

Though all four categories are distinct, I also noticed a consistent interweaving of the categories which makes it difficult to separate one category from another and indicated a strong interconnection between the ends and the means of this philosophy of education. This aspect of the findings will be explained further in the following sections.

4.2.1 Educators' Explicit and Embodied Use of Satyagraha in Classrooms (Theme 1)

First, the educators at the two local schools in Gujarat provided extensive explanations for why and how they draw on the philosophy of satyagraha within their own philosophies of education. In one of the group interviews, one of the younger male teachers in his early thirties who recently joined the faculty in the last two years, Sameer, explained that the philosophy of satyagraha is a natural part of their philosophies of education because of how the ideals of satyagraha are steeped in their daily life and culture. Sameer consistently spoke with reverence and sincerity each time he shared his personal convictions about this topic, and he often would include additional historical and cultural background insight behind his reasoning for shaping his own educational philosophy in this way. He shared that it is because his personal philosophy of education aligns with the atmosphere and goals of this school that he wanted to teach here.

As one of the few male teachers at these schools, Sameer was always cautious to speak up before allowing time for the other female teachers to share their thoughts. It seemed that this practice served as his way to allow extra space for the female teachers to share their perspectives before sharing his own, which I also took to be an embodiment of his explanation, “it is our moral values, our moral customs, our moral histories, our moral traditions and values, our daily habits, daily routines.” To provide emphasis he concluded, “it is just regular.” At this, the vast majority of the teachers nodded in strong agreement and several teachers of a diverse range of age groups joined Sameer in taking this opportunity to share about the values of satyagraha which are rooted in the ancient and recent history of India. As I explained in chapter two, the long-standing educational system in India reflected the values of satyagraha in philosophy and practice. In ancient times before British colonization, the local schools were called *gurukulas* and were modeled after *ashrams* to encourage the interrelationship between the sacred and the secular, the ideal and the practical, and the natural world and society (Kool & Agrawal, 2020; Tagore, 1922). This helps to explain why this teacher would express this idea and why so many teachers would agree wholeheartedly with his explanation.

Additionally, several teachers highlighted the importance of the values of satyagraha by citing the central cultural and spiritual texts including the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavad Gita, as their inspiration. However, this root of inspiration was not held by only a select few, but rather, when one teacher would cite some of the famous spiritual and cultural leaders and teachers of India including Rabindranath Tagore, Mohandas Gandhi, Savitribai Phule, and Swami Vivekananda, the entire room of educators would nod enthusiastically to emphasize the essential nature of the influence of these Indian teachers on their own philosophies of education as satyagraha.

The same consensus response was shared by the group, when one female teacher in her early fifties, Mary, spoke up and shared her perspective that in addition to these Indian leaders, Hindu scriptures, and Indian cultural practices, it is also her Christian faith that compels her, along with several other teachers of different generations, to utilize the philosophy of satyagraha in their educational practices. Mary has been a close friend of Seema's and teaching at the schools for nearly thirty years. She was always very well-spoken and seemed to have a practice of embodying direct yet compassionate communication each time she shared either in conversation with me personally, in the classroom, and in our group interviews.

Mary is one of the teachers who takes on additional leadership roles at the school including overseeing the team for prevention for sexual and physical abuse, and she often leads workshops on interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and mentorship for younger or newer teachers at the schools. One of her projects she is most passionate about is the "Red Revolution," which is an additional educational program created through partnerships with local doctors and NGOs that teaches students of both genders about the biological function of menstruation and provides instruction on hygiene while also explicitly confronting the stigma surrounding menstruation to reject negative norms experienced by those who menstruate. The project of Red Revolution also helps to create a safe space for students to approach teachers about these or any other topics dealing with sexual health.

These actions of service and leadership exhibited by Mary's work as a teacher help illuminate her perspective on how she interweaves the philosophy of satyagraha with that of her philosophy of education. She explained that the values and practices of satyagraha are clearly derived not only from Hinduism but also from the Christian Bible, and that she sees these ideals explained clearly through the commands of Jesus Christ to love our neighbor and to care for the

poor, the downtrodden, and the oppressed. In fact, when Mary shared in the group interview that the words of Jesus Christ are her primary inspiration for uniting the philosophy of satyagraha with that of her educational philosophy, again, just as when Sameer shared his perspective, the entire group nodded in agreement. Through this, it can be seen that the teachers draw on multiple religious and spiritual teachings along with their shared Indian culture and history to explicitly embody and utilize the philosophy of satyagraha within their educational philosophy.

4.2.1.1 The Use of Satyagraha as a Philosophy of Education for Holistic Development

With this information serving as the starting assumptions held by the educators, there also grew a consensus that defined the philosophy of satyagraha as a dynamic and practical philosophy that is fundamentally an educational philosophy that leads to holistic transformation of the individual and of society more broadly. All the educators agreed that the ultimate aim for integrating the philosophy of satyagraha into their philosophies of education is to encourage holistic character development for the individual learner with the long-term goal of positive transformation within the individual, their local communities, and within the greater society including within our ecological environment. The educators who provided their own written notes identified this as the primary reason for integrating the philosophy of satyagraha into their own philosophies of education.

For example, one of the science teachers, Priya, who is in her early forties and has been teaching at the school in Vapi for the past six years shared that the holistic development of her students in the third, fourth, and fifth standards (grades) is important to her. Priya, who often exhibited a calm and thoughtful presence whenever we spoke, wrote in her notes, “satyagraha is political action that relies on the use of nonviolence. In education systems, education becomes the tool which changes the mentality of people which can change society.” Another male teacher

in his thirties, Jevan, who teaches ninth and tenth standard computer science, comes from a family that lives below the poverty line. Jevan did not speak up during the group interviews, but instead wrote in his handwritten notes that he chose to share with me, “Study is done not just for a job, but to become a good human being. Respect everyone, big or small.” Jevan uses his teaching job as an opportunity to teach important skills that can help his students prepare to enter a career that can benefit their entire family while also teaching skills to be helpful, kind, and compassionate to their peers and colleagues in the present and in their futures.

Another female educator in her twenties, Sanvi, teaches the first standard, and exhibited often a bubbly and cheerful outward expression, often seeming full of energy and excitement, not just with her students, but with everyone she interacted, wrote, “By giving the concept of satyagraha, Gandhiji showed how to win over greed and fear by love, so we can use this concept in our teaching profession.” Another young, female teacher, Sheetal, who embodies a peaceful and happy demeanor and teaches third standard at the school in Vapi after graduating from this school herself shared, “satyagraha does not depend on physical or brute force as it is always based on moral force—that means the force of truth and justice, the force of self-purification, love and service, courage and discipline. The most powerful is nonviolence.” Sheetal and Sanvi use their classrooms as the training ground for real life, and they, along with the other teachers, are always prepared to take every opportunity to teach the holistic values and skills of satyagraha with their students through mediating conflict, creating opportunities for students to express their needs and desires, and guiding them through creating a practical strategy for achieving their goals.

Sheetal, with her hair often braided behind her in a similar style to some of her students, further explained to me alongside three other young female teachers who were her colleagues

and former classmates, that she and her three friends were all graduates from the school in Vapi, and that it is precisely because of the holistic development that they all experienced that galvanized them to become teachers at the school. As she shared this, the older female teachers all dressed in colorful saris perfectly wrapped, folded, and tied, came up to us and joined our conversation. Mary, Shreya, and Kopal, who had taught these younger teachers in school, joined us, smiling and laughing as they shared their joy at seeing these young women they remember teaching as children now serving as teachers and role models at the schools alongside them.

4.2.1.2 The Importance of Cultivating Deep Relationships

The importance of cultivating a depth of relationship between the teacher and the student is part of this aspect of universal kinship for the educators at the schools. For example, to explain this point, one educator in her early twenties, Roshni, who is one of the teachers who graduated from the school in Vapi herself, wrote in detail about the importance of building trust through developing strong and equal relationships with her students. Roshni who almost always wears jeans with a mid-length kurta in muted tones, her hair tied in a bun, wrote, “A relation of a student and teacher should be like a child and parents. If any students argue with the teacher during running class, the teacher should remain cool. After class they can ask the student the problem, and if it is valid, they should solve it together.” After I was finished with group interviews, Roshni, who often was eager to speak up and share her perspectives and strongly developed ideas in answer to my questions, approached me and shared with me further that the reason she enjoys teaching at this school is because of the opportunity she has here to teach in this way.

Another older female teacher in her fifties, Priti, who carried herself with a soft seriousness, spoke to me frequently about the motherly love she has for her students, wrote, “I

wanted to become a teacher to make a real difference in young people's lives. To give back to your community, to contribute to your community in a meaningful way. Teaching is one of the most direct ways to make an impact on young minds, to give back what you have received." Priti views her role as a teacher to be robust and influential in every aspect of the child's life specifically through the complex nature of this familial relationship.

Along with this, several teachers shared the importance of cultivating these kinds of deep, familial relationships with their students and explained the essential component of this relationship as being a "role model" for their students and for their community. Another female teacher, Jesal, who recently joined the faculty because of her awareness of Seema's reputation throughout the town of Vapi and the way she is known for implementing her educational vision at these schools, teaches tenth standard and explained, "A teacher plays an integral role in a student's life, providing support, developing knowledge and skills, and cultivating curiosity and creativity. They not only provide bookish knowledge but also inspire their students to live a meaningful and successful life."

Principal Seema further explained this when we were sitting together drinking chai in her office, "what we believe is you don't have to speak always. If I want to tell certain things, I don't have to speak, but my life should be as an example to show that this has to be done like this. When you do certain things, you have to practically be that person and then guide the people, not instruct them all the time." Principal Seema told me that this value and practice of universal kinship extends beyond the relationship between the teachers and students into the way the office staff members are treated. She explained that the office staff are important and valued members of the educational team even though they are not educators. In India, because of the high value placed on education, both historically and presently, it is typical for teachers to be revered and

respected while staff members may be treated with less respect and seen as a less important or skilled member in an educational context. However, Principal Seema has cultivated a different culture of familial love at these schools. She explained, for example,

When they (office staff members) are working or they have to travel to the government office, we have to tell them to eat properly, we have to tell them to use the school budget to eat a healthy lunch, to take a safe cab, to take care of themselves. They are so dedicated to the children and their work that they do not care for themselves. They do not feel they should be respected, but actually they are so dedicated that they have become an example to us.

After this, Principal Seema then added that this is unique to the culture they have cultivated at these schools saying, “other schools, they will not do this, they will not take care. But for us, we do not show that hierarchy, like these people are working under us. No, they are like equals, they eat with us.” The importance of cultivating deep familial relationships between each individual at these schools is a necessary component to the way these educators explicitly embody the philosophy of satyagraha in their philosophies of education at these schools.

4.2.1.3 The Interweaving of the Obligations of Universal Kinship in Educational Practice

Throughout our conversations and interviews, I became somewhat challenged by the intense interweaving of the concomitant obligations of universal kinship within the educators’ philosophies of education. The serious and consistent integration of familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice made it exceedingly difficult for me to distinguish between each of the obligations in the educators’ philosophies of education. This can be seen very clearly in the words written by Mary, one of the educators who has had decades of service alongside Principal Seema at the schools, who explained in detail,

Holistic development is the social, emotional, physical, mental, and intellectual growth of a person. It means focusing on all aspects of a child’s growth, not just their academic advancements. It is also about establishing the child’s overall wellbeing. For example, at our school we take care of the overall development of the child. We have art and craft exhibitions, handmade articles of day-to-day use, making the best out of waste articles.

We also celebrate canteen day, so that students can learn a variety of cooking skills and cook for themselves. We have a team [of teachers] who make students feel comfortable and free to speak about whatever issues they face at home or at school. Students approach any of the team members and then speak out about their issue. The team then reaches out to the concerned person and sees to it that it is resolved. We have talks and seminars by experts coming to our school and speaking about so many issues such as puberty, menstruation, peer fighting, and conflict resolution.

The interweaving of the concomitant obligations of universal kinship to accomplish the multiple SDGs can be seen in this explanation, but the underlying reason for the ability to do so is through the culture of peace and nonviolence that is created at these schools. This is further illustrated by another one of the female teachers who has been working with Seema for over ten years, Shreya, who wrote in her notes,

Gandhiji practiced satyagraha as an art and used it as a means of conflict resolution and protest against the holistic action of authorities. Satyagraha has different phases of action by people: self preparation, learning from other people, mass organization. Satyagraha was an education process that created awareness of injustice and exploitation, but also restored their dignity and self-respect. Satyagraha is a practical discipline in education. It shows that by following this, we can provide [the] conducive environment to coming generations to grow as a peace-oriented citizen of the world.

In these words, the presence of all the obligations can be recognized. Shreya, who was close friends with Mary and exhibited bold characteristics and an outspoken communication style full of command in the way she would engage with her colleagues and her students, highlighted the importance of ahimsa in the art of using satyagraha as a means of conflict resolution and pointed to the essential nature of actively pursuing justice in her mention of the usefulness of mass organization and the way satyagraha created awareness of injustice and exploitation. Shreya also included swaraj in her addition of the way that satyagraha as an educational process can restore the dignity and self-respect of individuals which empowers them to grow into peace-oriented citizens. Finally, Shreya emphasized the importance of being a peace-oriented citizen of the world, not only of their local community or nation.

Another younger female teacher in her late twenties who has been teaching environmental science, Dhruvi, expressed a sense of determination in wanting to explain this complexity very clearly in our conversation, and she shared in her handwritten notes,

The concept of satyagraha is built on basic tenets: satya and ahimsa. Truth implies openness, honesty, and firmness. Ahimsa means refusal to inflict injury on others. The basis of educational development of teachers is to develop high morals and strong character in their students. Education is not a static, but a dynamic process which develops the child according to changing situations and times. It reconstructs the society according to the changing needs of the time and place of the society. Satyagraha teaches the basic education or Nai Talim was an essential component to the structural and socio-economic imbalances that were badly affected. The aim of basic education was to educate the students on crafts which would enable them to solve the problems of their livelihood and become a good citizen.

In this, Dhruvi explained that the role of education should be practical and serve to help the individual to learn skills necessary to survive physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually while also empowering them to help others to do the same. In her notes, Dhruvi included a list of what must be present in such a philosophy of education:

- Free and compulsory education is to be provided
- Craft-centered education
- Development of creativity and critical thinking
- Emphasis on collaborative thinking
- Importance of moral education
- Emphasis of character building
- Development of faith in truth and nonviolence
- Awareness of social services

Within this same stream of ideas, Sameer, who explained earlier the daily habit of using the philosophy of satyagraha within his philosophy of education, wrote, “Vivekananda said we want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one’s own feet. Education must build up character and manifest our real nature.” For the educators at these local schools in Gujarat, holistic development of the

learner includes every aspect of being human including not only the mind, but the body and the soul as well.

The importance of the spiritual aspects of this education as satyagraha can be seen in the philosophy of education practiced by Kopal, one of the educators who, alongside Mary and Shreya, also takes on several additional leadership roles within the school because of her long-standing experience as an educator at the school. Kopal described her philosophy of education saying,

Education is not being limited to being only a literate person. Its essence lies in enlightening the mind of the individual. Education is leaving the ego behind and accepting oneself and others just as they are. Spirituality is an essential aspect of human life that can influence an individual's overall sense of well-being which is increasingly recognized as a vital component of a holistic approach to education. By providing a sense of purpose and meaning, promoting resilience and coping skills, fostering a sense of community and encouraging ethical decision-making, spiritual practices can help students navigate the challenges of their program and emerge as well-rounded and balanced leaders.

These ideals were shared consistently by the educators at the schools. They shared an abundance of examples of their use of the philosophy of satyagraha as part of their philosophies of education and in doing so adamantly highlighted the holistic nature of the philosophy.

The educators also wanted to communicate clearly that the fundamental principle of universal kinship is of utmost importance for understanding the value of interweaving the philosophy of satyagraha with their philosophies of education. Though they used different terms and concepts to explain the importance of universal kinship, when asked they quickly nodded along with understanding and agreement. It became clear that the value of the fundamental principle of universal kinship served as an empowering force to provide the educators the means to interweave all of the inherent obligations within their educational praxis.

4.2.2 Pragmatic Blending of Dominant Culture with Indian Cultural Values and Norms as a Strategy for Two-Eyed Seeing (Theme 2)

These findings presented by the teachers highlights the way the educators utilized two-eyed seeing in their philosophies of education. As I explained in chapter two, the philosophy of satyagraha simultaneously recognizes the practical importance of modernism while drawing on indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in ingeniously innovative ways (Nagler, 2013, p. x). The use of the English language as the medium of instruction at the schools is one of the primary aspects that illustrates the way educators in Gujarat are participating in two-eyed seeing in their philosophy of education as satyagraha. Though English is the language of the British colonizer that was originally introduced by force to the chosen educated class of people in India to oppress and exploit them, the need for fluency in the English language remains a reality for many individuals seeking to lift themselves and their families out of intergenerational poverty, and therefore speaking English has become a necessary skill.

Similarly, the development of skills in the fields of business and technology remains of utmost importance for many seeking to earn a higher paying job to meet the financial needs of their intergenerational families. Because the necessary skills to apply for jobs in these international economic sectors often rely on modern cultural practices and norms, students at these schools are learning how to balance their ability to participate in such a modern globalized society that operates within dominant global culture along with their ability to continue valuing and participating in their Indian cultural norms, sometimes even while living and working abroad.

The nuances of this concept can be understood more clearly through the experiences shared by a recent graduate of the school in Gujarat. Principal Seema introduced me to this

recent graduate, Jhumpa, via a Whatsapp video call during one of my visits to the schools, as Jhumpa is currently living and working in England and could not come to the schools in person for an interview. Jhumpa grew up in Vapi and her mother worked at the school in Vapi as part of the cleaning staff. Jhumpa attended a different school through eighth standard that did not teach in the medium of English, but she was driven and worked hard to learn to read English on her own. She shared with her mother that she wanted to learn English so that she could get a higher paying job and help lift her family out of intergenerational poverty, so her mother gathered her bravery to request that Principal Seema meet with her daughter to see if her daughter could be admitted. When Seema met with Jhumpa, she knew that Jhumpa would find the medium of English as the form of all her classroom instruction to be challenging, but Seema saw that she was determined to work hard. Seema was also willing to work hard to help Jhumpa overcome this challenge, and within the first year that she was admitted, she began to excel. During the call, Jhumpa explained:

Currently, I'm working as a physiotherapist in NHS England. I studied my primary education from this school, and it has a great impact in my overall life. Initially I studied in our native language which is Gujarati, but I wanted to pursue the highest study and English is the international language, right? So, we need a good command in English. So, yeah, so I finished my bachelor's from India. Then I came here to pursue my MSc in advanced physio. And then I got the job. And currently I'm working as a physio because of my command in English.

Jhumpa continued to explain how her job empowers her to send a larger amount of her earnings home to support her family financially which in turn helps support them in other ways. She exclaimed how proud she is of herself for achieving such a high earning position in which she can help others while also helping her family. She then explained this further by describing the influence of the other lessons she learned from her teachers. She explained how they help her remain “rooted” to her culture. She said,

I think culture, culture is very important. And I learned a lot because I studied an in-depth look at developing countries, right? And I can say that culture is inseparable, you know, because whenever you go, you follow your culture. And it is very important to know your roots, you know, then only you can know about yourself. And at that stage, you will raise your hand. Right?

Jhumpa used the phrase, “at that stage, you will raise your hand” to explain what she meant by helping others, because as she explained further, she said,

After coming in this country, the thing which I have learned is about exploring yourself. Understanding your values, your strength, you know, as a part of self-reflection. So, I think we need as a subject “self-reflection” to teach students, to prepare them for the external world, you know? Because when you step out from school, it is very important. We have self-reflection to reflect ourselves. And then only we can help ourselves and society in the best way what we can do. It's like a chain of kindness, you know, like Seema ma'am and the school. They gave me opportunity to have a good hire, like good, quality education, right? It's a chain of kindness. Like if someone is helping you, you have to help others. Yeah? Because if you are showing kindness and helping others, just make sure or just tell them to help two more people, and they can help two more people. You know, it's like, it's like trees. Yeah, and that's why they are very, you know, they like my work and are impressed because I'm connected to my roots. I know from where I'm coming, you know, and I think every day, for at least two minutes you should remember your roots. They make you, you know, attached.

These words from Jhumpa provide context for how these educators are practicing two-eyed seeing in their philosophies of education while also empowering students with the skills to participate in two-eyed seeing in their daily lives.

4.2.3 Satyagraha as Empowerment (Theme 3)

4.2.3.1 Emphasis on Universal Kinship to Empower Students and Teachers to Begin

Accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals

The ideal of universal kinship extends to all living beings, and the teachers here at the schools emphasize the all-encompassing nature of universal kinship through their lessons and projects for their students. This emphasis on the fundamental principle of universal kinship as a cultural value and practice empowers the students and teachers to collaboratively begin accomplishing several SDGs. Of course, the full and complete accomplishment of the SDGs has

not yet been attained, which is not surprising considering the all-encompassing language used within the SDGs. However, the SDGs that I observed being highlighted by the teachers and students at these schools are beginning to be accomplished through the way the teachers and students are empowered to value a reality that emphasizes universal kinship as the fundamental principle of their own existence which thereby empowers them to develop values and skills to operate within that reality in a more sustainable way that aligns with the SDGs. Therefore, though they are not accomplishing the SDGs in full, they are being empowered to begin accomplishing the goals in their own interpersonal and intrapersonal lives and local communities. This is a form of swaraj in which each individual student is encouraged and taught how to develop the necessary knowledge, values, and skills to begin accomplishing their own goals, which align with many of the SDGs, in their own daily lives.

This can be seen in the way several of the teachers highlighted in their notes the importance of utilizing the philosophy of satyagraha within their philosophies of education in order to accomplish the 5 P's of the UN's SDGs: People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership, and Peace. One female teacher in her forties, Iditri, teaches sixth standard, and though she comes from a family living below the poverty line and she was a little more shy during our interactions, she deliberately wrote in her notes and then made it a point to hand them to me as her answer to my questions,

The Sustainable Development Goals are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace and justice. Education is the key that will allow many other Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved. When people are able to get quality education they can break from the cycle of poverty. Education helps to reduce inequalities and to reach gender equality.

Iditri highlighted the way the education at these schools, which relies on the fundamental principle of universal kinship, empowers the students and teachers to equally value and

practically work toward increasingly accomplishing several of the SDGs simultaneously including, but clearly not limited to, SDG number 1: No Poverty, SDG number 4: Quality Education, SDG number 10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG number 17: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions.

I observed several of the ways that this philosophy of satyagraha is practically implemented into the educational philosophy and praxis to increasingly accomplish the UN SDGs to varying levels and degrees. For example, one of the SDGs, SDG number 15: Life on Land, is the focus of this educational practice when the teachers partner with local NGOs to educate students on the dwindling songbird populations in their communities due primarily to habitat loss and human overpopulation. However, the teachers do not stop in simply educating students about this crisis, but they continue to educate them about exactly how the local flora and fauna all provide an essential function in our ecological balance and environmental health.

To do this, the teachers will partner with the NGOs to take students on field trips to local nature preserves and nearby outdoor areas dedicated to conservation efforts for the various life forms that live in this area. Students are encouraged to be observant and to become more aware of the fact that human beings are not the most important living being within the environment, but rather to recognize that the human being must become responsible for caring for and protecting the life forms that live in their communities and to protect natural environment which is shared by all. Then, going further, the teachers provide students with the opportunity to take supportive action by teaching them how to build nests and to provide natural materials for the birds to use as they adapt to these new habitats within the students' own urban and community settings. In this way, students are able to learn about the problem and a more sustainable way forward while also learning to actively participate in helping to alleviate the ecological problem.

Similar educational goals focus on SDG number 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, when the teachers create similar projects which involve students gathering trash and waste to create something beautiful and oftentimes useful out of the waste. I was impressed by the artistic and creative innovations students of all ages displayed in their art and science projects that relied solely on trash that they had gathered during a community clean up event organized by Principal Seema and the teachers. Other teachers also shared about the way they teach their students to help care for the needs and well-being of the stray dogs and cats around the community by wrapping glass bottles in paper or cloth before disposing of it. Several of the older students I spoke with explained that this reminder from their teachers has encouraged them to also think about the animals' other needs and to take action to care for those needs by feeding them in alleyways or nearby fields on their way to and from school. In this, both SDG number 12: Responsible Consumption and SDG number 15: Life on Land are cooperatively accomplished because of the emphasis on universal kinship.

The way the reality of universal kinship extends beyond human beings is essential and is further illustrated in the collaborative partnerships that Principal Seema has cultivated with local NGOs and international nonprofit organizations such as World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Smile Foundation. These partnerships highlight the practical ways in which the teachers and students at the schools are actively engaging in the fundamental principle of universal kinship while also accomplishing various SDGs. For example, the Smile Foundation is described on their website as:

an Indian development organization [that] works as a catalyst in the cycle of change, complementing and supplementing government efforts...to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. We sensitize and partner with like-minded institutions and individuals to implement high-impact programmes that enable access, enhance quality and help bring long term behavioural change at the grassroots.

Through partnerships with this organization and others, the educators at these schools tackle real life challenges for their students and provide the necessary knowledge and skill development for them to accomplish real positive change in their own lives and the lives of their family and community members.

This is another one of the ways that this philosophy of satyagraha is implemented in practical ways, woven into the educational philosophy to empower individuals to being accomplishing various UN SDGs. For example, this emphasis on the holistic development of the child is indicative of the focus on the SDG number 4: Quality Education as they seek to develop the mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical aspects of the child's life. In fact, many of the teachers shared about the way these partnerships have helped them address many of the physical and mental aspects of the development of the learner. The teachers highlighted the importance of their participation in the "Red Revolution" which, as I explained earlier, deals with confronting the stigma surrounding menstruation and resisting negative norms experienced by those who menstruate through promoting healthy discussion for all genders about these topics, teaching hygiene practices, and providing a safe place for students to approach teachers about these or any other topics dealing with sexual health.

Mary was especially vocal about the importance of their participation in such initiatives at the schools and she highlighted the ways that these workshops help to accomplish the SDG number 5: Gender Equality due to the myriad ways this topic impacts the way girls view themselves and develop their self-confidence, the way the boys view girls and interact with them, and the way all the students are explicitly taught to speak up against taboos and false information about human biology and physiology, and the way the students are explicitly taught to speak up for the strength and resilience of girls and women in their lives.

Another example the teachers and the students highlighted is the importance of having “canteen days” which is an educational workshop in which students learn how to prepare and cook healthy food that is nutritional and sustainable from their own local markets. Students are taught about the different nutritional values of different foods as well as their own nutritional needs on a daily basis. Students are then given the opportunity to learn how to choose and prepare healthy food options for themselves and for their families. They then get to practice making these dishes under the supervision and guidance of their teachers, so that they can develop confidence in their skills to feed themselves and others. This provides an example for how this educational philosophy helps to begin accomplishing several of the SDGs including SDG number 2: Zero Hunger which highlights improved nutrition as one of the targets and SDG number 3: Good Health and Well-being which focuses on ensuring healthy living and increasing well-being at all ages.

Yet another example of how this philosophy of education is practically implemented to help individuals begin accomplishing the SDGs to varying degrees is how the school ensures that all students have constant access to clean water and private and maintained toilet areas. In addition, the students are taught how to practice daily hygiene for the health of themselves and their fellow students and teachers. These lessons include basic handwashing practices to clean away germs and bacteria, cleaning practices for surfaces to prevent spread of sickness, and important techniques for cleaning and disinfecting or disposing of dirty cleaning supplies. They are then encouraged to share this learning with their families and community members to increase the awareness of such practices throughout the local communities. This example highlights the increasing accomplishing of SDG number 6: Clean Water and Sanitation which focuses on ensuring the availability and accessibility to clean drinking water and sanitation.

Other challenges these partnerships aid in addressing include conflict resolution, interfaith dialogue, female empowerment, financial wellness, and overall good health and mental well-being, among others. For example, the schools recognize, honor, and celebrate all of the national holidays in India, many of which originate in different religions, as well as additional holidays observed by multiple religions. In educating children on all of these issues of their individual and collective health, it can be seen that several SDGs are increasingly accomplished through this interwoven educational philosophy with the philosophy of satyagraha including SDG number 1: No Poverty, SDG number 2: Zero Hunger, SDG number 3: Good Health and Well-Being, SDG number 4: Quality Education, SDG number 5: Gender Equality, SDG number 6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG number 10: Reduced Inequalities, SDG number 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG number 15: Life on Land, and SDG number 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

4.2.3.2 Cultivating a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence through Interpersonal Relationships

The accomplishment of the SDGs is not the only goal of this education at the schools, but rather because of the reliance on universal kinship, the teachers and students at these schools are empowered to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence which ultimately empowers them to create the environment in which the SDGs can be practically accomplished. It is through the way the educators and the students embody the tenets of satyagraha in their daily learning activities which empowers them to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence in their interpersonal relationships. The educators at these schools shared that it is the way that their philosophy of education as satyagraha relies on interweaving the concomitant obligations of universal kinship:

familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice, that these can be practically used by individuals to accomplish multiple SDGs simultaneously.

Therefore, it is the familial interrelationship between teacher and learner that shapes the moral and social structures of the community and then guides the culture into participating in universal kinship which relies on peace and nonviolence. One of the male teachers in his thirties, Arjun, who teaches physical education, summed up this ideal saying,

We have good one-on-one relationships with our colleagues. It's reciprocal. Through good communication we can find the uniqueness of each student, good code of conduct (practice) with the whole organization not only with colleagues, not just with particular students, but with the whole organization—collaboration, love, trust, faith, positive communication.

The teachers at these schools work hard to foster collaborative and familial relationships that are rooted in the concept of universal kinship as they integrate this ideal into their philosophies of education.

Embodiment of the tenets of satyagraha is expressed and practiced daily through the way relationships are expressed among the students and the teachers. For example, many of the teachers shared with me that they strive educate their students through their own lived example. They interact with one another according to the tenets of satyagraha including familial love, nonviolence (*ahimsa*), individual agency & self-rule (*swaraj*), and active justice, and by doing so they exemplify how to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence in everyday life simply by the way they engage on an interpersonal level with their colleagues. These tenets of satyagraha encourage the teachers to engage with mutual respect, emphasizing collaboration over competition, and finding sincere understanding even in conflict.

In this way, I observed the teachers exemplifying what they expect daily of their students. The teachers explicitly communicate to their students that they should engage with one another

and with their other teachers under these same tenets of satyagraha. Whenever there is conflict among the students, the teachers do not immediately move to punishment from their position of power, but instead they facilitate discussion by asking questions of each student involved in the conflict. The teachers serve as guides for the students, helping them to understand their own emotions and to investigate why they are in conflict with their peer. In this practice, the students are empowered with the skills to discover how they can discern the root of their emotions and how they can communicate their needs and desires with their peers in a constructive and peaceful way. I observed how this then provides the students with the opportunity to repair their relationships on their own through mutual understanding and more willing collaboration which increases their skills of familial love, *ahimsa*, *swaraj*, and active justice.

This depth of engagement from the teachers allows the conflict between students to become a learning opportunity, so that the students themselves can learn how to actively practice the skill of conflict resolution peacefully in a safe setting. Instead of allowing the students who are in conflict to simply be removed from one another's presence to ensure that the teachers do not have to deal with their conflict, the teachers take time to encourage the students to reflect on their emotions, understand why they are feeling a certain way, and then to collaboratively communicate to one another. The teachers then create space and provide guidance for the students to communicate clearly and to teach them both how to actively listen and cultivate empathy while also being clear and direct about their own needs and desires. The teachers then continue to follow up with the students over the days and weeks ahead, guiding them to hone the skills of collaboration and nonviolent relationships, so that the students can practice utilizing the skills in settings outside of school with their families and community members.

One of the teachers, Kopal, summed it up in her notes, “Satyagraha is a practical discipline in education. It shows that by following this, we can provide [the] conducive environment to coming generations to grow as a peace-oriented citizen of the world.” These skills that are being honed at these schools empower students to be active cultivators of a culture of peace and nonviolence in their families, communities, and greater society.

4.2.4 Educational Leadership as Embodiment of Satyagraha (Theme 4)

4.2.4.1 The Vision and Leadership of Principal Seema

The education vision and leadership of Principal Seema provide the framework of education as satyagraha at the schools. Seema’s educational model infused with the tenets of satyagraha is woven throughout the school day for the goal of providing holistic education for students to ensure their development at home, in the community, and in society. Seema describes her educational methodology saying,

My vision is that you have to make the child understand values for the family and society to become good citizens. Education can be also negative; it can also spoil things. As you know educated people do a lot of destruction in society...that is why along with the education, along with the books, you have to work in the heart, in the mind, with the hands, and for the soul. It is a combination. If you are educating a person, you have to take all kinds of approach[es]. Bookish knowledge can make them a very educated person, but that does not necessarily mean they are good people. How they behave is more important. How you understand the value of a person is more important. If any person comes into my presence, how do I behave with that person? How do I value that person? This is the child’s example. So education should not be bookish only, but should work in the mind, heart, and hands. You have to make that person skillful for their future life, and you have to also give them core values in the heart and in the mind (Seema Justin, personal communication, February 19, 2023).

The holistic nature of this education for the individual is important to Seema’s vision because of the opportunity it provides to accomplish her goals of community development through impacting the ways her students will engage in their families and society as they grow and become adult members of the community.

When I asked Seema specifically about the influence of Gandhi and his teaching on satyagraha in the schools, she wrote to me on WhatsApp:

Gandhiji's simple life n non violence approach plays important role in India. His point was everything can be achieved by peace n love not by violence. So to keep his words known to the nation he spoke to with Marching quietly n quit salt. Salt is the cheapest thing in India and essential to all, so if tax was put it would also mean for poor people same tax. So brought awareness that we can together win the battle against Britishers. He was a learned man but only education didn't make him popular but his simple living and high thinking made him the Father of Nation. Gandhi distinguished education from literacy. Gandhi said, "By education, I mean all-around drawing out of the best in child and man-body mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education, not even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby men and women can be educated." In other words, Satyagraha means clinging to truth, holding fast to truth.. Gandhiji described Satyagraha as "firmness in a good cause" in Indian opinion. All these values are taught in school it is so important for children to follow n cling to these values (Seema Justin, personal communication, February 1, 2024)

The use of the philosophy of satyagraha as both a pedagogy and a practice is of utmost importance to Seema.

This is most evidently seen in daily seemingly mundane situations in which Seema embodies the role of a collaborative leader like Gandhi: at the schools, in her marriage, with her friends, and even with me and our research. I observed her consistently embodying a form of leadership that was focused on service to those around her. She did not seem domineering in her leadership with students, her leadership staff, or the other teachers, but instead used assertiveness and an attention to the shared vision and mission to collaboratively guide those with whom she was engaged. Still, she made a point to consistently and implicitly assert that she will not willingly subjugate herself but will speak up for herself and those around her when need be.

I observed that her highly honed skill in this aspect of leadership is highlighted as she does so in a way that is full of grace and kindness, almost as if her audacity to live into her own power as a woman is an open invitation for all to step onto the same path. Surprisingly to me, she makes it seem effortless, like living in your full self is the best way to survive in a patriarchal

world, though I have still witnessed the effort she exerts in the face of daily struggles and challenges imposed by patriarchal systems. She is aware that her embodiment of her own power never takes away that of another but instead serves as a motivating force to galvanize others to step into their own power as well.

When I would observe her from a distance, I noticed that Seema often walks with an air of confidence, stepping purposefully into her work to serve and bolster her community. She seems to have a clear eye set on her goals and refuses to be easily deterred from accomplishing them. An interesting manifestation of this is exemplified in how I see Seema present herself outwardly. I never know if I can expect to see Seema in the more traditional Indian cultural garb of a beautifully stylish sari or in the seemingly more laid back and casual “Western look” as she calls it, blue jeans, t-shirt, and sneakers. Her dark hair is cut shoulder-length, which communicates her desire to be recognized as a “modern woman,” unbounded to what some would label as historically patriarchal norms and expectations. Regardless of what she wears though, she maintains her characteristics of being a leader who uses her position to serve others and to develop the individuals in her community.

In all of this, her dedication to the philosophy of satyagraha in her life and work is made manifest. In our conversations, she often shares with me about the way our lives are all connected with one another, and how we can only be successful and achieve our goals when we help those alongside us to do the same. She relies heavily on the fundamental principle of universal kinship and engages in each of the concomitant obligations, and she does so in all her relationships that I observed, both personal and professional.

4.2.4.2 Seema's Intercultural Inspiration

When I asked Seema who besides Gandhi, Tagore, and Phule, inspires her as an educator, she listed Dr. Abdul Kalam, a Muslim astrophysicist who became the first president of independent India, and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first deputy prime minister in independent India who is famous for the political unification of the Indian states. A statue of Patel's likeness was constructed in 2018 in Gujarat to be the world's tallest statue, surpassing the height of the American Statue of Liberty, and is called the Statue of Unity. It is interesting and indicative of Seema's perspective on her own leadership role that both of these men she admires were not strictly educators but were prominent leaders within the Indian National Congress and the Indian Freedom Struggle as well as intentional collaborators with Gandhi in the work of Satyagraha.

When I told her I saw similar character traits in her that are attributed to those educators like Gandhiji, Sarojini Naidu, Savitribai Phule, and Rabindranath Tagore, she smiled shyly, and though she slightly nodded in a cautious agreement, she also explained to me that these people are the greatest of all, and they are so great that she could not possibly be compared. Because of her stalwart humility, she seemed graciously unwilling to be placed in such proximity with those that accomplished such great work, for India and for the world. But still, when I read of Gandhi and the Salt Satyagraha, or when I read Tagore's myriad essays and lectures on education and the Spirit of India imbued within his texts on educational pedagogy, I recognized a strong resemblance to Seema's leadership and the holistic work she was accomplishing at the schools.

Additionally, Seema practices a unique intercultural interweaving within her own personal life, and it is reflected in her professional work. She shared that in addition to Indian cultural practices she also practices the Christian faith and is strongly rooted in the beliefs and practices of the Wesleyan denomination which is originally a denomination that focuses

primarily on the greatest commandment as preached by Jesus Christ. Christ spoke that the greatest commandment is to love God and to love your neighbor. Seema often refers to this greatest commandment as her life's purpose which guides her work and educational vision she puts into practice at the schools. However, Seema does not allow her connection to her Christian faith to cause distance between her colleagues or students of other faith backgrounds nor to insert a barrier to her cultural beliefs and values that are rooted in her Indian heritage. Seema clearly and explicitly draws on her Indian cultural values of nonviolence, love, compassion, and justice, values which she sees as exemplified by Jesus and Gandhi among others. She does not communicate that her Indian cultural values are in any way conflicting or competing with her Christian values, but rather that these values with different roots are able to be grown together into one life. Her life is a testimony to this reality, and her educational philosophy and practice highlights exactly how this can be embodied practically.

In my observations, one of the ways I noticed this resemblance was in Seema's persistent dedication to community development through education, and her relentless push for addressing every single need of the child in her school. She communicated with me multiple times that she sees her holistic model of education as the primary means by which the multiple aspects of the individual's development of the mind, body, and soul can be accomplished, and she identified that this holistic accomplishment is what will immediately affect the surrounding community in a multitude of positive ways.

Another way I observed this resemblance is the way Seema gladly intermingles her own personal faith convictions with those of her students. For example, rather than inspiring fear of difference between students of diverse ethnic, cultural, or caste backgrounds, she fosters

understanding and friendship between them, and she encourages them to learn and play together during the school day, never allowing them to reject anyone on these grounds.

Additionally, I observed Seema's dedication to humility being woven together with a pride in her work, especially when she shared about the students who were kicked out of other schools for not earning high enough test scores. She often beamed with pride when she described the academic success of these students in particular who put in all their effort to collaborate with their teachers to achieve even higher scores than their peers from their original school. She explained that though they were rejected and subsequently disempowered and devalued to the point of feeling innately incapable of learning; by experiencing encouragement and love at these schools, these students were empowered to recognize their innate potential to succeed academically as well as in other aspects of life.

Seema repeatedly referenced the importance of developing the child holistically, developing "the head, heart, and hands" so that they not only learn to understand our shared reality of existence, but they also learn to truly love all beings within it. It is this establishing of relationship that I observed Seema embody in her conversations, leading of meetings, and even passing moments of connection with students between classes. She explained that her work relies on this cultivating of interwoven relationships, between the students and all parts of themselves, the students and their families and local communities, extending into the global international community, and between the students and their surrounding environment, because it is through the practice of engaging in relationships in this way that transformation of the individual occurs.

4.2.4.3 The Importance of Ontological Entanglement for Seema's Educational Vision

Being deeply connected with her community in Gujarat, Seema is uniquely attuned to the specific needs of her students, including those of their physical bodies. One of the best examples

of this is the way Seema purposely incorporates preventative healthcare into the curriculum and is not afraid to introduce sexual health into the lesson plans despite the cultural taboos sometimes surrounding the subject. Students of all genders are taught about their normal bodily functions and how to care for their bodies as a form of preventative healthcare, including sexual health, and to increase gender equity, one of the seventeen SDGs.

Seema explained that it is not only important but necessary for students to learn about their bodies biologically and to discover the value of their gendered identities to care for their bodies and to protect themselves from all forms of sexual violence. Seema detailed this interconnection between health, safety, and gender equity, saying,

We teach the girls about their menstrual cycle. We give them extra medicine to make sure they are healthy because their hemoglobin level is very low depending on their diet at home...to give them immunity power. They come to school and we teach them what is hygienic...we teach them what is good touch [and] what is bad touch. There is a committee we have formed in school that takes care of all these things. If any of these issues come up they can approach the teacher, even if something happens at home. About six, seven, years ago, one small girl child, she was in second standard, very sweet, very nice girl, but she was getting molested by one very old person...he used to do things to her that she was not understanding. So the teacher reported it...and the truth came out, so they shifted the house. So these issues are told to the teachers and the teachers report them. So these kind of issues we are addressing” (Seema Justin, personal communication).

As she walked me through this, her facial expressions communicated nuanced emotions, seeming particularly devastated by the reality of sexual violence perpetrated against her students. She seemed to be still disturbed as she relayed her account of this young girl, reeling as if she was remembering events that happened to her own child. Still there was a glimmer of hope in her eyes, and her face brightened as she spoke of the reality that she in collaboration with the committee was acting to create substantial and positive change in these situations.

Her demeanor became even more optimistic as she shared with me about the way the educators of the schools partner with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to promote

gender equity through sexual health and reproductive education for all genders, not just girls, to make cultural shifts in understanding gender roles and shared responsibility in larger societal contexts. The teachers, in collaboration with NGOs, teach students the value of mutual respect and proper behavior between inter-gender relationships. They teach students what is appropriate in intimate relationships and how to protect themselves from dangerous situations in public and in private settings with the explicit goal of long-term, positive social change.

4.2.4.4 Practical Implications of Seema's Education as Satyagraha

Seema adds to this part of the curriculum the importance of developing cognitive skills in tandem with social emotional intelligence, preparing students to be active participants in their communities and society. Students are taught to engage relationally with their peers to develop skills for collaboration, understanding, empathy, and collective imagination which highlight clearly the four obligations of satyagraha as defined in chapter two: familial love, nonviolence (*ahimsa*), individual agency & self-rule (*swaraj*), and active justice. As discussed in chapter two, satyagraha recognizes that human beings are interconnected with one another, and the decisions and actions committed by one have rippling impacts on others within the community.

Therefore, at these schools, students are taught that they must develop their own sense of self-awareness and cultivate independent thought while also considering how their perceptions and values can lead into actions that can have both harmful and beneficial ramifications on their families, communities, and society. This is not meant to cause anxiety over every decision or action, but to empower the individual to act with recognition that their life has an impact on others, and they must therefore act in ways that will positively influence themselves and those around them.

Students are given the agency to practice building healthy relationships and communicate effectively for constructive conflict resolution to develop skills necessary to participate in these ways outside of school for a lifetime. Because the students and teachers come from various faith backgrounds, castes, and socio-economic levels, intercultural and interfaith relationships are made manifest throughout daily class periods and extra-curriculars. Students are prepared to enter a globalized society and engage internationally without the usual degrees of prejudice and discrimination. Principal Seema provides a place and pedagogy that encourages students to engage in learning for their holistic development, empowering them to thrive and promote the thriving of others for a lifetime.

4.3 Conclusion

At these schools, there is a synthesis of exposing young children to these justice-centered values, engaging relationally with students to cultivate their own capacities to learn and practice skills for life. This education as satyagraha is empowering them as individuals with agency and responsibility to use those skills to create, develop, and protect their communities which thereby helps empower them to accomplish many of the SDGs in their daily lives. In all these ways, Principal Seema, in collaboration with the other leadership, educators, and students, is innovating an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge. Through this specific pedagogy, Seema is able to participate in the empowerment of the individual learner to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1 Research Problem

As explained in chapter one, the United Nations (UN) has recently called for an integrated approach to accomplishing the interconnected Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for our collective existence and has identified “quality education” as the primary means of accomplishing many of the SDGs. According to the targets of such an education and the corresponding indicators of accomplishing each target, quality education should:

ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, *promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence* [emphasis added], global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development (UN, Target 4.7, 2015).

This critical ethnographic research provided a case study for how educators in Gujarat, India are innovating ways to embrace the philosophy of satyagraha as a philosophy of education to expand the role of education to align with this definition of quality education. This case study explored how such an alternative philosophy of education can equip individuals with values and skills to cultivate a way of life that promotes these SDGs through creating a culture of peace and nonviolence (Kool & Agrawal, 2020).

As I highlighted in chapter two, Shiva (2021) explains that the philosophy of satyagraha is, “Gandhi’s word for non-cooperation with and non-participation in systems, structures, laws, paradigms, policies that destroy the earth and rob us of our humanity and our freedoms that crush our potential for compassion and sharing, that atrophy our hearts, our minds and our hands” (p. 80). Diop (2020) also identified Gandhian nonviolence as a necessary addition to our educational philosophies and practices specifically because of how it confronts our personal and societal problems on all levels,

Globally youth must be empowered to be resilient to violence...Human rights violations, conflicts between countries and escalating intolerance has to be combated. In a globally connected and interdependent world, education needs to focus on not merely cognitive knowledge, but encompass communication skills and create belongingness with humanity as a whole...Though the centrality of education, like nonviolence, is almost conclusive, the type of education that is necessary for peace is what has never been addressed in any serious manner. There is a need for education not as the usual intellectual exercise of regurgitation but a journey through self-of building peace first with the self, before the society (Diop, 2020)

The purpose of this study was to explore how the educators in the two local schools in Gujarat are innovating this kind of integration in their philosophy of education. This case study showed that integrating this philosophy with a philosophy of education can serve as a practical response through which people can actively confront and disrupt colonial violence on a cultural level.

5.1.1 Purpose of the Research Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how the philosophy of satyagraha is being contextualized and integrated with a philosophy of education at two local schools in Gujarat, India to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence for sustainable development. Therefore, this study sought to address the research gap on the connections between the philosophy of satyagraha and a philosophy of education. Though the use of the values of satyagraha in educational practices can be recognized implicitly in ethnographies of education in India, there is a need for additional ethnographic research that explores the explicit use of the philosophy of satyagraha with alternative philosophies of education to discover how educators are drawing on this philosophy to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence. This study addressed this research gap by exploring universal kinship as the fundamental principle of satyagraha and investigating how the obligations of universal kinship inherent within the philosophy are being interpreted by educators in Gujarat and formed into a philosophy of education that promotes nonviolent cultural transformation at the individual, community, and societal levels.

5.1.2 Objectives of the Research Study

The following research questions guided this research study for the purpose of discovering a meaningful approach to the need for an alternative philosophy of education as identified by the UN's SDGs.

1. How are educators in post-colonial contexts, specifically India, interweaving an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge?
2. How does this alternative, intercultural philosophy of education empower individuals to accomplish and experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence?

One objective of this study was to explore how educators in Gujarat, India are using the philosophy of satyagraha as an alternative philosophy of education that draws on dominant global culture and Indian cultural knowledge simultaneously. Another objective was to discover how the philosophy of satyagraha is being used as a powerful alternative philosophy of education at the two local schools in Gujarat to accomplish the SDGs through creating a culture of peace and nonviolence.

Educators who participated in this case study in the local schools in Gujarat have provided valuable insights into how this alternative philosophy of education is being envisioned, understood, and implemented today. The final objectives of this study are to provide educators with these findings so they can draw from certain aspects of this philosophy to inform their own philosophies of education and educational practices to accomplish similar goals. Another objective is to provide policy makers, community development agencies, and local educators with a possible philosophy of education that can help them address their concerns that align with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, especially including the goal of quality education for the "promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence" (UN, Target 4.7, 2015). A

final objective is to provide future researchers fundamental guidance for investigating how such an alternative philosophy of education can be contextualized in various locations globally.

5.2 Significant Results of the Study

As I explained in chapter two, some of our current philosophies of education focus on creating cultures of peace and nonviolence to eradicate our global problems (e.g. Cavanagh, 2009; Bajaj & Chiu, 2009; Bentz & O'Brien, 2019; Kaur, 2023; Nicoson et al., 2023). However, the majority of these still need to reimagine the philosophical framework of our common educational models with the goal of empowering individuals to engage in self-transformation for the ultimate goal of transforming our larger society. The findings of this case study provided an example of how educators in Gujarat are engaging in the reimagining necessary for meeting these needs in their own local contexts and communities.

The findings from this case study illustrated how educators in Gujarat are interweaving the philosophy of satyagraha into an alternative philosophy of education to combine Freire's (1970/2002) focus on critical consciousness while also prioritizing indigenous epistemologies in our philosophies of education, a solution suggested by Daniels and Enslin (2023) as described in chapter one. This integrated philosophy of education as satyagraha as detailed by these educators in Gujarat provided an answer to my first research question because it highlights how educators in post-colonial contexts, specifically India, are interweaving an intercultural philosophy of education for two-eyed seeing that draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge. The integrated nature of the philosophies of education as satyagraha are at once rooted in indigenous knowledge of Indian culture while also drawing strategically on the ideas and practices of dominant global culture necessary for survival.

These findings also answered my second research question as they highlighted the ways this alternative, intercultural philosophy of education empowers individuals to accomplish and

experience the SDGs and create a culture of peace and nonviolence. Through the various partnerships with NGOs and nonprofits as well as through developing the unique vision of the philosophy of education as satyagraha, these educators empower themselves and their students with the skills and opportunities to successfully critique and transform our dominant global culture at a grassroots level. These findings provided a practical example of how satyagraha can be interwoven into an intercultural, nonviolent philosophy of education, capable of meeting various SDGs and to ultimately resist and reject the vestiges of colonial violence (Abdi, 2012) as described in chapter one and which threaten our holistic wellbeing and collective existence (see the UN SDGs).

5.2.1 Educators' Explicit and Embodied Use of Satyagraha in Classrooms (Theme 1)

The findings of this case study are similar to those as described in Adjei's (2007) look at satyagraha's decolonizing power in knowledge production in schooling in Ghana. However, the findings within this first theme provided a depth of analysis describing in more detail why and how the philosophy of satyagraha can be so powerful when used in explicit and embodied ways in the classroom. While Adjei (2007) highlights the nature of the philosophy of satyagraha as being powerful enough to decolonize in the means of producing knowledge in local schools in Ghana, this case study helped identify the meaningful aspects of this philosophy and its use in educational philosophies and practices in schools.

One aspect that this case study identified is the decolonizing power of using the philosophy of satyagraha in schools lies in the way educators interweave satyagraha into a philosophy of education for holistic child development. These educators in Gujarat are utilizing the fundamental principle and concomitant obligations of the philosophy of satyagraha within their philosophies of education as a means of cultivating the natural capacities within each individual child to be able to decolonize their own bodies, minds, souls, communities, and shared

natural environment. Through a serious valuing of the fundamental principle of universal kinship, educators in Gujarat are resisting the colonial aspects of our dominant global culture and therefore more directly addressing our myriad global problems as described in chapter one.

The decolonizing power of explicitly interweaving satyagraha into a philosophy of education can also be clearly seen in how the educators are interweaving the obligations of universal kinship in their embodied educational practices. As the findings of this case study showed, these educators explained that their philosophy of education as satyagraha relies on a consistent interweaving of the concomitant obligations of universal kinship: familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice. Though this integration made it exceedingly difficult to distinguish between each of the obligations in the educators' philosophies of education, it is this dedication to the interweaving of these obligations that leads to and allows for holistic development of the learner.

In fact, many of the teachers highlighted these led to interweaving the philosophy of satyagraha within their philosophies of education. Many of the teachers interpreted this interweaving as the same thing Gandhi did in his description of *Nai Taleem* or Basic Education which focused on using education for children as a way to practice satyagraha through the holistic development of the learners. Therefore, there is an equal emphasis given to the holistic needs of the children including their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs while also remaining dedicated to the holistic needs of the community and the environment. Because of these myriad goals, this Basic Education requires that educators engage in developing the learner's capacity for both critical thinking and creativity so that the children can hone skills for successful discernment and problem solving in all aspects of their lives.

This aligns with Nakhre's (1981) suggestion that the philosophy of satyagraha can itself be educational when it is practiced as a form of peace action. However, this requires that

education be conducted in a nonviolent manner and simultaneously be focused on the goal of societal transformation. The philosophy and practice of peace education (e.g. Kaur, 2023; Kester; 2023; Koopman & Seliga, 2021; McGregor, 2022; Vandering, 2014) has similar goals and outcomes, but once again does not use the philosophy of satyagraha explicitly, as was seen in the schools in Gujarat.

5.2.2 Pragmatic Blending of Dominant Culture with Indian Cultural Values and Norms as a Strategy for Two-Eyed Seeing (Theme 2)

The findings of this study highlighted that the explicit reliance on the fundamental principle of universal kinship along with the unique interweaving of the concomitant obligations is at once distinctly part of Indian culture while also being an integral and necessary aspect of this alternative philosophy of education that serves as a strategy for two-eyed seeing (Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009). As detailed in chapter two, the philosophy of satyagraha itself was shaped intentionally to serve as a strategy for two-eyed seeing as it both assumes the practicality of engaging in certain necessary aspects of dominant global culture while also, according to Nagler (2013, p. x), ingeniously innovates indigenous epistemologies for use in the modern world. This can be seen in the way the educators in Gujarat use education to help their students develop real life skills to survive in the modern world of international business and technology while also cultivating their skills for engaging in life-sustaining relationships in universal kinship with themselves, their communities, and the earth.

Since the strategy of two-eyed seeing is meant to serve individuals in finding alternative ways to survive within dominant global culture by drawing on both modern and indigenous cultural norms and values (Bartlett et al., 2012; Iwama et al., 2009), the findings of this case study provided a specific example for how to pragmatically engage in two-eyed seeing in the

context of education. Lange's (2023) description of global education is similar in that it comes close to articulating a philosophy of education that is interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional enough to address our myriad global problems because of "the interweaving of peace, development, environmental, multicultural/antiracist, human rights, and women/gender/sexual diverse equity educations" (p. 187). However, this still does not rely on an equal embrace of developing critical consciousness in the individual with indigenous ways of knowing for the purpose of cultural transformation toward nonviolence. The findings of this case study filled in these gaps by providing such an equal embrace through their explicit and consistent use of the philosophy of satyagraha.

5.2.3 Satyagraha as Empowerment (Theme 3)

The findings of this case study identified the ways in which a philosophy of education interwoven with the philosophy of satyagraha can empower individuals to accomplish multiple SDGs simultaneously and practically cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence in our modern world. In fact, one of the most important findings of this study illuminated that it is the reliance on and use of the fundamental principle of universal kinship in the philosophy of satyagraha that empowers individuals to cultivate a culture of peace and nonviolence which then serves as the originating means by which people can accomplish the SDGs. The findings highlighted that accomplishing the SDGs is not a mutually exclusive goal from creating a culture of peace and nonviolence. Rather, there must be effort put into cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence because of the ways in which such a cultural shift empowers people to accomplish the SDGs in their own lives.

These findings emphasized that the philosophy of satyagraha, relying on the fundamental principle of universal kinship, contributes to individuals being empowered to cultivate

relationships based on that principle. When individuals shape the nature of their interpersonal relationships with all living beings—human beings and more-than-human beings—based on the assumption of universal kinship, they are empowered to participate in the concomitant obligations of familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice. By mutually participating in these obligations, individuals can accomplish multiple SDGs simultaneously. This helps to provide a deeper understanding of what Nakhre (1981) meant by saying, “satyagraha was much more than a nonviolent technique; it was an educational process that would...create an acute awareness of injustice and exploitation, but also restore their dignity and self-respect and spur them to action” (p. 212), and “[satyagraha means] the elimination of the consequences of colonialism and exploitation, eradication of direct as well as structural violence, and restoration of cultural identity and individual dignity disrupted by existing exploitative institutional structures” (p. 205).

This case study provided insight into the educational aspects of the “practical idealism” of satyagraha as described by Mantena (2012) and Naidu (2006), both of whom suggested that the philosophy of satyagraha is a practical ideal for our current global context as it encourages realistic transformation at the individual, community, and societal levels. This concept of practical idealism is implicit within several fields of education which share similar methods and goals as described by the findings of this study in Gujarat such as education for human rights (e.g. Bajaj, 2011, 2012; Bajaj & Chiu, 2009; Bentz & O’Brien, 2019; Nicoson et al., 2023), transformative education (Brookfield, 2012; Charaniya, 2012; Mejiuni, 2012), and education for sustainable development (e.g. O’Flaherty & Liddy, 2018; Wessels, 2002).

5.2.4 Educational Leadership as Embodiment of Satyagraha (Theme 4)

The findings of this case study indicated that the nature of Principal Seema's leadership role in implementing her vision of education as satyagraha is essential to ensuring the large-scale outcomes as described throughout this project. Seema's distinct vision, integrating the philosophy of satyagraha within the unique philosophy of education at these schools in Gujarat, influenced the entire educational community dedicated to creating a schooling atmosphere in which a culture of peace and nonviolence can be cultivated. It is this culture in which students, teachers, staff, and even families of these individuals are empowered to come together to accomplish the SDGs in their daily lives.

As Mehrotra (2007) highlighted and as was detailed in chapter two, these kinds of educational ideals have been practiced by many leaders in India, including those that Seema highlighted as being her intercultural inspirations. Therefore, the findings indicated that Seema is a living example of influential Indian philosopher-educators, including Gandhi, Tagore, and Naidu, all of whom valued what Mehrotra (2007) describes as "ethical commitments and reciprocal links between school and society" (p. 29). Like these other influential leaders, Seema therefore uses education as the primary means of transformation of both the individual and society. This is seen in the way Seema's vision of education encourages the interrelationship between the sacred and the secular, the ideal and the practical, and the natural world and society, (Kool & Agrawal, 2020) a feature of schooling that resembles the way historic *gurukuls* were modeled after *ashrams* and served as local schools throughout the majority of villages before British colonization (Mehrotra, 2007; Tagore, 1922).

In this way and in the way holistic development of the learner is emphasized, the schools in Gujarat are a modern day, contextualized example of what Gandhi called the "beautiful tree"

of Indian education which was rooted deeply in Indian cultural history, values, and norms, but “perished” in British colonization (as cited in Mehrotra, 2007, p. 27). As highlighted by Dharampal (2000) and Singh (2017), values-based education has been a long-standing cultural tradition in India for millennia in which academic development was balanced with development of additional skills of discernment, ethics, and social justice. It is Seema’s cultural heritage along with her determined inspiration from Gandhi and the philosophy and practice of satyagraha that empowers her to create such an educational experience in our modern world. As the findings of this study indicated, Seema’s leadership plays a crucial role in that it emphasizes the importance of participating in universal kinship in the educational practices at the schools as well as the concomitant obligations of familial love, ahimsa, swaraj, and active justice to create the culture of peace and nonviolence at the schools.

These findings indicated that Seema’s educational philosophy aligns with that of Tagore (1917b) who concisely stated, “The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence” (p. 142). Seema’s vision is an example therefore, of how Mukherjee (2013) describes Tagore’s vision as a “sense of kinship” which Tagore defined as itself an act of “learning to feel oneself at one with the animate and vegetable existences of the world is a fundamental fact in the outlook of Ancient India...Learning to see fire, air, water, land, and the whole universe pervaded by a universal consciousness, is true learning” (as cited in Mukherjee, 2013, p. 262).

Similarly, these findings highlighted the proximity that Seema’s educational vision and leadership have with Naidu (1918/2020) who binds together the means and end of this education as satyagraha saying, “we believe instinctively and it is a part of our spiritual inheritance to understand and to realize the continuity of life, the unbroken continuity between the moment of

sowing and the moment of reaping” (p. 191-192). As Seema explained, her focus on the holistic development of the child through education is not simply an end in itself, but it is the means also, for it is the means by which that child can immediately begin to live into the accomplishing of the SDGs and can immediately begin to experience the positive outcomes of participating in a culture of peace and nonviolence with themselves, their fellow students, teachers, and family members, and their communities and natural environment at large. As the findings from Seema highlighted, the moment of sowing the seeds of this depth of cultural transformation is indeed also the moment of reaping the benefits, to varying degrees, of living within such a culture.

However, it is not just the nature and implementation of Seema’s vision and educational leadership that contribute to these realities, but it is in Seema’s personal values and qualities of her character that empower her as one individual to engage in this degree of transformation on so many levels. In one of Tagore’s (1922) essays, he writes about his meeting with an ascetic woman from Bengal, and in his description of the encounter, the description of the character of the ascetic woman illuminates the way these findings of Seema’s character can be interpreted. Tagore (1922) begins by describing being startled by this woman’s question to him, “‘When are you coming to meet me underneath the trees?’” and continues his story saying,

Evidently she pitied me who lived (according to her) prisoned behind walls, banished away from the great meeting-place of the All, where she had her dwelling. Just at that moment my gardener came with his basket, and when the woman understood that the flowers in the vase on my table were going to be thrown away, to make place for the fresh ones, she looked pained and said to me, ‘You are always engaged reading and writing; you do not see.’ Then she took the discarded flowers in her palms, kissed them and touched them with her forehead, and reverently murmured to herself, ‘Beloved of my heart.’ I felt that this woman, in her direct vision of the infinite personality in the heart of all things, truly represented the spirit of India (Tagore, 1922, p. 45)

Seema embodies these ideals within her educational philosophy and daily practice. Though of course she is not an ascetic, nor does she claim to be a holy woman with divine qualities

elevating her above anyone else, the depth of her compassion for her students is at the heart of her transformative efforts at these schools. Her life is not disconnected from her work but is intricately woven together with it, so that her deep value for those cast aside or excluded from the community, like the rescue of discarded flowers, is evident in all she does, and it is this trait that she consistently brings to the consciousness of her students, galvanizing them to live in interconnected relationships with one another in similar ways.

5.2.5 Distinctions of Findings from Literature

The findings of this case study help to describe how these educators in Gujarat, like many educators in India who have gone before them, are practicing a “community-based system of schooling...[which] play[s] an important social role” (Mehrotra, 2007, p. 27). This can be seen in how the thematic findings of this study are closely aligned with the findings from the ethnographic studies in India I highlighted and discussed in chapter two by Lavi (2022), Maithreyi (2019), Niesz and Krishnamurthy (2014). However, the primary distinction between the findings from this case study in Gujarat and the findings of the other ethnographies can be seen in both the explicit use of the philosophy of satyagraha and within the educational philosophies and practices of the school educators and leadership along with the deliberate, conscious interweaving of two-eyed seeing for the purpose of accomplishing the SDGs.

For example, the findings of this study are very similar to the findings that Lavi (2022) elucidates about how an indigenous forest-dwelling community in India primarily utilizes familial relationships to cultivate skills of empathy for communal life with all life forms while also encouraging personal agency to try new tasks and learn experientially, even through mistakes. The use of the tenets of the philosophy of satyagraha can be clearly seen in the educational practices of the family members in Lavi’s (2022) study, but the explicit use of the

term satyagraha is not expressed. Additionally, there is no mention of using two-eyed seeing for the accomplishment of any of the SDGs.

There are similar distinctions between the findings of this study and those in Maithreyi's (2019) description of the way Life Skills Education (LSE) is being employed to empower students to achieve their professional and personal goals while simultaneously learning how to practically raise their families out of intergenerational poverty. With LSE as with the education as satyagraha there is an important role of empowering the individual to develop skills necessary to improve their own life. However, in LSE the source of empowerment is not explicitly drawn from the philosophy of satyagraha and the tenet of swaraj. Additionally, the role of two-eyed seeing can be discerned in LSE but is not a consistent and fundamental framework as it is in education as satyagraha.

5.2.6 Explanations on the Distinctions of Findings from Literature

One different aspect in findings between this case study in Gujarat and the findings from other ethnographies in India is likely due to the specificity of my research questions as well as the nature and depth of my relationships with the study participants. Though by the end of the study, these findings were expected due to the theoretical saturation and depth of my contextual understanding, the findings were somewhat unexpected from what I originally thought.

At the outset of this project, I was aware of the importance of the philosophy of satyagraha within the cultural framework of India, and I was also cognizant of the value placed on education and the primary role that holistic education plays in the Indian cultural context. However, I was not expecting these two local schools to embody the philosophy of satyagraha as deeply and consistently in their philosophy of education as was presented in the findings of this study. I interpret that educational leadership made this key difference, in which Seema embodies a robust, intercultural interweaving of philosophies and practices, driven by her dedication to her

students and community. This may shed light on implications of this research study as well as suggestions for future research in other contexts globally.

5.3 Implications of the Research Study

The findings of this research study have implications that can have an impact on our myriad global problems as described in chapter one and should be considered by educators in a variety of global contexts, educational practices and policies that align with goals similar to those of this project, and community development leaders active in various sectors, especially those involved with initiatives involving the SDGs. These findings indicated that implementing a philosophy of education as satyagraha can significantly empower students and the educational community to deepen interrelational skills to increase their capacities for cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence. By engaging in holistic development, individuals can practice skills for increased toleration, empathy, and collaboration within their own classrooms and then extending into the greater local community and international society.

Furthermore, as this education as satyagraha emphasizes individual agency, learners become responsible and active participants in their relationships within themselves as well as within their own diverse communities and natural ecosystems in which they live. In this way, they are empowered to design communities that are more adaptable and resilient, capable of sustaining a culture of nonviolence collectively. The implications therefore, are aligned with the purpose of this research project to understand how to engage actively in what Shiva (2021) describes as satyagraha, “non-cooperation with and non-participation in systems, structures, laws, paradigms, policies that destroy the earth and rob us of our humanity and our freedoms that crush our potential for compassion and sharing, that atrophy our hearts, our minds and our hands” (p. 80). Therefore, the implications of this study provide opportunities to contextualize

the philosophy of satyagraha as an educational means by which to empower people to confront and resist personal and societal problems that inhibit sustainable development (Diop, 2020).

5.3.1 Implications for Educators and Educational Practices

The findings from this case study can be of immediate use and implementation in schools across various states in India considering the way this model draws equally on critical consciousness and Indian cultural knowledge. Additionally, the findings can have implications for educators in India who are striving to cultivate an educational model that can meet similar goals as described in this research project. For example, educators who are seeking to accomplish the SDGs or to create a culture of peace and nonviolence within their local communities can use this specific philosophy of education to guide their educational practices toward certain goals. Additionally, educators who want to find a practical means of aligning their pedagogy and praxis with the SDG of Quality Education can draw from this research study and adapt their practices accordingly.

These findings can also have implications for educators in a global context or culture who are interested in practicing similar forms of education to accomplish similar goals. This education as satyagraha can especially be of use for educators and leaders in post-colonial contexts where the necessary development of the skill of two-eyed seeing is readily experienced and already understood. For example, those who want to practice two-eyed seeing can glean from this study and then contextualize to the degree and nature necessary for their own context and setting and goals. Similarly, in contexts where there are people of diverse cultures represented, this educational model can be especially useful to encourage and exemplify similar practices of intercultural interweaving for other philosophies with local educational practices.

It is important to make note that educators who may find this philosophy of education helpful for their communities or cultural contexts may not in fact be educators in a formal sense.

Therefore, the findings of this study can be beneficial and have important implications for individuals who serve in an informal capacity to educate such as grassroots community development workers, community advocates, local NGO leadership, community and public health workers, and even family members and community leaders who are striving to accomplish similar goals.

This education as satyagraha contains within it the recognition of the nature of the human person as having the “imminent capacity to learn” (Niesz and Krishnamurthy 2014, p. 158).

Therefore, it places a responsibility upon educators to cultivate that capacity for the fullness of the human being, with the intent purpose of attaining sustainable human rights for the individual and for the entire community, which necessarily includes the environment in which we all survive and thrive. This value and way of life is directly drawn from the meaning of the term satyagraha. It is imperative that such an educational methodology is designed to nurture the child holistically, impacting the mind, body, and spirit for the purpose of empowering the individual to live well within their social and natural environments. As Seema said, “It is a lot of work,” as she described the daily effort required for educating students in such a holistic way. She explained that sometimes the work can feel insignificant, “like pouring a glass of water into the ocean,” but the impact on the human being is undeniable (Seema Justin, personal conversation, February 19, 2023).

It is important to remember when identifying these implications that education as satyagraha is not an end in itself, but it is strategically implemented for the goal of individual human development leading to large-scale societal impact through the means of accomplishing human rights and the SDGs simultaneously across multiple aspects of existence. Working within a way of life that values the unity of all life through the fundamental principle of universal

kinship provides a unique opportunity for educators to root their pedagogies, curriculum, and educational policies and practices into a methodology of education as satyagraha to accomplish the SDGs.

Developing a connection between the embodiment of satyagraha and the accomplishment of a culture of peace and nonviolence in tangible and contextualized settings through education allows people to collectively adapt our human culture for a more sustainable, peaceful, justice-centered future. This study has shown that relational cooperation between all living beings is the learning classroom which can have transformative impacts on the human being, their communities, and our planet.

5.3.2 Implications on Educational Policies

Additionally, there are implications for educators seeking to develop educational practices that align with the recently published “National Education Policy (NEP) 2020,” which is a detailed, sixty-six page document crafted by the Government of India to define their nation’s educational philosophy and strategic plan of implementation. The NEP defines the need to develop an educational policy “to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (i.e., SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved” (NEP, 2020, p. 3). The NEP explains:

Indeed, with the quickly changing employment landscape and global ecosystem, it is becoming increasingly critical that children not only learn, but more importantly learn how to learn. Education thus, must move towards less content, and more towards learning about how to think critically and solve problems, how to be creative and multidisciplinary, and how to innovate, adapt, and absorb new material in novel and changing fields. Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable. The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character,

enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment (NEP 2020, 3).

The education articulated here is contextualized to our current global setting and needs. It emphasizes the imperative that educational models must address our challenges by engaging students in learning that is transformative, cultivating the individual's capacity to learn through providing opportunities in the classroom for students to increase diverse skills and abilities. A close reading of the NEP indicates that both the mode and goals of the education described here are similar to the model of education as satyagraha as described and practiced by the educators in this case study in Gujarat.

This is further emphasized in the fact that this educational methodology described by the NEP requires the presence of certain attributes which recognizes the complexity of the human being. The NEP describes the “fundamental principles” that must accompany this kind of education that aims at skill development for increased cognitive abilities, social emotional intelligence, physical health, and mental wellbeing, among others. Some of these fundamental principles are listed as:

- flexibility, so that learners have the ability to choose their learning trajectories and programmes, and thereby choose their own paths in life according to their talents and interests;
- no hard separations between arts and sciences, between curricular and extra-curricular activities, between vocational and academic streams, etc. in order to eliminate harmful hierarchies among, and silos between different areas of learning;
- multidisciplinary and a holistic education across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, and sports for a multidisciplinary world in order to ensure the unity and integrity of all knowledge;
- emphasis on conceptual understanding rather than rote learning and learning-for-exams;
- creativity and critical thinking to encourage logical decision-making and innovation;
- ethics and human & Constitutional values like empathy, respect for others, cleanliness, courtesy, democratic spirit, spirit of service, respect for public property, scientific temper, liberty, responsibility, pluralism, equality, and justice;
- promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning;

- life skills such as communication, cooperation, teamwork, and resilience (NEP, 2020, p. 5).

Each of these principles are present within the philosophy of education as satyagraha as defined by educators in this case study. As highlighted by the above list, this holistic education for individual development is meant to lead each learner to become an active participant in creating the communities and societies in which they want to live. The NEP aligns with the educators in Gujarat as they define and utilize education to maintain the interconnection between a holistically healthy human being and the subsequent creation of a more socially equitable and just society and ecological environment.

In the NEP, the holistic nature of the development of the human being is cultivated for the purpose of achieving the fullness of the SDGs. The sphere of educational influence on the mind, body, and soul of the human being is expansive, with the goal of cultivating individual capacities for independent thinking, problem solving, personal agency, adaptability, and resilience. The development of these skills empowers the individual to make decisions that are beneficial for themselves and for their holistic wellbeing, while also allowing them to participate actively in shaping their own community and our world in positive ways that align with the UN SDGs.

This case study provided a practical example and local expression of how the goals of the NEP are being interpreted and accomplished by local educators in Gujarat. Therefore, the implications of this research study provide a culturally appropriate example of how to educate students in India with the goal “to develop knowledge, skills, values, and dispositions that support responsible commitment to human rights, sustainable development and living, and global well-being, thereby reflecting a truly global citizen” (NEP, 2020, p. 6).

5.3.3 Implications for Future Research

In addition to providing guidance to the Government of India on best practices for implementing the NEP, this case study can serve to guide future researchers in the fields of peace education (e.g. Kaur, 2023; Kester, 2023; Koopman & Seliga, 2021; McGregor, 2022; Vandering, 2014), education for human rights (e.g., Bajaj, 2011; Bajaj, 2012; Bajaj & Chiu, 2009; Bentz & O'Brien, 2019; Nicoson et al., 2023), transformative education (Brookfield, 2012; Charaniya, 2012; Mejiuni, 2012), and education for sustainable development (e.g., O'Flaherty & Liddy, 2018; Wessels, 2002).

This case study can also guide research on the educational aspects of the “practical idealism” of satyagraha (Mantena, 2012; Naidu, 2006) which indicates the realistic, transformative nature of satyagraha at the individual and community level. The fields of transformative education and critical pedagogy can use this case study to provide insight into how to practically collaborate more effectively as this alternative philosophy of education in use by educators in Gujarat is robust enough to empower the individual through developing human agency for the intent purpose of transforming society, and it does so specifically through formal schooling contexts. As I explained in chapter two, and as this case study suggested, this philosophy education as satyagraha can be a powerful tool to cultivate the individual's imagination, helping them to reimagine their communities through a justice-centered lens in similar ways as Freire (1970/2002), Dewey (1916), Montessori (1992), and Tagore (1922). Researchers within these fields can use this case study to continue further research for practical and contextualized implementation.

5.4 Limitations of this Case Study

As with any ethnographic case study, it is important and necessary to recognize the limitations and potential weaknesses of the research study due to the limited scope and

implementation. It is important to note, therefore, that this case study cannot be generalized or universally applied in any cultural context or geographic location. This case study was intended to understand how educators in India, specifically in the two local schools in Gujarat State, are utilizing the philosophy of satyagraha in their philosophies of education.

Though there are findings in this study that suggested that the philosophy of satyagraha is part of the cultural ethos of the people in India, there are still many questions that remain unanswered about exactly who adheres to this cultural ethos, for what reasons, to what degree, and with the goal of which outcomes. These questions should be the focus of future research and cannot be answered by a single case study at these two local schools. However, this case study can present a possible suggestion for discerning how the communities at these local schools are answering these questions, in what meaningful aspects they are doing so, and with which results and outcomes in their own local communities.

5.5 Conclusion

This research project has explored how the philosophy of satyagraha can be interwoven into an alternative philosophy of education for the purpose of cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence for sustainable development. Through this critical ethnographic case study, this project investigated the way educators and students at two local schools in Gujarat, India are innovating such a philosophy of education and practically contextualizing it in their local communities. The findings from this research study provided examples of the way this philosophy of education as satyagraha draws on intercultural values and a dedication to collective social action capable of transforming our societies at the cultural level and strategically altering our interconnected global problems.

Therefore, this research study has implications for research and future scholarship within the fields of community development, social change, peace education, education for sustainable

development, transformative education, education for human rights, global education, and philosophy of education, among others. The implications of this study also extend into practical spheres of educational policy and practice in various contexts around the globe, but especially in India where the government is currently already working to implement the NEP. These findings are especially useful for those researchers, educators, community development leaders, and policy makers who are working to identify and contextualize an integrated approach to what the UN calls “quality education” for accomplishing the interconnected SDGs through cultivating a culture of peace and nonviolence.

In one of my final engagements with Principal Seema during this research project, I asked her to share a summary of her final thoughts for this research and some suggestions for going forward in a practical way and in our daily lives. As she spoke, she seemed to be trying to find that balance between the vital and driving push to work hard and the essential need to simply live and find enjoyment in our living. In her words, I could hear her tone shifting ever so slightly between speaking determinedly with me as a fellow educator and speaking gently and with genuine compassion toward me, in the same way I have watched her teaching her students at the schools. She said,

Sometimes we just build up big, huge structures and education systems that it becomes very dense. The light of love cannot reach the students. We have made the system so complicated sometimes, and everything is there, except the emotions of love and hope, the emotions of nonviolence. Such things are *very* important for the students to carry. Sometimes I feel that students are missing the childhood. It is so much a burden, the studies, the discipline, and they have forgotten smiling. Be happy. Be happy and never give up. Do not live your life according to anyone's opinion. Do not live your life, like, there are critics, there will be critics. If you fail in your examinations, or you are average student, nevermind. Just look at google, there are so many successful people and they were criticized, but still they are doing something. Everything is black and white, but you need to put it into practice. The grading is there, but you need to be practical. Okay? Why do we do so much hard work? You and me, and everybody does hard work? To get a very beautiful life, satisfied life, isn't it? And we have missed that essence of happiness somewhere in our childhood. We have not *learned* how to be happy. Keep sharing, keep

talking, be happy with others. Talk to them, be encouraged, motivate people. That will give you the right sense of happiness, I would say. Be happy. Smile. Never be so much burdened, just do your work. Enjoy your work. Enjoy your learning. There is never an end to anything. If you fail, if you make a mistake, you have another chance. I tell this thing to my tenth standard board exam students and twelfth standard students. Your life and everyone's life is so precious, isn't it? So many people have invested in your life, parents, teachers, professors, siblings, friends, they see so much of goodness in you, so never overshadow that. Okay? Never give up (Seema Justin, personal communication, March 12, 2024).

As Principal Seema finished sharing, she smiled, and her eyes lit up in the same way they do when she talks about the successes of her students or the way the teachers partner with one another in their work of education. She held my hand as she often does, and when she squeezed it a little tightly to communicate her love and to emphasize the sincerity of the words she just shared, she communicated clearly that these words were not only meant to provide an answer for this last interview question, but to provide some of her consistent, motherly guidance for me.

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Appendix A: Sample Interview Questions

For Educators and Other Leadership at the Schools

1. What is your teaching philosophy?
2. Why did you become a teacher?
3. What values, beliefs, and practices influence your educational methodology?
4. What is the role of a teacher in the life of a student?
5. What is the role of a teacher in the local community?
6. How does your work impact other community development goals?
7. How does your work intersect with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
8. How does this specific educational model accomplish these SDGs?
9. Which educational practices accomplish which SDGs? How is this evidenced?
10. How does your work intersect with the Government of India's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP)?
11. Does your educational practice lead to individual empowerment and holistic development of the learner? How is this evidenced?
12. Does your work as a teacher lead to or increase more peaceful, collaborative, equitable community practices? How is this evidenced?
13. Does your work as a teacher lead to or increase more peaceful, collaborative, equitable practices for all living beings including non-human beings like plants and animals? How is this evidenced?
14. How does your educational methodology promote ecological reciprocity?
15. What is the connection between spirituality and your educational methodology? What role does spirituality play?
16. What are the influences of ancient Indian cultural values and practices on your educational methodology?
17. What are the intercultural influences or influences from other global cultures in your educational methodology?
18. Who are some prominent individuals or communities that influence your educational pedagogy?
19. Is your educational model influenced by Tagore, Gandhi, Naidu or other key leaders from India?
20. Do the values of the term *satyagraha* impact your teaching philosophy? In what ways?
21. Do you see your work as a teacher to be a form of positive social change? In what ways?

For Students and Recent Graduates of the Schools

1. Which of the UN Sustainable Development Goals are being accomplished for you through your education here? In what ways?

2. What are the skills you have developed that help you in real life situations? Can you share an example?
3. Which parts of your education are the most influential to you? How has your education affected you in your personal life?
4. Have you felt more empowered and able to take agency in your life circumstances because of your education? In what ways?
5. How is this education preparing you for your future?
6. Do you think your education has helped you in your relationships with your family members? In what specific ways?
7. Do you think your education has helped you in your relationships within your community? In what specific ways?
8. Do you think your education has helped you in your relationships within your environment, including with other living beings that are non-human, like plants and animals? In what specific ways?
9. How would you describe the educational methods you engage with at this school?
10. Do you think the values of ancient India or Indian culture are present in your education? In what ways?
11. Do you think this education has helped you become a more global citizen? In what ways?
12. Do you think this education has given you more opportunity to develop diverse skills for real life after graduation?